

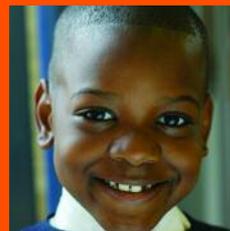
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Newham Agreed Syllabus  
for Religious Education

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# Exploring beliefs, celebrating diversity

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# foreword

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You don't have to go far in Newham before you come across a Mosque, Church, Temple or Gurdwara. The abundance of cultures and faiths, the rich tapestry of our lives can be for all of us a bewildering, threatening, exciting and challenging experience. Yet this is our community. How do we make sense of our lives within one of the most diverse places in the planet?

'Exploring Beliefs, Celebrating Diversity' is an invitation to discover something about the other - other people's faith or others who question faith and to discover new worlds of understanding. It is an invitation to journey alongside another and find out about their culture or belief. I believe that this exchange can be an enriching experience as we start to share and celebrate our differences and learn to better understand each other.

Britain has seen an increase in religious and ethnic diversity. RE professionals agree that the subject provides a vital opportunity for pupils to gain an understanding of and a respect for cultures, beliefs and customs differing from their own. This ultimately helps to nurture the virtues of tolerance and respect and thus prevents some of the tensions that can arise when prejudice is left unchecked. RE is a crucial first step in the process of developing respect, understanding, tolerance and empathy between different community groups.

I commend this document to you on behalf of the Agreed Syllabus Conference. This Agreed Syllabus is a document to be used and not left in some dusty file. It has been designed by teachers for teachers as they journey with the children to explore the rich diversity of their life in Newham.

It is a new document which embraces six principles:

- raising the expectation of pupils' achievement in RE
- providing flexibility within a clear framework for schools to develop RE within their own context
- providing an effective methodology for best practice in teaching and learning in RE
- ensuring continuity and progression in pupils' learning in RE
- ensuring a broad, balanced study of a range of world religions and world views
- reflecting the rich diversity of the Newham and local communities

The Agreed Syllabus Conference is extremely grateful to all the teachers who helped mould this document that will harness our children's enthusiasm for the subject and be a building block for harmony in the future.

Finally, this new Agreed Syllabus reminds me of the following words,

'We are pilgrims on a journey.  
We are travellers on the road;  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load'

'Exploring Beliefs, Celebrating Diversity' is here to help the children of Newham as they make their own journey of discovery.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Quintin Peppiatt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Revd. Quintin Peppiatt

Chair of Newham Agreed Syllabus Conference and Executive Member for Children and Young People's Service

September 2011

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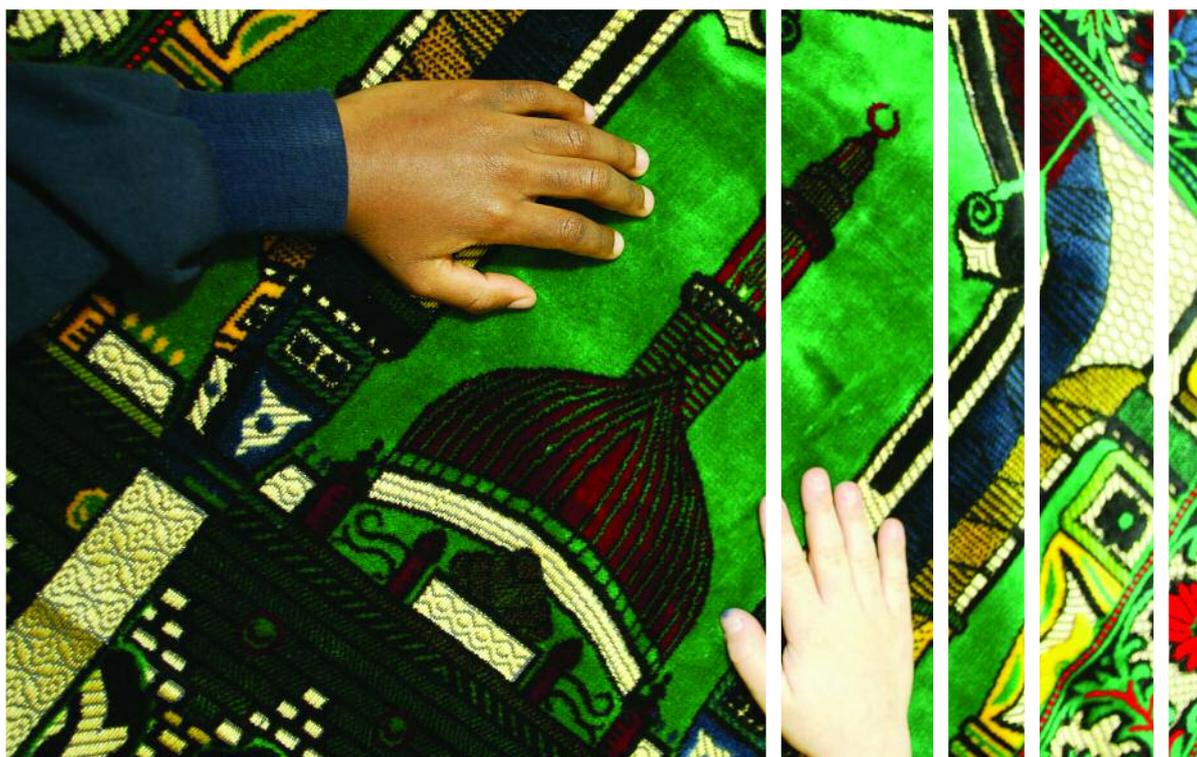
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# Section 1

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What is an  
agreed syllabus?



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## A brief historical comment

- 1.1 During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a system of schooling for the population as a whole was gradually created in England and Wales. Christian bodies set up and ran many schools; education reflected society at this time when most people identified in some way with the Christian religion. Christian belief and practice – including daily worship and Bible reading- featured in the everyday life of schools.
- 1.2 At the beginning of the twentieth century, some education authorities decided to seek agreement amongst the various Christian groups about what material should be covered in ‘religious instruction’ (as it was usually called then). This was the birth of the ‘agreed syllabus’.
- 1.3 The 1944 Education Act required that ‘religious instruction’ should form part of the curriculum, and that each school day should begin with an act of collective worship. In making these requirements, the legislators were simply confirming what was already common practice in schools. This Act, however, also required each local education authority (LEA) to draw up an agreed syllabus for religious education (RE).
- 1.4 Since 1944, there have been significant changes in both the format and content of agreed syllabuses. These have been due to, for example:
  - an evolving understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education;
  - shifts in general educational thought and strategies for teaching; and
  - changes in the social, ethnic and religious make-up of local and national communities.

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## Agreed syllabuses today

- 1.5 An agreed syllabus for religious education sets out what all schools in a local authority (LA) – with the exception of those which are voluntary aided – should include in their RE programme. An agreed syllabus will also contain statements about the role of RE within the curriculum.
- 1.6 The text of an agreed syllabus is ‘agreed’ by an ‘agreed syllabus conference’ which includes representatives of the various educational, religious and political groupings found in its local authority. For the membership of the agreed syllabus conference that agreed this document, see appendix F. This agreed syllabus has been validated by Newham as a Local Authority to be followed in all its schools.
- 1.7 The 1988 Education Reform Act made it a requirement that any new agreed syllabus published after that date should ‘reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain’. This requirement was confirmed by the Education Acts of 1996 and 1998.

- 1.8 These Acts also made it a requirement that:
- an agreed syllabus should be reviewed within five years of its publication;
  - every LA should set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) in order to keep a watching brief on RE and collective worship in its LA. This responsibility includes looking at how schools are implementing the local agreed syllabus and the support that the LA provides in enabling them to do this.
- 1.9 For a number of reasons, including the fact that its programme is decided locally, RE currently is not part of the National Curriculum. However, RE together with the subjects of the National Curriculum, are sometimes referred to as the ‘basic curriculum’ because of their statutory nature.

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### The local and the national

- 1.10 In 2004, following widespread consultation, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) published a non-statutory National Framework for RE with the aim of providing principles and guidance for LAs in drawing up their own agreed syllabuses. This national framework has been consulted in revising the Newham agreed syllabus.
- 1.11 In addition to the non-statutory National Framework, there is a growing body of support material, schemes of work and resources, much of it digital, available to schools. Such material, however, has the status of guidance in that the local agreed syllabus is the statutory requirement for teaching RE in schools.

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### Agreed syllabuses in Newham

- 1.12 The first agreed syllabus for Newham was published in 1996. An agreed syllabus called ‘Exploring Beliefs, Celebrating difference’, was published in 2003. This current 2010 revision takes account of the many changes that have occurred since that time.
- 1.13 This new revision of the Newham agreed syllabus is based on the approach to RE outlined in its predecessors. It is ‘new’ in that, building on the experience of the last five years, it:
- draws on key documents that have been issued since 2003, including the non-statutory National Framework for RE (see 1.10 above) and *Every Child Matters* (2003+);
  - follows the advice of the non-statutory National Framework that secular philosophies and world-views should be part of the scope of RE programmes;
  - follows the advice of the non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education where it states that 50% of time in RE should be in the study of Christianity; and
  - incorporates clear strategies for progression in learning and identifies levels of progress.

In the 2001 Census, 47% of the population said they were Christian, 24% Muslim and 7% Hindu, with the rest of the population 22% members of other faith groups or none.

*Full 2001 Census data figures for Newham are shown below and are taken from the Office for National Statistics 2001 Census-data census table KS07:*

Christian	114,247	46.8%
Muslim	59,293	24.3%
None	21,978	9.0%
Non-stated	21,838	9.0%
Hindu	16,901	6.9%
Sikh	6,897	2.8%
Buddhist	1,592	0.7%
Other	664	0.3%
Jewish	481	0.2%

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### Using the agreed syllabus.-

- 1.14 The agreed syllabus provides a single point of reference encompassing statutory requirements, good practice and recommendations. In addition, it should be used by:
- headteachers and governing bodies in ensuring adequate provision for RE;
  - subject leaders in drawing up their school's scheme of work and associated documentation;
  - headteachers and subject leaders in ensuring progression in pupils' learning;
  - headteachers and subject leaders who wish to check on statutory requirements;
  - teachers who wish to develop their understanding of the context of teaching and learning in RE;
  - link governors who have a remit for RE development;
  - faith leaders when looking to understand the nature and content of RE within Newham schools;
  - parents who wish to learn more about the nature and content of RE in schools:  
and
  - LA advisory staff.

