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## **Foreword**

Dr James McElligott, Director of Education

This is the 4th Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Wolverhampton and replaces any earlier versions.

The City of Wolverhampton Council, Wolverhampton Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and, our Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC), worked hard alongside a group of Wolverhampton teachers and RE Today Services, to produce a document that is useful to staff in schools. The non-statutory materials will enable schools to present Religious Education in an innovative and exciting way that reflects the local context here in Wolverhampton.

This syllabus has been produced within the context of the national framework for Religious Education, and in line with the non-statutory guidance for schools.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference, which includes representatives of local religious bodies, has given support and approval to the efforts of the working group. They are pleased that the richness and diversity found in Wolverhampton is evident in the new Agreed Syllabus.

I commend this new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and trust it will help to continue to promote respect, understanding and tolerance amongst the different faiths represented in the city.

Dr James McElligott



Director of Education

## **Acknowledgements**

With thanks to:

Wolverhampton SACRE members

ASC members

RE Today Services

NATRE

Villiers Primary School

Uplands Junior School

Colton Hills Secondary School

The Kings Secondary School

Interfaith Wolverhampton

## **Introduction**

### **The Importance of Religious Education**

Religion provokes and answers questions about what it means to be human arising out of and relating to different spiritual and cultural traditions. As all religions are concerned with human transformation, religion enables its adherents to understand the world in terms of a transcendent dimension to life.

Consequently religious education is a focus within the curriculum for:

- Provoking challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, issues of right and wrong, the nature or reality, beliefs about God and what it means to be human.
- Developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions, and other world views, which offer answers to such questions.
- Enhancing pupils' awareness and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.
- Offering opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development by encouraging pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and question of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.
- Encouraging pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging and enabling them to flourish individually within their communities, as citizens in a plural society and global community.
- Developing respect and sensitivity to others, in particular those with faiths and beliefs different from their own, to combat prejudice and promote discernment. Religious education thus has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and life-long learning.

### **Religious Education and the School Curriculum**

#### **The contributions of religious education to the values of the school curriculum**

Religious education actively promotes the values of truth, justice, respect for all, care of the environment and human stewardship of the earth. It places specific emphasis on:

- Pupils valuing themselves and others
- The role of the family and the community in religious belief and activity
- The celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences
- Recognition of the changing nature of society, religious practice and expression
- The influence of religion in the local, national and global community
- Sustainable development of the earth

#### **The contributions of religious education to the aims of the school curriculum**

Aim 1: The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.

#### **Religious Education**

- Should be stimulating, interesting and enjoyable
- Should promote the best possible progress and attainment for all pupils

- Should develop independent and interdependent learning
- Should contribute to pupils' skills in Literacy and ICT
- Should promote an enquiring approach to issues of belief and truth in religion
- Should enable pupils to evaluate thoughtfully their own and others' views, in a reasoned and informed manner

Aim 2: The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare them for all the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

### Religious Education

- Focuses on ultimate questioned and ethical issues
- Enable pupils to appreciate their own and others beliefs and cultures and how these effect individuals, communities and societies
- Develops pupils awareness of themselves and others
- Develops a clear understanding of religions in the world today
- Enables pupils to learn about the way different faith communities relate to each other

Religious education aims to:

- Promote religious understanding, discernment and respect
- Challenge prejudice and stereotyping
- Explore the significance of the environment both locally and globally, and the role of humanity and other species within it
- Promote pupils self-worth, thus enabling them to reflect on their uniqueness as human beings to share their feelings and emotions with others and appreciate the importance of forming and maintaining positive relationships.

### Religious Education and British Values

#### A perspective from the national association for the teaching of religious education

Ideas that support the teaching of British values will regularly occur in Religious education (RE). References to values such as democracy or the uniqueness of every individual will be made during discussions or circle time. Topics associated with the history of politics of British values may occur in RE curriculum at secondary level.