# Section 2

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What is the contribution of RE to education and society?



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## RE's contribution to education

- 2.1 Well-taught RE makes a significant contribution to the education of children and young people.
- 2.2 The Newham agreed syllabus expresses this through the following aim:  
**The aim of religious education is to promote the spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cultural and intellectual development of pupils and of society by encouraging an exploration of and response to those aspects of religion and human experience which raise fundamental questions of belief and value.**
- 2.3 In essence, then, RE consists of **learning about** and **learning from religion and human experience** in such a way that it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cultural and intellectual development.
- 2.4 The aim of the syllabus is clear in setting out RE as an educational activity. In a diverse community such as Newham, in which there are many religious stances, and stances about religion, this aim should be grounded in the following principles:  
**RE should...**
- encourage pupils to have confidence in their own growing sense of identity as well as valuing and respecting diversity in others;
  - help pupils in their search for meaning and purpose in life;
  - neither promote nor undermine any particular religious, spiritual or secular stance; and
  - be accessible to pupils and teachers of any religious stance or none.
  - encourage pupils to be confident and able safely to express their views and opinions.
- 2.5 This agreed syllabus encourages schools to develop an approach to RE which, in common with all other aspects of school life, is inclusive and promotes the five outcomes associated with the national document *Every Child Matters that a child has an entitlement to*;
- be healthy
  - stay safe
  - enjoy and achieve
  - make a positive contribution
  - achieve economic well-being

Please click on hyperlink below which will connect you to an online pdf outlining how RE can contribute to these outcomes. (see [qca.org.uk](http://qca.org.uk))

[http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/uploads/Every%20Child%20Matters\\_tcm8-15950.pdf](http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/uploads/Every%20Child%20Matters_tcm8-15950.pdf)

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## RE's contribution in Newham to schools promoting community cohesion

“A cohesive community is a community that has naturally many cross-links, where people from different race, age, background, feel free and happy to mix together in housing, in education, in leisure facilities.” Rodney Green 2008

“By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.” Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, speaking in Parliament on 2 November 2006

2.6 Potentially, RE has a significant contribution to make to the community cohesion agenda by, for example:

- providing a model for reflection, engagement and encounter for life-long learning;
- providing opportunities to explore issues of identity and belonging in Newham (the yearly ‘visit a place of worship’ week gives pupils first-hand opportunities to meet a wide range of people from different faiths and through running a Junior and Student SACRE in Newham where students of different faiths and secular world views come together to discuss and seek to understand moral and ethical subjects);
- encouraging the investigation of a range of lifestyles and ways of thinking in order to understand themselves and others better;
- encouraging reflection on their own and others’ beliefs, values and lifestyles and, with sensitivity, to develop understanding of beliefs;
- providing opportunities for the challenge of unhelpful stereotypes and the promotion of key values such as ‘respect for all’;
- drawing schools and faith groups and individuals into mutually enriching encounters;
- fostering personal engagement with, and a sense of responsibility for, the development of a diverse, understanding and equitable society;
- encouraging a fascination in how people respond to probing questions which affect the way they approach and shape their lives; and
- fostering appreciation of the accumulated wisdom of centuries of human experience as distilled in religious beliefs, practices and texts.

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## Home, parents and families, community and the right of withdrawal

2.7 The inclusion of RE in school contributes to a broad and balanced education. The ‘success’ of RE is not judged in terms of whether a particular child or young person maintains or develops a particular religious, spiritual or secular outlook. In Newham there is a special relationship between families, the home and school which RE seeks to nurture.

- 2.8 It is both the choice and responsibility of the home and the faith communities to *nurture* children into particular religious, spiritual or secular traditions. The role of RE in schools is complementary to their religious and secular faith background.
- 2.9 Because of its broad educational aim, it is hoped that parents and carers will support the school in its religious education work. They might do this, for example, by:
- taking an interest in how their child is progressing in RE;
  - contributing their own ideas, insights and experiences;
  - helping their child to find good sources of information (including people and places); and
  - enjoying the experience of learning alongside their child.
- 2.10 Parents have the statutory right to withdraw their children from RE and teachers in general have a right not to teach the subject. It cannot be stated too strongly, however, that this agreed syllabus has been constructed in the hope that parents will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal, and will be prepared to explore with the school ways in which their child can receive their RE education. It is hoped that teachers, too, will recognise the educational validity of RE and will feel drawn to meet its professional challenges (see 2.3).
- 2.11 All schools have a requirement to publish within their school prospectus and on their school website their policy concerning Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW). It is helpful for school to state that they do not support selective withdrawal from RE and CW within their policy statement.

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## RE, collective worship and assemblies

- 2.12 Collective worship and assembly in school can:
- promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
  - explore values and experiences which contribute to a school's RE programme; and
  - acknowledge, explore and celebrate the diverse nature of the school as well as local, national and international communities.
- 2.13 Though RE and collective worship are linked historically (see 1.3), and Newham SACRE advises the LA on both aspects of school life (see 1.8), the stance taken in this agreed syllabus is that:
- it is important to regard RE and collective worship as separate aspects of school provision;
  - care should be taken not to confuse legislative requirements relating to RE with those relating to collective worship; (<http://www.cpd.newham.gov.uk/advisory/re.htm>) and
  - it should not be assumed that a particular teacher's responsibility for RE necessarily includes responsibility for collective worship: this should be a matter for consultation and negotiation.

# Section 3

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How does religious education promote personal development?



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## RE and the development of pupils

- 3.1 The aim of RE as stated in this agreed syllabus (see 2.2) links RE with six forms of development: spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional and intellectual.
- 3.2 RE has a key role in promoting pupils' **spiritual development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:
- how they relate to themselves, to others, to the world around them and, for some, to God;
  - paradox, mystery and the deepest questions of life such as 'Why are we here?', 'Why do people die?' and 'Why is there so much suffering in the world?';
  - the lives of individuals and groups who have inspired others;
  - what different religious, spiritual and secular traditions teach about the meaning and purpose of life; and
  - values such as justice, honesty and truth.
- 3.3 RE has a key role in promoting pupils' **moral development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:
- personal issues and values like 'Why should I tell the truth?', and 'How can I be good?'
  - a range of ethical and moral issues;
  - the role of ethical rules and codes within communities and society; and
  - what different religious, spiritual and secular traditions teach about right and wrong.
- 3.4 RE has a key role in promoting pupils' **social development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:
- their own growing sense of identity, place in society and different experiences of community, eg family, school, national, religious;
  - their experience of working in diverse groups and social settings;
  - a range of social issues relating to the quality of life in contemporary society;
  - how religious teachings have shaped and influenced different communities and societies;
  - commonly shared experiences that communities seek to celebrate and mark, eg rites of passage;
  - how religious, spiritual and secular traditions lead to particular actions and concerns; and
  - how religion has inspired individuals with a sense of social responsibility that has generated great social change historically.
- 3.5 RE has a key role in promoting pupils' **cultural development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:
- the place of culture and tradition in their own and others' lives;
  - the relationship between culture and religion, and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practice;

- the ways in which those from different cultures have expressed themselves through the creative and expressive arts; and
- the many ways in which meaning, belief and value can be expressed and communicated.

3.6 RE has a key role in promoting pupils' **emotional development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration and response to, for example:

- the relationship between our emotions and ability to learn;
- the skills that underpin our roles as effective communicators;
- the many ways in which we use empathy to understand the feelings and opinions of others;
- the way we can engage pupils in motivating themselves and see a purpose in what they are doing; and
- developing the way in which positive relationships can occur.

3.7 RE has a key role in promoting pupils' **intellectual development** by fostering skills to enable pupils to, for example:

- identify issues that warrant philosophical or ethical enquiry;
- reflect on and communicate their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, values and aspirations;
- engage in sustained discussion of others' viewpoints, analysing and critically evaluating ideas, weighing up issues of right and wrong, interpreting and applying symbolism;
- investigate and explain the place and importance of religious and secular beliefs and teachings in the lives of individuals, groups and societies; and
- realise that there are different understandings and measures of reality, and to appreciate that there are non-empirical truths.

Many of these aspects clearly overlap with Citizenship and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), and schools are encouraged to make use of RE to add to the cross-curricular dimension of different areas of learning within the primary and secondary curriculum.

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## RE and inclusion

3.8 The Newham Agreed Syllabus for RE allows for balance in teaching about different faiths, and between learning about religions and learning from them. It provides pupils with opportunities to explore their own thinking and beliefs, relating those to what they learn about a range of religious perspectives, and reflecting on their learning. Religious education is open to female and male pupils, believers of principal religious traditions, minority faiths, ethnic, racial or cultural groups, those who are unsure and those who have no faith. Belief on the part of pupils is in no way assumed by the syllabus, nor are pupils penalised if they have no faith. RE is also open to pupils with disabilities, special educational needs, higher and lower achievers and to gifted and talented pupils.

- 3.9 Religious education makes a significant contribution to inclusion, particularly in its focus on promoting respect for all. Effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating RE curriculum that:
- builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences that pupils bring; and
  - meets all pupils' learning needs including those with learning difficulties, those who are gifted and talented, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils from all religious and secular communities and pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.
- 3.10 Access to RE can be encouraged by the full range of teaching strategies, including:
- introducing topics using pictures and other visual stimuli;
  - varying activities to improve concentration;
  - using group and paired work as well as individual tasks;
  - using aids to literacy, such as writing frames and AfL strategies;
  - developing the use of ICT within RE; and
  - differentiating resources and tasks.

These approaches should also benefit all pupils, not just those with special needs.

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## RE and Special Educational Needs

- 3.11 This guidance is based upon work prepared for QCDA to support LAs, SACREs, schools and others. It is designed to stimulate, support and promote best practice and high standards of achievement in RE for all pupils in Newham schools. It focuses on teaching and learning in RE among pupils with a range of special educational needs

### 1. Introduction

RE can make a powerful contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs. They can develop understanding of religious and life issues through discussion, use of artefacts and the creative arts which cannot always be reflected in their written work. What follows is guidance on how RE may be made more accessible for such pupils.

### 2. Principles for RE and pupils with special educational needs

- Valuing the importance of RE for pupils with special needs.

RE is part of the core curriculum and is a positive entitlement for all pupils and should be taught with the same educational purposes, validity and integrity to all. In special schools the law requires the Agreed Syllabus to be taught 'as far as is practicable', and quality teaching will tailor the syllabus carefully to the special needs of all pupils. The positive effect may be that in RE pupils with difficulties, problems or tragedies find the most space to explore and seek to resolve their own conflicts.

- Using pupils' experience of difficulty to develop their capacity to understand searching themes in RE.

There are areas in which pupils with special educational needs may show particular strengths. A pupil's experience of difficulties or suffering could lead to a heightened awareness of searching themes in RE. Sometimes small group work with pupils with special needs is particularly important in making space for reflection on experience and meaning.

- Building on pupils' interest in people and what they do.

Some pupils with special educational needs show more awareness of people's feelings and a curiosity about what people do. This can lead to an interest in the effect of religious belief on people and interest in how individual religious people lead their lives. This may involve pupils working on AT 2 – learning from religion (human experience) in which pupils consider things for themselves.

- Valuing pupils' use of religious language.

Some pupils with special needs may show a lack of inhibitions in using religious and spiritual language, such as 'soul', 'heart' and 'spirit'. This can lead them into a spiritual perception of religion and human experience and an engagement with the symbolic.

- Being sensitive to the variety of pupils' understanding of religious concepts.

It is difficult to generalise about the appropriateness of introducing certain religious concepts to pupils with special needs owing to the wide range of their needs. Teachers need to be sensitive in judging the appropriateness of different material on, for example, miracles and healing, which may be perceived differently by pupils with different disabilities. RE seeks to develop sensitive and respectful attitudes, and these can be exemplified by teaching which is sensitive and respectful.

- Allowing pupils to engage with explicit religious material.

RE, which lets the emotion and power of explicit religious materials loose in the classroom and welcomes personal responses, can provide powerful opportunities for spiritual development for pupils with a variety of special educational needs. An over-emphasis on seeing special needs pupils as needing a 'small step' approach can block the development of a vital and dynamic form of RE. Some pupils may respond to the 'burning core' of questions that engage the imagination and often lead from the spiritual into 'explicit RE.'

- Promoting pupils' use of the arts as a way of expressing themselves.

Pupils with special educational needs may have an enjoyment and engagement with art, music, dance and drama. Using these forms of expression can be very effective with special needs pupils.

- Recognising pupils' intuitive responses to religious issues.

Pupils with special educational needs may show a more intuitive approach to religion and human experience and this may be expressed through questions, insights or gestures. These intuitive moments can display leaps of understanding which are at odds with their understanding of other concepts. Some pupils with special educational needs will show a willingness to share a spiritual response. These achievements can be celebrated and noted by the teacher, but often no written product of achievement exists.

- Valuing pupils' achievement through creative forms of assessment and recording.

These forms need to be developed in order to reflect moments of intuition, insight and response. A Wall of Wisdom, where pupils' deep comments and questions about religion and human experience are written can be displayed in class, or a photographic or video record of significant events can be kept, or a running record in the teachers' notes.

### 3. Educational contexts

The principles set out above apply to pupils with special educational needs in all settings. These include SEN pupils in mainstream schools, units attached to mainstream schools, PRUs, hospital schools and special schools. Pupils have a wide range of backgrounds and needs, including learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In RE these may be accentuated by differences of home and faith backgrounds. It is important to recognise that all pupils can achieve in RE, and teachers have the task of unlocking that potential and facilitating that achievement.

### 4. Differentiation in Religious Education

The 1996 Education Act provides for an entitlement for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum. A wide range of ability and experiences exists within any group of pupils. Teachers need to be able to provide equal opportunities in learning through a flexible approach and skills which differentiate teaching and learning, matching the challenge of RE work to individual learners' needs.

Differentiation within RE involves meeting the individual needs of pupils in ways that are relevant to their life experiences. Successful differentiation is dependent on planning, teaching and learning methods and assessment. This requires.

- an understanding by teachers of the ways in which pupils learn;
- matching work to pupils' previous experience;
- an understanding of factors which may hinder or prevent pupils learning;
- careful analysis of the knowledge and skills which comprise a particular learning task;
- structured teaching and learning which will help pupils to achieve and to demonstrate their learning outcomes;
- providing imaginative learning experiences which arouse and sustain pupils' interest; and
- supporting the learning which takes place in RE by what is taught in other curriculum areas.

Differentiation strives to help all pupils to learn together through providing a variety of tasks at any one time. Pupils can also be given some choice over what and how they learn so their learning reflects their interests and needs.

The ethos of a school and the work of individual teachers is very influential in RE. A positive ethos facilitates differentiated teaching through excellence in relationships based on mutual respect. Two factors make an important contribution:

- attitudes to learning – a philosophy which encourages purposeful learning and celebrates effort alongside success, as well as helping pupils take responsibility for their own engagement in tasks;
- a safe, stimulating environment which recognises individual needs of pupils, sets appropriate challenges and builds on a positive, praising classroom culture.

## 5. Planning

Once schools are familiar with the requirements of the Newham Agreed Syllabus and have chosen which religions are to be studied in which Key Stage, long, medium and short term planning can be put in place which includes teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs. Special schools have the flexibility to modify the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus to meet their pupils' needs, such as selecting materials from an earlier key stage or by planning to focus on just two religions.

The development of pupils' individual education programmes (IEPs) allows for RE to be provided according to pupils' needs, such as focusing on communication, social, sensory or other skills to which RE can make a significant contribution. Some pupils may need additional experiences to consolidate or extend their understanding of particular concepts, so timing needs to be flexible enough to allow for this. Where teaching is good, the specific skills of reflection, expression and discernment will not be neglected.

Planning should provide for:

- the range of pupil ability in the group, with differentiated activities;
- the past and present experience of pupils;
- the family background of pupils;
- the individual needs of pupils, including their special educational needs; and
- a range of opportunities to assess progress and to report to parents.

## 6. Teaching and learning approaches for pupils with special educational needs

A wide variety of approaches can succeed, including the use of artefacts, video, visits and visitors, reflection, stilling and experiential activities, classroom assistants, the widest possible range of sensory and experiential approaches, and use of ICT including internet, CD Roms, a digital camera and scanner, big mac switches, concept key boards and overlays.

## 7. Recording pupils' achievement

Pupils with special educational needs want to be able to show their achievement. Teachers need to enable pupils to demonstrate statements of achievement and learning outcomes. For pupils who have greatest difficulty in learning this might be supported by using QCA's performance descriptions in religious education (P levels). Levels P4 to P8 refer to skills, knowledge and understanding in RE. Teachers can also make special use of the eight level scale. A particular level could be broken down into a number of smaller elements and steps to work on and celebrate achievements. These could include pupils' responses to:

- experiencing an activity;
- sharing an awareness of the activity;
- using the senses in different ways;
- exploring artefacts, experiences, stories, music or other stimulus materials; and
- participation in the activity.

The use of the eight level scale may provide an important tool in enabling teachers to:

- plan future work with objectives, tasks and learning experiences appropriate to pupils' ability and development;
- ensure continuity and progression to the next stage;
- set appropriate RE targets for pupils' personal IEPs; and
- recognise pupils' levels of engagement and response.

## 8. Accreditation of RE

The National Qualifications framework provides for entry level qualifications to accredit the achievement of students at 16 whose achievement is below that of GCSE. Entry level qualifications in RE/RS are available from several awarding bodies. These accreditation routes award grades of pass, merit and distinction roughly equivalent to National Curriculum levels 1, 2 and 3. These qualifications may allow appropriate forms of assessments for pupils with special needs. Local collaboration between special schools and other schools can provide support for the use of such accreditation.

### Pupils in special schools

- 3.12 The legislative requirement is that every special school pupil, unless withdrawn by parents, will receive RE as far as is practicable. Practicability is related to the special educational needs of the pupils and not, for example, to problems of staffing or premises.
- 3.13 In special schools, it is important that the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional and intellectual development of all children is addressed. The broad aim of RE should be seen to apply to pupils in special schools and units as much as to those in mainstream schools.



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## National Requirements

- 4.1 Legislation requires that RE is part of the school curriculum for all registered pupils.
- 4.2 Legislation requires that:
- in Community, Foundation or Voluntary schools without a religious character, RE is taught in accordance with the local agreed syllabus;
  - Academies must provide RE in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses and have regard to the requirements of the non-statutory National Framework for RE (QCA, 2004) or, where the academy is designated as a school with a religious character, in accordance with the tenets of the specified religion or religious denomination (Academies Funding Agreement, DCSF, October 2006, pp.10-11);
  - for Foundation and Voluntary Controlled schools with a religious character, RE must be taught according to the agreed syllabus unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school; and
  - in Voluntary Aided schools RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed.
- 4.3 RE must be included in the curriculum for all registered pupils, including all pupils in reception classes and sixth form but excluding:
- pupils in nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools;
  - any person aged nineteen or above for whom further education is being provided at school; and
  - any person over compulsory school age who is receiving part-time education.
- 4.4 Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE. (See 2.13)
- 4.5 A school prospectus must include details of:
- the RE provided; and
  - the parents' right to withdraw their child from RE.
- 4.6 Pupils progress in RE should be reported to parents according to current yearly requirements.
- 4.7 In all schools, the policy for teaching RE is the responsibility of the governing body and, as with all other curriculum subjects, the delivery is the responsibility of the teachers lead by the headteacher.

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## Local Requirements

- 4.8 In order for the LA and SACRE monitor the quality of RE provision in non-faith schools, Newham has set up a programme of review and monitoring so that all primary and secondary schools evaluate each year how they are complying with the Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus. This process includes the head teacher, RE Co-ordinator/Head of Department and the school's governing body.