#### Curriculum

Democracy: In the KS2 classroom, teachers may explain Britain's democratic system when covering topics about rules and laws. At KS3, a democratic country may be contrasted to theocratic country or a monarchy if the class is exploring rules, free-will and determinism. KS4 students may debate the value of majority rule when studying utilitarianism, which is an oblique critique of our democratic system.

Rule of law: in the primary classroom the rule of law may be contrasted with religious rules or moral precepts. For example, in an exploration of the idea of rules generally, children may consider why we all have to follow civic law and the impact this has on our lives. This may then be contrasted with rules, precepts and guidance given by different religious communities. In addition, pupils may explore how democracy and legislation in the UK, in contrast to some other jurisdictions, support and protect

people's religious beliefs and freedoms. At KS3, students may encounter religious customs, such as polygamy which are not allowed under civic law. At KS4, students may contrast the rule of law to ethical and religious norms.

Individual liberty: in studying non-Christian faiths in the UK the idea of freedom of religion may arise as part of the rights of the individual. At primary level, there will be the study of rights and responsibilities referencing celebrations such as Tu B'shevat – the Jewish festival tree, Ahimsa – the principle of non-harming and charitable giving. These are all examples of where, while we have individual liberty with it, religions explain that there are certain responsibilities. It would be appropriate at secondary level to explore in more detail the history of this right, and the nature of it within the Church of England.

Mutual respect: this occurs often across the phases in RE lessons through case studies, religious teachings and ethical debates. Pupils hear stories of people who have taken particular actions because of their beliefs, actions that have been about equal treatment and respect for those who are, for example, black, female, or have a different religious belief from the majority, such as Martin Luther King or Malala Yousafzi.

Students may question why some groups and individuals do not seem to be treated respectfully in the UK when studying units on prejudice and discrimination.

Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs: this is clearly a key driver in RE lessons across the age range. To learn about different ways of life and beliefs requires openness to difference. Students at secondary level might query if tolerance as an ethic is powerful enough, and suggest warm acceptance or love is a better ideal to work towards.

### **Making use of the local religious community**

Wolverhampton has a rich religious history and the harmonious relationships between religious communities in the city provide pupils with a positive example of how to respect others' beliefs.

The City is an ideal location for the study of religion, with a fascinating history and a contemporary profile. Historically milestones for Christian communities cover over a thousand years of Christian worship around St Peter's Collegiate Church; Giffard House as the oldest centre used continually for Roman Catholicism in England; John Wesley opened a local chapel in 1788; and the first Black-Led Christian congregation meeting was held at the YMCA in Wolverhampton in 1953. There are currently over 150 places of worship in Wolverhampton, and the 2011 National Census revealed the presence of all the principal religions in Wolverhampton.

Interfaith Wolverhampton supports educational visits to places of worship to give valuable insights into differing cultures and faith traditions. Their mission is to provide education aimed specifically at nurturing and disseminating knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of religious beliefs and practices within the City of Wolverhampton with the purpose of supporting community cohesion through dialogue and collaboration on specific projects.

Further information regarding Interfaith can be found at <http://www.ifwton.org.uk/homepage.html>

## **Wolverhampton Agreed Syllabus**

### **The legal position**

By law <sup>1</sup>, religious education

- Must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools and school sixth forms, except to those withdrawn by their parents.
- Is a component of the basic curriculum to be taught alongside the national curriculum in all maintained schools. In all such schools, other than aided schools, it must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus.

Each LA must convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to produce a syllabus. Once adopted by the LA, the programmes of study of the agreed syllabus set out what pupils should be taught, and the attainment levels set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages. An agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that "the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian while taking account of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain ", Each LA must have a SACRE. It is the duty of the SACRE to advise the LA on the need to review an agreed syllabus every five years. Voluntary Aided schools provide religious education according to the trust deeds of the school.

### **The structure of the agreed syllabus for religious education**

The agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should study in religious education from the ages of 3 to 19. It is organised in three main sections for pupils of different ages.