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## Curriculum Time for Religious Education

- 4.9 This agreed syllabus is constructed to follow the government advice on time allocation for religious education in the QCA guidance paper on using the framework to develop an agreed syllabus for RE, QCA/08/3477, January 2008. In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus, the Agreed Syllabus Conference strongly recommends these minimum allocations of curriculum time for RE. This recommendation is further supported in 'Designing the Curriculum' (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, 2008).
- 4.10 It is recommended that:
- throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage RE should be a discernable element of the curriculum in keeping with the guidance offered in section 7 of this document;
  - in each of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, RE occupies about 5% of curriculum time. In more specific terms, following the recommendation of the Dearing Report (1997) this means 36 hours per year for Key Stage 1 (approximately 50 minutes a week); 45 hours per year for Key Stage 2, 3 (approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes a week); and
  - RE at Key Stage 4 should be a clearly identifiable element in the curriculum which either follows a publicly accredited course in religious education/studies or is made up of at least eight units of work (each unit being at least six hours in duration) in Year 10 and four in Year 11 as set out in section 11 in this document.
- 4.11 The Agreed Syllabus conference would also like to highlight:
- RE is a core subject of the curriculum for all pupils. The requirements of this Agreed Syllabus are not subject to the flexibility of the Foundation Subjects.;
  - Curriculum time for Religious Education is distinct from the time schools may spend on collective worship or school assembly. The times given above are for Religious Education;
  - There is clearly a common frontier between RE and such subjects as literacy, citizenship or PSHE. But the times given above are explicitly for the clearly identifiable teaching of Religious Education. Flexible delivery of RE curriculum time, through RE study days, or weekly themes is possible, and often leads to good standards; and
  - Any school in which head teachers and governors do not plan to allocate sufficient curriculum time for RE is unlikely to be able to enable pupils to achieve the standards set out in this syllabus.

- 4.12 In each school there should be a **teacher with lead responsibility for RE**. In a primary school, this would be a subject leader; in a secondary school, a head of department who is a subject specialist. The role of this teacher should:
- be clearly set out in a job description which is agreed, regularly reviewed and updated; and
  - include responsibility to review and monitor the quality and standard of RE in the school. See Appendix B of this Agreed Syllabus and support material for further guidance.
- 4.13 **RE Documentation** should include:
- a brief policy document, which includes key issues such as monitoring provision and pupil progress, assessment, reporting, dealing with pupils' questions and disclosures, and responding to parents'/carers' requests for withdrawal;
  - a scheme of work which, in accordance with the requirements and recommendations of the agreed syllabus, sets out the RE programme for each year group; and
  - links to the school's self evaluation process form and development plan.

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### What schools should consider

- 4.14 Further RE documentation might include:
- a specific action plan for RE (as a part of whole-school evaluation);
  - a portfolio of material which exemplifies and celebrates a range of learning experiences and standards in RE; and
  - support materials for teachers.
- 4.15 In drawing up their schemes of work and action plans, the following issues should be considered:
- the active engagement of pupils, including the quality of discussion;
  - access of all pupils (including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language);
  - the challenge of the work (particularly for higher attaining pupils and those designated as gifted or talented);
  - the use of ICT;
  - links with the local community (including the role of visits and visitors);
  - opportunities for personal, local, national and global issues and events of significance to be thought about; and
  - the image and status of RE in the school.

- 4.16 In a spirit of striving for improvement, schools seeking to develop RE might also consider the following:
- using the Newham monitoring and review of RE as a means of professional dialogue and identifying key areas for development;
  - the continuing professional development available to teachers (courses and referrals);
  - how good practice is shared and developed;
  - the adequacy and fairness of funding, in relation to other subjects of the curriculum;
  - the use which is made of local support such as their Advisor, Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), ASTs and Consultants;
  - the school's involvement with Visit a Place of Worship week and the competition for pupils work which runs out from the week itself;
  - the school involvement with Junior and student SACRE; and
  - the use of support from further afield such as material which is available on the Internet, non-statutory guidance which is offered by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and the publications and services of organisations like the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) [www.natre.org.uk](http://www.natre.org.uk), RE OnLine – [www.reonline.org.uk](http://www.reonline.org.uk).



# Section 5

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What is the nature and scope of RE?



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## Exploring and Responding

- 5.1 Good RE brings together the processes of **learning about** and **learning from** (see 2.2).
- 5.2 **The process of learning about:**
- focuses on those strands or aspects of religion and human experience that seek to understand beliefs, teaching and sources (strand A), practices and ways of life (strand B) and forms of expression (strand C) (see visual representation on page 18);
  - consists of more than information-gathering in that it includes identifying the underlying concepts and themes; and
  - enables pupils to engage with the material through developing a range of identifiable skills (see list 5.8 below).
- 5.3 **The process of learning from:**
- encourages pupils to make links between their learning about (of religion and human experience) and their own personal experiences through identity and belonging (strand D), meaning, purpose and truth (strand E) and values and commitments (strand F);
  - enables pupils to develop their thinking about their own and others' experiences so that they are enabled to develop in their thinking about their own experiences in life, as they compare their experiences with those of others;
  - encourages pupils to express their responses in a range of forms and styles (representational, symbolic etc); and
  - encourages pupils to be sensitive to a range of human responses that might differ from their own.
- 5.4 This 'world' of RE is shown pictorially on page 18.
- 5.5 Good RE enables pupils to develop an understanding of concepts and themes that underpin religion and human experience.

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## Concepts, themes and skills

- 5.6 **General concepts and themes** that underpin religion and human experience include:
- |               |              |         |
|---------------|--------------|---------|
| • Authority   | • Justice    | • Faith |
| • Believing   | • Prayer     | • Hope  |
| • Belonging   | • Revelation |         |
| • Celebration | • Ritual     |         |
| • Charity     | • Sacredness |         |
| • Commitment  | • Symbolism  |         |
| • Duty        | • Worship    |         |
| • God         | • Diversity  |         |
| • Identity    | • Mediation  |         |

5.7 **Specific concepts and themes** linked to specific religious traditions include:

- *unity* (Baha'i)
- *mitzvah/religious duty* (Jewish)
- *dukkha/unsatisfactoriness* (Buddhist)
- *tawhid/Oneness* (Muslim)
- *Incarnation*; (Christian)
- *guru/spiritual leader* (Sikh)
- *avatar/incarnation of Vishnu* (Hindu)
- *nature* (pagan)
- *human responsibility* (Humanist)
- *purity* (Zoroastrian)

5.8 The development of **skills** is crucial to learning in RE. They also impact on life-long learning in that, without them, pupils will not approach religion and human experience in an informed and enquiring spirit. Religious Education provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **Communication** through developing a broad and accurate religious vocabulary, reading and responding to a range of written and spoken language (including sacred texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy and worship), communicating ideas using the creative and expressive arts, talking and writing with understanding and insight about religious and other beliefs and values, reflecting critically on ultimate questions of life, using reasoned arguments;
- **Application of number** through calendrical reckoning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting data involving graphs, charts and statistical analysis;
- **Information technology** through using CD ROMs and the internet selectively, researching information about religion and beliefs, teaching and practices, using email to communicate and analyse information with people of differing beliefs and cultures, using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present data relevant to the study of religious education;
- **Working with others** through sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices, collaborating with each other and developing respect and sensitivity;
- **Improving own learning** and performance through setting targets as part of religious education development, reviewing their achievements and identifying ways to improve their work; and
- **Problem solving** through recognising key issues to do with religious belief, practice and expression, interpreting and explaining findings and making personal decisions on religious issues, ethical dilemmas and priorities in life.

5.9 The skills cited above are usually developed in relation to the key concepts that underlie religion and human experience. For example:

- At the early years foundation stage, pupils will retell (communication skill) a story about good winning over evil (concept);
- At Key stage 1, pupils will recognise a symbolic object (communication skill) and be able to talk about how it is used symbolically (concept);
- at Key Stage 2, pupils might investigate (skills of investigation and interpretation) Hindu understanding of God (concept) and its impact on Hindu worship (concept); and
- at Key Stage 3, pupils might compare and contrast (skill) the communities (concept), to which they and others belong, and the impact on their lives (skill of interpretation).

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## The attitudes and qualities that good RE teaching should foster

- 5.10 Successful learning in RE requires a learning environment that encourages in both teachers and pupils:
- self-awareness
  - curiosity
  - respect for all
  - sensitivity towards and understanding of others
  - open-mindedness
  - trust
  - community
  - appreciation and wonder
- 5.11 Such attitudes and qualities will be expressed in a range of ways including:
- an awareness of one's own developing views and perceptions;
  - a curiosity about the world of other people and an active interest in how they communicate their beliefs and values;
  - a willingness to respect the values and beliefs of others;
  - a willingness to take part in the human search for truth, purpose and meaning;
  - a fascination with how people respond to those deep questions which affect the way in which they approach and influence their lives; and
  - Life long learners. (see 12.11-14)

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## Bringing it all together

- 5.12 On the following pages there are two diagrams that have been developed in Newham with teacher consultation. These will be useful supports in order in communicating the agreed syllabus to various audiences through:
- a 'Celebrating Diversity: the area' diagram showing the various 'areas' of RE;
  - a diagram showing how exploration and response + attitudes + concepts + skills 'fit together in 'good' RE

## Six Key areas of learning in Religious Education

### Celebrating Diversity: THE AREA



1. Connecting symbols and actions with underlying beliefs and ideas eg:

- Symbols, artefacts and objects
- Art and design, music, dance and drama
- Special words and actions

2. Interpreting the sources of different beliefs or teaching and their impact on people's lives eg:

- Religious stories and sacred texts
- Inspirational figures
- Guidance for daily living

3. Exploring reasons for our own and others' puzzling questions relating to meaning, purpose and truth eg:

- Beliefs and questions about God, the world and others
- Individual and communal well-being
- Curiosity, awe, wonder and imagination

4. Understanding how our sense of identity is affected by, or expressed through, the diverse groups to which we belong eg:

- Personality and uniqueness
- Belonging to communities
- The impact and challenge of belonging

5. Making links between beliefs and values and how people think, feel and behave eg:

- Human rights, fairness and justice
- Relationship to the environment
- Living the 'good life'
- Materialism in the modern world

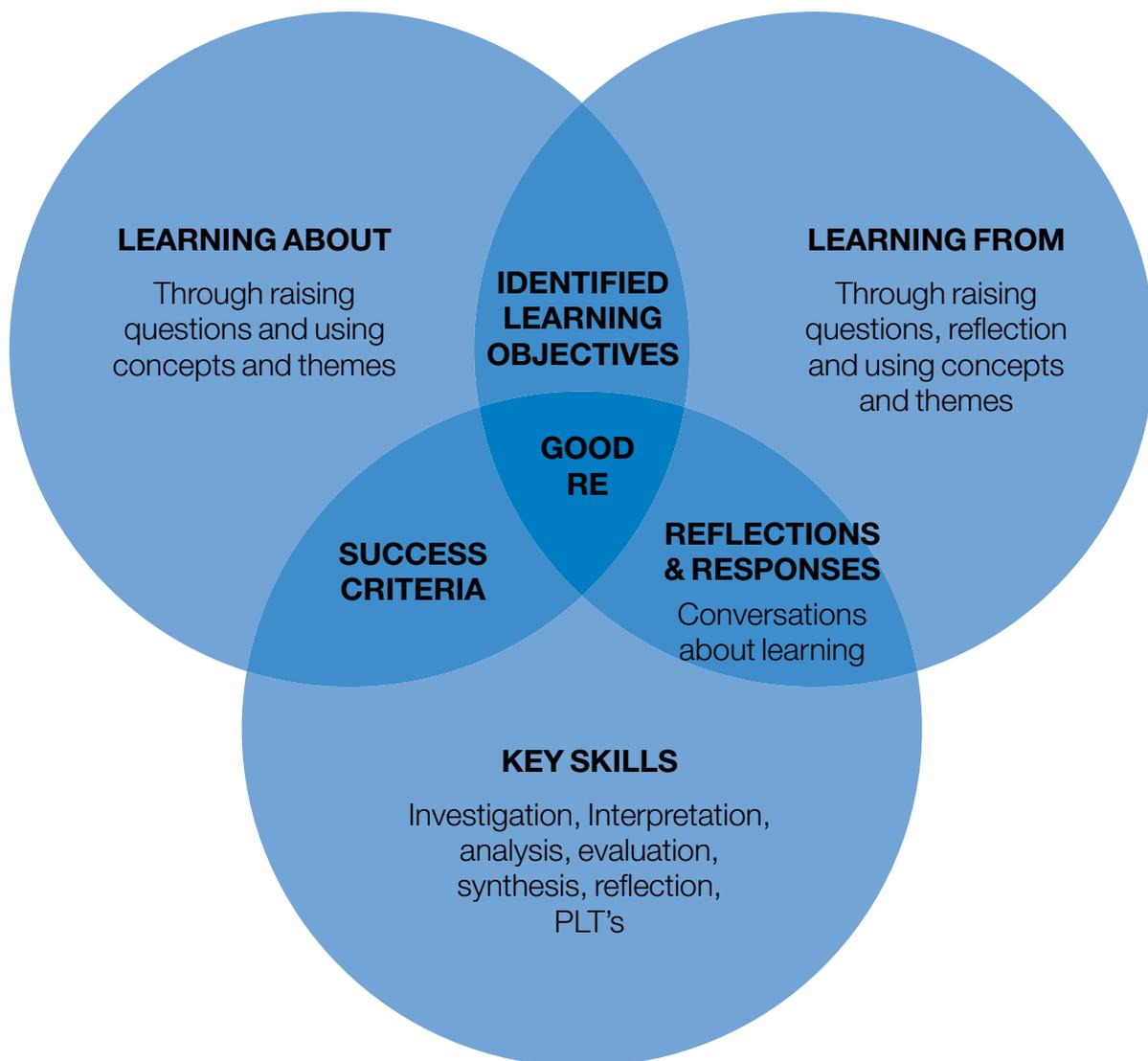
6. Explaining how people's lives are affected by tradition, custom and culture eg:

- Daily living and relating
- Special times and places
- Rules and customs of food and dress

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## What we are building in RE

**Good RE is where all this comes together**



# Section 6

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How is progress made in religious education?



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## A question of balance

- 6.1 In RE, it is important that pupils:
- make progress in both learning about and learning from;
  - are challenged by the activities and tasks in which they are engaged;
  - achieve standards which match with their expected capabilities; and
  - understand how they can improve further.
- 6.2 At the same time, it is important that teachers use both their personal flair and their professional judgement in order to balance:
- paced activity and focused reflection;
  - the measuring of progress and the acknowledgment that it is sometimes inappropriate to measure some of the most personal aspects of learning;
  - the planned and the spontaneous; and
  - analytical thinking and drawing from the imagination.
- 6.3 In seeking this balance, it is important to remember that some of the most exciting things that happen in RE (and in life) go unrecorded in any formal sense. In this spirit, teachers should ensure that enjoyment is not lost through an over-emphasis on recording achievement painstakingly.

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## A broad notion of achievement

- 6.4 This agreed syllabus has incorporated levels of attainment in keeping with national non-statutory guidance. It is important, however, that both teachers and pupils:
- avoid the assumption that only that which has been measured is of worth;
  - recognise that not every piece of work has to be assessed; and
  - retain a sense of enjoyment in both teaching and learning.
- 6.5 This agreed syllabus encourages a broad understanding of achievement/progress in RE. This is seen in the way that pupils:
- develop their capacity to use religious and philosophical language;
  - think reflectively about human experience;
  - express their thoughts and feeling using creativity in RE;
  - show interest and enthusiasm; and
  - show imagination, empathy and insight.

- 6.6 Therefore, teachers of RE are encouraged to adopt a manageable and flexible approach to recording pupils' attainment and achievement in RE. They might, for example, use some or all of the following methods:
- in the context of regular marking and feedback to pupils, setting some more formal assessment tasks for which levels are used;
  - highlighting and displaying particular examples of achievement, including pupils' statements and questions, for all to note and aspire to;
  - recording examples of attainment and achievement in its breadth and diversity; and
  - developing a shared language through which targets for future development can be expressed.

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### The role of levels of attainment in RE

- 6.7 Levels assist teachers in:
- planning schemes of work matched to the appropriate key stage;
  - identifying sharply-focused and challenging tasks;
  - assessing pupils' levels of attainment and progress;
  - explaining to pupils how they can make progress;
  - recording and reporting on pupils' attainment and progress; and
  - evaluating the impact of teaching on learning.

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### The levels used in this agreed syllabus

- 6.8 The levels of attainment used in this agreed syllabus have drawn on and adapted those produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the 'I can' levels on the Better RE website.
- 6.9 The levels relate to six strands or aspects of religion and human experience

#### Learning about

- beliefs, teachings and sources
- practices and ways of life
- forms of expression

#### Learning from

- identity and belonging
- meaning, purpose and truth
- values and commitment

- 6.10 There are eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty (levels 1 to 8) with a further level for exceptional performance. Teachers should judge which description best fits the pupil's performance. When doing so, each description should be considered alongside the descriptions for adjacent levels:
- at Key Stage 1: the great majority of pupils are expected to work within levels 1-3, the expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of the key stage being level 2;
  - at Key Stage 2: the great majority of pupils are expected to work within levels 2-5, the expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of the key stage being level 4;
  - at Key Stage 3: the great majority of pupils are expected to work within levels 3-7, the expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of the key stage being level 5/6;
  - at Key Stage 4: study leading to national qualifications (such as GCSE courses), will include assessment arrangements. School-designed work should require pupils to work at levels appropriate to their age and capability;
  - post-16: study leading to national qualifications (such as GCE courses) will include assessment arrangements. School-designed work should require pupils to work at levels appropriate to their age and capability.
- 6.11 The levels of attainment are presented in a familiar grid format in this agreed syllabus.
- 6.12 In some schools, there will be some pupils whose attainment is below that of level one. For these pupils, P scales can be used as a source of reference. (see appendix A)



# Section 7

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## Religious education at the Early Years Foundation Stage (ages 3 to 5)



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## Statutory requirements

- 7.1 RE is a statutory requirement for children in reception classes (see 4.3). Nevertheless, it is recommended that RE should be a discernable element in the experience of children in both nursery and reception classes.

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## What is distinctive about the Early Years Foundation Stage?

- 7.2 Young children experience and respond to the world around them with all their senses. During the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the provision of a wide variety of learning experiences and interaction with adults and other children helps them to recognise the shape and pattern of this world. These elements are reflected in the Early Learning goals, particularly:
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
  - Knowledge and Understanding of the World;
  - Communication, Language and Literacy; and
  - Creative Development (linked with physical Development).
- 7.3 Children then begin to create for themselves an image or map of the world, often very personal to them, to which they can give expression through their play, their conversation and their early attempts at representational drawing, painting and model-making. In this way they demonstrate their growing understanding of how the wider world relates to themselves.
- 7.4 In the context of RE, a variety of practical experiences and stories will enable children to become familiar with relevant concepts and skills and to learn to articulate their understanding, as they become familiar with stories from a range of cultural and religious traditions, encouraging comments / discussions.
- 7.5 The experiences offered will involve children in a voyage of self-discovery in the course of which they will become aware of the essential contrast between self and what is beyond self. Issues relating to identity and relationships will need to be addressed.
- 7.6 Teachers and other adults working in the EYFS will need to take account of the fact that children enter school at varying points between the ages of three and five. Not all children will therefore have the same learning experience in every aspect of RE. They will also bring with them a variety of home and other experiences.

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## What experiences should children encounter?

- 7.7 Part of the significance of RE in the EYFS is that it provides a developing structure for understanding habits, religious and secular customs and rituals, and the ways in which these influence likes and dislikes, preferences and individual choices.
- 7.8 In order to promote effective development of their understanding of the relationship between religions and human experience, children should have opportunities to:
- **share religious and culturally significant events**  
eg Easter, Christmas, Divali, Sukkoth, Guru Nanak's birthday, Harvest, end of year performances, birthdays, EID, Chinese new year, births and bereavement
  - **draw links between shared events in school and their own experiences at home and in the community, focusing on common elements**  
eg getting ready for special events, visits, use of special food, clothing, objects, music;
  - **participate in conversation and play, including role play, some of which will encourage them to raise questions about meaning, explore similarities and differences, and begin to be aware of cultural and religious practices**  
eg home corner set up with a religious or cultural theme (with appropriate clothing, food, utensils, artefacts and decorations); Setting up classroom as a culture / R.E. corner.
  - **examine and explore a variety of artefacts of religious, cultural and secular significance**  
eg things people wear, Jewish seder plate, Christian nativity figures, bells (from various traditions), prayer mat (Muslim tradition), Diva lamps (Hindu tradition), bangles(Sikh tradition), R.E. corner
  - **listen and respond to a variety of faith-associated stories at least once, so that they become familiar as stories**  
eg The Christmas story (Christian tradition), Rama and Sita (Hindu tradition), Noah's Ark (Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions), a story about Guru Nanak (Sikh Tradition), Samara's Eid (Muslim tradition), R.E. interactive book (ICT), Quaran Kids stories.
  - **undertake practical activities which enable them to develop their growing understanding of religious language and pictorial representations (eg symbols, images), using a variety of cross-curricular approaches and ICT**  
eg making puppets, creating rangoli patterns (Indian traditions), making models or painting to illustrate a story, writing about a special event, cooking, talking with adults Espresso, websites for virtual tours.
  - **use special terms, including religious ones, when it is helpful and appropriate to do so**  
eg 'belief', 'community', 'God', 'prayer', 'celebration', 'symbol', 'love', 'family', 'religion';
- 7.9 Over the EYFS, material should be drawn where possible from significant human experiences (including the children's own) as well as from Christian and other relevant religious and cultural traditions, especially those which reflect the family backgrounds of children and adults in the class.