#### **The foundation stage (Ages 3-5)**

For children in the Early Years it is inappropriate to view the curriculum from the perspective of the learner as separate subjects. Therefore planned activities should fit into an interactive curriculum both inside and outdoors, where learning is essentially first hand, explorative, active and fun. With this approach it is possible to integrate, link and extend different strands of knowledge, attitudes, values, understanding and experience that link into Religious Education.

#### **Key stages 1-3 (Ages 5-14)**

##### **Knowledge, skills and understanding**

The Programmes of Study for KS1 -3 are designed in the same ways so as to ensure continuity and progression. The knowledge, skills and understanding focus on two key aspects of learning in Religious Education, learning about religion and learning from religion.

Learning about Religion includes:

- Enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion -its key beliefs, teachings and practices
- The impact of these on the lives of believers and communities and varying ways in which these are expressed
- The skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation

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<sup>1</sup> Education Act 1996

- Developing pupils' ability to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary
- Identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues

Learning from Religion develops:

- Pupils' reflection on and response to their own and others' experiences and their learning about religion
- Pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion
- Communication of pupils' own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose, truth and values and commitment

In teaching religious education, it is vital that skills are developed through knowledge and understanding, and vice-versa. It is also important that pupils understand how their learning in religious education is progressing, and what they need to do to improve it.

The knowledge, skills and understanding are taught through three elements of the Breadth of Study.

#### i. Religions

To make sure that the curriculum for religious education is broad and balanced:

- Christianity should be studied at each key stage
- The other principal religions represented in Great Britain (here regarded as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) should be studied across the key stages. It is important that schools ensure that by the end of key stage 3 pupils have encountered all five principal religions in sufficient depth. It is also important that pupils are given the opportunity to study other religious and non-religious perspectives.

Pupils at key stage 1 should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding as set out in the programme of study through the study of Christianity, at least one other principal religion and a religious community with a significant local presence.

At key stage 2 pupils should be should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding as set out in the programme of study through the study of Christianity, at least two other principal religions and a religious community with a significant local presence, with thematic studies drawing further material from other religions if deemed appropriate.

At key stage 3 pupils should be should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding as set out in the programme of study through the study of Christianity, at least two other principal religions and a religious community with a significant local presence, with thematic studies drawing further material from other religions if deemed appropriate.

#### ii. Areas of study-themes

These themes are Creation and the Natural World, Community and Relationships, Worship, Tradition, Occasions and Celebrations and Symbolism. They provide a map of the main conceptual areas which pupils will explore in religious education within these Key Stages. These themes are designed to ensure that religious education is broad and balanced, and makes a contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral,

cultural, intellectual, social and physical development. The themes may be taught separately, in combination or within studies of particular religions.

The emphasis placed on each of the themes may vary within and between Key Stages. Nevertheless, in presenting a broad and balanced curriculum for religious education, the six themes provide the focal points for teaching and learning throughout the phases of schooling, and should be taught with increasing depth and sufficient breadth.

### iii. Experiences and Opportunities

A broad range of experiences and opportunities are identified for each key stage which are intended to enrich and broaden pupils' learning in Religious Education.

#### **Planning Schemes of Work**

It is important to balance these three elements when planning schemes of work. At times planning will concentrate on the study of a particular religion whilst on other occasions an area of study or experience may be the key focus. Included in the agreed syllabus is a non-statutory Scheme of Work for Key Stages 1-3. This Scheme has been developed by Wolverhampton teachers and RE today and is the recommended programme of study.

The schemes of work have been developed on the assumption that reasonable curriculum time is provided for Religious Education. The expectation of the Wolverhampton Agreed Syllabus is for a minimum of 5% of curriculum time to be devoted to Religious Education. This means

- 36 hours per year in key stage 1 (50 minutes per week)
- 45 hours per year in key stages 2 and 3 (1 hour 15 minutes per week)

#### **Key Stage 4: (Ages 14 – 19)**

For 14-19, the agreed syllabus sets out an entitlement for all students to study religious education and to have their learning accredited. It follows the format used in the revised KS4 curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Changes to the key stage 4 curriculum: guidance for implementation from September 2004 (published by QCA)