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## What should children gain from these experiences?

- 7.10 Planning should encourage children to make the connection between practical experiences and underlying concepts and themes ('growth', 'family', 'celebration'). This happens at different points during the EYFS, and children of different ages will relate more readily to some aspects of the suggested RE activities than to others. Nursery children will usually engage in practical activities involving a range of sensory experiences and hear and begin to respond to stories. In building on this, reception children should be developing the ability to understand and share key experiences in their own and others' lives in terms appropriate to their stage of development.
- 7.11 The RE-related activities suggested in this agreed syllabus (and developed in support material) are related to three broad areas of experience – '**Celebrating Special Times**', '**Stories and What They Tell Us**' and '**Aspects of Identity and Relationships**' – so that engaging in these activities during the Foundation Stage will enable children to begin to:
- acknowledge their own individuality and that of others;
  - explore the relationships between themselves and those around them;
  - meet visitors and engage with them in different ways;  
(<http://www.teachers.tv/video/22291> example of RE in the Foundation Stage on Teachers' TV website);
  - listen to stories and respond appropriately to them;
  - participate, where appropriate, in some aspects of a variety of cultures;
  - experience a variety of special occasions in the classroom and at school and talk about them;
  - talk about and visit special places;
  - share special things, including books, stories and favourite possessions;
  - respond to their experiences of nature and the world; and
  - experience a variety of ways of expressing meaning, attempting to use these when expressing their own ideas eg writing, talking, making, creating, role-play.

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## Using the unit framework

- 7.12 The Newham syllabus reflects key concerns of children of this key stage, as formalised in the early learning goals and EYFS framework. RE-related activities therefore focus on three themes:
- **Celebrating Special Times;**
  - **Stories and What They Tell Us; and**
  - **Aspects of Identity and Relationships.**
- 7.13 The RE-related activities for the EYFS should maintain a balance between two elements:
- exploring (what people believe, what people do, and how people express themselves) and
  - responding (making sense of who we are, making sense of life, and making sense of values and commitments).
- 7.14 A template for planning RE-related activities has been devised (see below which is illustrated by materials from ‘What happens at Christmas?’ activity), which has also been used in devising the following support material for EYFS practitioners (hyperlink to materials):

### **Celebrating Special Times**

- What happens at Christmas?
- Diwali
- What happens at Easter?
- What happens at Eid-UI-Fitr?
- Guru Nanak’s Birthday
- What happens at Sukkot?

### **Aspects of identity and relationships**

- What happened to Dogger?
- The Gotcha Smile: How do we make friends?
- My Muslim Faith: Khadijah Knight:
- The Donkey and the Tiger Skin

### **Stories and what they tell us**

- The Lost Coin
- Muhammad and the Kitten
- The Good Samaritan
- Gifts for the Poor
- The Gift of Friendship

## The template for planning RE related activities

<p>Theme: the broad area of experience (ie ‘Celebrating Special Times’ or ‘Stories and What They Tell Us’ or ‘Aspects of Identity and Relationships’)</p> <p>RE-related activity: the specific focus/resource</p>	
<p>Context</p> <p><i>Background information that it would be useful for adults leading the activity to know</i></p>	<p>Key underlying ideas/concepts</p> <p><i>Two or three underlying ideas and concepts that link to the specific RE-related activity</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of giving these is to encourage depth to the work – looking ‘below the surface’</i></p>
<p>Links to Early Learning Goals</p> <p><i>To show how these activities fit in with overall Early Years Foundation Stage practice, eg:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Personal, Social and Emotional development</i></li> <li>• <i>Knowledge and Understanding of the world</i></li> </ul>	
<p>Main elements of the unit</p> <p>Stages to show how the activity will develop</p>	<p>Suggestions for practical activities</p> <p>A series of activities matched to the stages of the session</p>
<p>Key questions to ask</p> <p><i>These questions will focus children’s thinking on key ideas and concepts</i></p>	
<p>Story sack</p> <p><i>Resources that stimulate the children’s engagement and reflection on the RE-related activity. Sometimes these may be artefacts used within faith communities.</i></p>	

# Section 8

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## Religious education at Key Stage 1 (ages 5 to 7)



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## Statutory requirements

- 8.1 RE is a statutory requirement for pupils during Years 1 and 2. Pupils are entitled to 36 hours of RE in each school year at Key Stage 1.
- 8.2 The content of RE at Key Stage 1 must 'reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions presented in Great Britain' (The Education Act 1996).

This agreed syllabus expects schools as a minimum to provide opportunities for pupils to be taught about Christianity; at least one other principal religion; a religious community with a significant local presence and where appropriate a secular world view.

In the support materials for this agreed syllabus there are 12 support units already planned which schools can choose from to use at Key Stage 1. These support units can be found in appendix 'C1' but each unit should be developed to meet the individual needs of the pupils and school.

- 8.3 A school scheme of work will need to show for RE the order and sequence of the units across each year. While the support materials provide clear guidance on how teachers could work through the units, it is assumed that teachers will make good provision for pupil discussion and activities in addition to these basic requirements.

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## What is distinctive about Key Stage 1?

- 8.4 During Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to develop an awareness of themselves and others and to recognise that there are stories, people, places, times and values that are especially important to themselves and to others.
- 8.5 They are also beginning to develop their questioning skills in order to help them to make sense of and respond to the world in which they live. Through this process of questioning, they will begin to:
- be aware that some questions are puzzling and may not have easy or right answers, even for adults;
  - understand that people's beliefs and values affect the way in which they live; and
  - make links between their own experiences and those of others.
- 8.6 As pupils progress through this key stage, they will begin to make more sense of key concepts and should be encouraged to establish a vocabulary of words related to religion.
- 8.7 Pupils will be developing an ability to express their own feelings, reactions and responses. They will also be learning to respond to others in appropriate ways.

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## Breadth of learning experiences across the key stage

- 8.8 Each of the RE units for this key stage develops a theme, which draws from a range of religious material. In year 1 the big question is ‘What does it mean to belong?’, and in year 2 it is ‘Can stories change people?’. Investigating the relationship between in year 1 the relation between religion and belonging and in year 2 the relationship between religious stories and action. The units in the support materials also encourage pupils to relate what they are learning to their own and others’ experiences.
- 8.9 The support materials provide the following information about each of the RE units:
- the title of the unit (in the form of a question);
  - a brief description of what should be covered;
  - a sequence of questions which provide a structure for the unit.
- Support material has been written for each core unit. Specific to each core unit is an assessment task matched to appropriate levels of attainment (see section 6 and appendix C1)
- 8.10 Schools, while following the requirements of the agreed syllabus, should apply their professional judgement in adapting or developing the units of work. They may choose, for example:
- to teach a unit across a key stage, when their classes consist of Year 1 and 2 pupils; and
  - to tailor content and activities to draw upon the family backgrounds of their pupils, but without losing a unit’s character.



# Section 9

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## Religious education at Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 11)



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## Statutory requirements

9.1 RE is a statutory requirement for pupils during Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Pupils are entitled to 45 hours of RE in each school year at Key Stage 2.

9.2 The content of RE at Key Stage 2 must 'reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions presented in Great Britain' (The Education Act 1996).

This agreed syllabus expects schools as a minimum to provide opportunities for pupils to be taught about Christianity; at least two other principal religions; a religious community with a significant local presence and where appropriate a secular world view.

In the support materials for this agreed syllabus there are 24 support units already planned which schools can choose from to use at Key Stage 2. These support units can be found in appendix 'C2' but each unit should be developed to meet the individual needs of the pupils and school.

9.4 A school scheme of work will need to show for RE the order and sequence of the core and supplementary units across each year. While the support materials provide clear guidance on how teachers could work through the units, it is assumed that teachers will make good provision for pupil discussion and activities in addition to these basic requirements.

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## What is distinctive about lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)?

9.5 During lower Key Stage 2, pupils will be developing their interest in, as well as knowledge and understanding of, different religious beliefs and practices as well as secular world views. They will begin to recognise diversity within, as well as between, religious and cultural traditions.

9.6 Most pupils' ways of thinking and responding will be developing, though some will be more open to different levels of meaning – in a story, for example – than others.

9.7 Information gathering skills are developing and pupils will be able to use religious and other specialist vocabulary with growing confidence, building on and consolidating their learning from Key Stage 1.

9.8 Pupils will be able to talk about and respond to questions about their own beliefs and lifestyles, making comparisons with other people's experiences.

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### What is distinctive about upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6)?

- 9.9 During upper Key Stage 2, pupils will be developing an understanding of the connection between beliefs and actions. They will increasingly understand some of the ways in which cultural and social influences affect the practice of religion and will be able to compare their own beliefs and lifestyles with those of others.
- 9.10 Most pupils will be able to identify underlying ideas. They will be able to use religious and technical vocabulary with greater confidence, explaining symbolism and abstract ideas with increasing depth of understanding.
- 9.11 They will be able to research independently, using a wider range of sources.
- 9.12 Pupils will recognise increasingly that some questions do not have answers or could have a range of answers, depending on beliefs and experience.

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### Breadth of learning experiences across the whole key stage

- 9.13 The RE units for this key stage have been chosen so that they:
- identify key aspects of Christianity which are appropriate to explore across this key stage;
  - include thematic units: that is, units which draw material from a range of religious traditions and/or human experiences;
  - enable schools to draw on a range of resources, including people and communities in Newham; and
  - draw from one big philosophical question for each year group.
- 9.14 The support materials provide the following information about each of the RE units:
- the title of the unit (in the form of a question);
  - a brief description of what should be covered;
  - a sequence of questions which provide a structure for the unit.
- Support material has been written for each unit. Specific to each unit is an assessment task matched to appropriate levels of attainment (see appendices C2)
- 9.15 While following the requirements of the agreed syllabus, teachers should apply their professional judgement in adapting or developing the units of work. They may choose, for example:
- to teach a unit across several year groups, when their classes consist of pupils drawn from different years; and
  - to tailor content and activities to draw upon the family backgrounds of their pupils, but without losing a unit's character.

# Section 10

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## Religious education at Key Stage 3 (ages 11 to 14)



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## Statutory requirements

- 10.1 RE is a statutory requirement for students during Years 7, 8 and 9. This agreed syllabus requires that each school design a scheme of work for RE at Key Stage 3 which meets the requirements listed below, ensuring that pupils are provided with 45 hours of RE each year in this key stage.
- 10.2 A programme of study for Key Stage 3 should:
- begin with a 'introductory unit' which is related to the local religious traditions, and marks a transition in RE between the primary and secondary phases;
  - involve students in a thorough investigation of the Christian tradition;
  - involves students in an investigation of at least one other religious tradition, whether a major tradition (eg Hindu, Muslim or Sikh), a group within major tradition (eg Roman Catholic, Sai Baba movement, Muslim Sufi tradition) or a minority tradition (eg Baha'i or Rastafarian);
  - involve students in an investigation of secular/non-religious world views (eg atheist, humanist);
  - engages students in an exploration of philosophical, theological and ethical issues;
  - include assessment tasks which enable students by the end of the key stage to respond creatively to the question 'What might it mean for a person to belong to this/these religious/secular traditions today?';
  - in addition a school should provide an opportunity for children to reflect on their own religious and human experience; and
  - teachers should refer to the guidance material for examples of programmes of study and schemes of work.

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## What is distinctive about Key Stage 3?

- 10.3 Key Stage 3 is characterised by expanding horizons. Beginning at a new and larger school and having a changed status will stimulate students to reflect on such aspects of life as continuity and change, sameness and difference, simplicity and complexity. This key stage will be marked by exploring pattern and diversity within and between religious traditions as well as within human experience in general.
- 10.4 At this stage of rapid physical and emotional development, students are likely to be concerned about, and have growing insights into, relating to self-worth, identity and relationships. This should provide a context in which to engage students in an exploration of issues such as identity and belonging as reflected in a range of religious and secular traditions.

- 10.5 Students should be developing the ability to understand different viewpoints, to be objective and to use abstract language. Increasingly, they should be demonstrating a depth of understanding in their use of RE-specific language.
- 10.6 They will be developing the ability to evaluate religious and secular views on a range of issues, and to examine and explain how beliefs, values and teachings influence the behaviour of individuals, communities and society. By the end of the key stage, they should be able to explain what it might mean for a person to belong to a religious/secular tradition.

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### Breadth of learning experiences across the key stage

- 10.7 The programme of study for Key Stage 3 should:
- involve students in the twin processes of learning about and learning from;
  - build on but also challenge and extend what students already know, understand and can do;
  - enable students to learn more about the nature and significance of religious and secular world views in society;
  - provide students with the opportunity to learn more about themselves and others, drawing upon religious and secular world views represented in the school and beyond;
  - have a local and global dimension, taking due note of diversity both within and between different religious traditions;
  - draw from the creative and imaginative as well as the more rational and intellectual aspects of experience;
  - provide students with compelling learning opportunities in RE (<http://www.natre.org.uk/secondary/video.php?id=42> produced by Brampton Manor secondary school's RE department with QCA);
  - provide opportunities for cross curricular linkage of RE to other areas of the curriculum;
  - build upon cross curricular skills in their RE studies, eg becoming critical thinkers, independent enquirers, develop decision making capabilities, team workers and effective participants;
  - include recognition of the interaction and dialogue between religious practices and communities; and
  - include the opportunity to visit places of interest (such as religious centres) as well as meeting and engaging with visitors from a variety of traditions.

10.8 The study of any one religious or secular tradition in the key stage would include an exploration of:

- **what people believe:** the key ideas and questions of meaning in religions and beliefs, including issues related to God, truth, the world, human life and life after death; different sources of authority (including the relationship between religion and science) and how they inform believers' lives;
- **what people do:** questions and influences that inform ethical and moral choices, including forgiveness and issues of good and evil, right and wrong;
- **how people express themselves:** how and why human self-understanding and experiences are expressed in a variety of forms; role of the expressive arts in challenging and inspiring believers;
- **making sense of who we are:** a study of relationships, conflicts and collaboration within and between religions and secular world beliefs;
- **making sense of life:** what religions and secular world beliefs say about health, wealth, war, animal rights and the environment; and
- **making sense of values and commitments:** what religious and secular world beliefs say about human rights and responsibilities, social justice and citizenship.



# Section 11

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## Religious education at Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16)



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## Statutory requirements

- 11.1 RE is a statutory requirement for pupils during Years 10 and 11. This agreed syllabus requires each school to provide a course of study in RE for all pupils in each year group.
- 11.2 Schools might achieve this by enabling students to follow a publicly accredited course in Religious Education/Studies, such as GCSE short or full course, or certificate of achievement/entry level qualification.
- 11.3 Alternatively, a school might wish to design their own courses of study, which must meet the following criteria:
- the course must be studied in clearly discernible units in the curriculum of both Years 10 and 11;
  - the course must be planned in units which follow the approach to RE set out in this document;
  - at least eight units must be studied at Key Stage 4: six in year 10 and two in Year 11, ensuring that pupils are provided with 5% of curriculum time in RE each year in this key stage. Ideally units should take about 6 hours of curriculum time.
  - a unit might consist of either a series of taught activities or an event (such as a conference or visit) which takes an equivalent amount of time;
  - units must include exploration of material drawn from Christianity and some or all of the other principal religious traditions and world views; and
  - units must encourage students to respond by way of analysis, reflection and synthesis, evaluation, and by drawing on their own experiences.

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## What is distinctive about Key Stage 4?

- 11.4 Students of this age group will exhibit a wide range of abilities, aptitudes, approaches and interests.
- 11.5 Students will be developing a firmer perception of their own identity – including the influence of family and cultural background – and that of others. They will often be aware of a range of sometimes competing pressures – from peer group, school, family and the wider community. There will sometimes be a tension between the individual's wish for greater independence and the need for the acceptance and support of others.
- 10.6 This is a time when students should be able to explore and debate the phenomenon of religion in a wider context, using increasingly sophisticated language, including such issues as:
- the effect of religion on individuals, communities and society;
  - the various views about religion found in society, including specifically anti-religious standpoints;
  - the effect of the media on people's values, attitudes and beliefs; and
  - the challenges and demands of living in a multi-religious, multicultural and multi-lingual community such as that found in Newham.

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## Breadth of study across the key stage

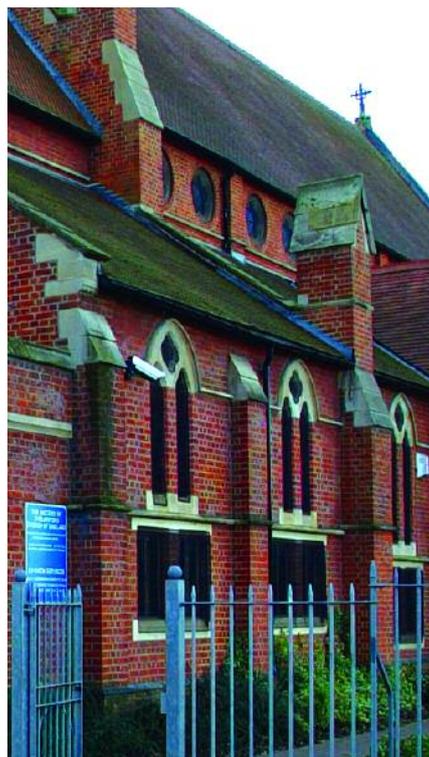
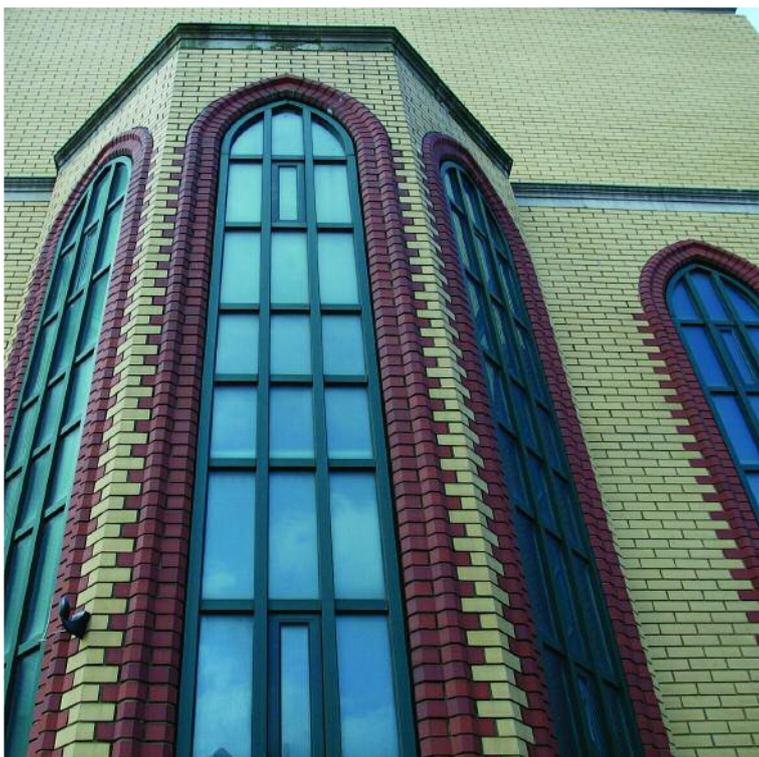
- 11.7 If a school decides to design its own RE course for students at this key stage, it might wish to focus material on:
- religious and ethical issues (see 11.8 below);
  - an exploration of the nature of religion and belief in contemporary society (eg inter-faith dialogue; other responses to life such as Humanism; the representation of religion in the media); and
  - specific religious traditions or groups, which need not be confined to the six principal religions, but which might be represented by students or adults associated with the school (eg the Baha'i, Jain, Parsee [Zoroastrian] or Sathya Baba traditions).

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## Key questions

- 11.8 The following key questions are suggested as providing a basis for exploration and response into units of work suitable for key stage 4:
- **Is life a journey?**  
issues of change in the human lifecycle
  - **What is worth celebrating?**  
issues concerning the value and purpose of celebration
  - **Does it matter whether it really happened?**  
issues concerning historicity in relation to belief
  - **What does it mean to be successful?**  
issues concerning wealth and responsibility
  - **Why be good?**  
issues concerning morality and doing good
  - **Are men and women equal?**  
issues concerning the role and status of men and women
  - **Is there life beyond death?**  
issues connected with death and belief in resurrection and reincarnation
  - **Whose world is it anyway?**  
issues concerning the environment
  - **But why?**  
issues concerning the existence of suffering
  - **Whose body is it anyway?**  
issues relating to alcohol and other drugs
  - **Who are we? Who are you?**  
issues concerning identity and prejudice

- **What does it mean to be free?**  
the idea that service to others is the key to freedom
- **Why this path? Why this road?**  
the life and beliefs of local, national or international person/s
- **What's the message?**  
exploration of how the arts portray religious ideas
- **Why bother?**  
exploration of the origin and purpose of a local, national or international charitable organisation/s
- **Whose life is it anyway?**  
exploration of issues concerning dying and the taking of life
- **Why should I?**  
exploration of issues concerning obedience to the law
- **Is there a God?**  
exploration of issues concerning belief in God and non-belief
- **What is truth?**  
issues of the meaning and claims of truths



# Section 12

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## Religious education at 16-19 and beyond



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## Statutory requirements

- 12.1 RE is a statutory requirement for students attending school up to and including the age of 19.

Although the schools in Newham who are required to follow this Agreed Syllabus do not provide Post-16 education, the search for meaning and purpose does not end when pupils leave school.

- 12.2 If any Newham schools change and have 16-19 facilities, in order to be deemed to be meeting statutory requirements for RE, an individual student must have participated in at least one activity from each of the following groups, A and B, during their post-16 education at school:

### Group A activities

- A1. A GCSE (short or long) course in Religious Education or Religious Studies
- A2. A GCE (AS or A2 level) course in Religious Studies
- A3. A GCE (AS or A2 level) course in General Studies which includes a study of religious and/or ethical issues
- A4. Any other publicly accredited course which includes a study of religious and/or ethical issues
- A5. An RE unit of study, devised by the school, of at least six hours duration in total

### Group B activities

- B1. A half-day or whole-day course or conference with an RE-related theme
- B2. An activity with an RE-related theme which takes place away from school
- B3. The creation of material which contributes to the individual's ongoing exploration of his or her identity, with particular reference to beliefs, attitudes and values
- B4. The creation of material which contributes to the ongoing exploration of the place of religion and belief in the life of the Newham community and its members.

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### What is distinctive about the post-16 stage of schooling?

- 12.3 The post-16 stage of schooling is usually marked by a number of changes in the stance of students, both towards themselves and towards the world around them. Students are often given more personal freedom through which they are able to explore and respond to their identity as individuals.
- 12.4 This is also a time of considerable pressure for many students when decisions need to be made about their futures. The key stage is usually characterised by more time given to independent research, reasoning and reflection. This is usually a time when students are becoming more aware of themselves as individuals and of their capacity to state views and opinions. The careful articulation of personal views or opinions, often in a public context, can be a source of personal satisfaction. Labels to describe one's own personal stance – such as believer, humanist and atheist – are often alluring.
- 12.5 There is often a ready engagement with big issues such as those relating to the nature and workings of society or to the environment. Students usually enjoy engaging in conversation, discussion and argument.
- 12.6 Relationships are usually very significant for students of this age. Some relationships are very deep and links might be formed which carry on for many years.
- 12.7 Relationships with teachers and other significant adults often undergo a subtle change. Students realise that such people are individuals in their own right and that, within the right context, disagreement can be life enhancing.

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### Devising imaginative forms of provision

- 12.8 In order to meet legislative requirements, this agreed syllabus encourages schools to devise imaginative forms of provision which:
- are consistent with the approach to RE set out in this document;
  - build on the RE experiences of students in previous stages of their schooling;
  - are tailored to meet the needs of the students at the particular school they attend;
  - enrich the lives and learning experiences of students;
  - contribute to the creation of a broad and balanced curriculum;
  - contribute to the development of students' key skills;
  - create and develop links with individuals, groups and communities – local, national and international – outside the school;
  - make full use of the opportunities afforded by information and communication technology (ICT); and
  - make use of opportunities to develop debate and use of philosophical argument.

12.9 Examples of the kinds of activity which could be developed to meet requirements are:

- a whole-day conference on the theme of Suffering or Religion Today which includes the opportunity for members of a number of faith communities to meet with small groups of students (B1);
- a multi-faith coach tour involving visits to a number of religious centres at each of which students are able to meet members of the community and to share ideas and views of life as well as learning about what takes place at the centre (B2);
- an opportunity for a group of students to spend several days at a religious centre, such as a Buddhist or Christian Monastery, or retreat centre (B2);
- students preparing a personal statement (including beliefs, attitudes and values, religious and non-religious) about themselves, using a chosen medium or combination of media, such as: photographs, prose, poetry, two or three-dimensional art, and music. Some of the personal statements could then be displayed and/or presented to others (B3); and
- students, singly or in groups, engaging in an exploration of the impact of the various religious groups on Newham life and culture. The results of this exploration could be exhibited (at school or elsewhere), linked to a school event (such as multi-cultural evening), published (as an article in a school, local or national publication), or used as an RE resource by others in the school, including younger students (B4).

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## RE and lifelong learning

12.10 This agreed syllabus stands as part of Newham's commitment to lifelong learning.

12.11 It is hoped that a lifelong interest in exploring and responding to religion and human experience will be encouraged amongst pupils by;

- fostering a love of learning;
- developing the skills of learning and understanding others;
- tolerating people's views that are different from their own;
- promoting achievement and pride in their work in RE.

12.12 When they support young people in their RE work, it is hoped that parents and carers will have their own interest in religion and human experience deepened, rekindled or sparked off.

12.13 It is also hoped that the local community in Newham will be a partner, supporting schools in their efforts to create a well-informed, relevant and challenging form of RE for their pupils.

# Appendix A

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## Summary



## Summary of Newham Agreed Syllabus

1. Religious education (RE) is part of the curriculum that all schools must provide for pupils from the ages of 4 to 18.
2. In contrast to other subjects in the curriculum, where there are national programmes of study, the programme for RE in each local authority (LA) is locally agreed. The document in which each LA sets out the RE programme for its schools is called a 'local agreed syllabus for religious education'.
3. In Newham, the local agreed syllabus must be followed by all community and foundation schools. (Faith-based schools have their own separate RE programmes.)
4. The title of the Newham local agreed syllabus is 'Exploring Beliefs, Celebrating Diversity'. It is called this because RE gives children and young people the opportunity to learn about and learn from those aspects of religion and human experience that give rise to 'big' questions such as 'What is the meaning of life?' and 'Is death the end?' Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an excellent tool to facilitate these discussions across all key stages in RE. Religious Education also provides an opportunity for children and young people to understand each other's beliefs, practices and ways of life, making a vital contribution to promoting community cohesion and the spiritual development of children and young people.
5. RE makes a valuable contribution to the personal development of children and young people, particularly their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development.
6. RE makes a contribution to the development of all children and young people, regardless of whether they come from a religious family background. In the rare case that parents or carers do not want their child to take part in RE, they have the right to withdraw their child.
7. Alongside all other aspects of school life, RE should make a contribution to the five Every Child Matters outcomes – that children have an entitlement to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. It shows strong links to PSHE & Citizenship Education.
8. RE also has an important role in promoting community cohesion.
9. In learning about and learning from religion and human experience (see note 4 above), children and young people will have the opportunity to acquire and develop:
  - an understanding of important key concepts,
  - a range of skills;
  - a range of attitudes; and
  - knowledge.

10. In order to provide challenge and to identify the progress that children and young people make in RE, the agreed syllabus suggests that, when appropriate, 'levels' are used to chart progress in each of six areas of the subject:
- beliefs, teaching and sources
  - practices and ways of life
  - forms of expression
  - identity and belonging
  - meaning, purpose and truth
  - values and commitments

11. In the **Early Years Foundation Stage** (ages 3 to 5); the agreed syllabus suggests that the school experience of young children includes a range of RE-related activities that follow three themes:
- 'Celebrating special Times';
  - 'Stories and what they tell us'; and
  - 'Aspects of identity and relationships'.

12. At **Key Stage 1** (ages 5 to 7), the agreed syllabus requires that schools 'reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions presented in Great Britain' (The Education Act 1996).

This agreed syllabus expects schools as a minimum to provide opportunities for pupils to be taught about Christianity; at least one other principal religion; a religious community with a significant local presence and where appropriate a secular world view.

In year 1 the big question is 'What does it mean to belong?', and in year 2 it is 'Can stories change people?' Schools will investigate with children the relationship between: in year 1, religion and belonging, and in year 2 religious stories and action. There are 12 support units written by practising teachers in Newham that schools can use to support RE teaching in their school.

13. At **Key Stage 2** (ages 7 to 11), the agreed syllabus requires that schools 'reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions presented in Great Britain' (The Education Act 1996).

This agreed syllabus expects schools as a minimum to provide opportunities for pupils to be taught about Christianity; at least two other principal religions; a religious community with a significant local presence and where appropriate a secular world view.

In the support materials for this agreed syllabus there are 24 support units already planned which schools can choose from to use at Key Stage 2. These support units can be found in appendix 'C2' but each unit should be developed to meet the individual needs of the pupils and school.

14. At **Key Stage 3** (ages 11 to 14), the agreed syllabus requires that schools design schemes of work that:
- begin with a unit that bridges the transition between primary to secondary school;
  - involve students in a thorough investigation of the Christian tradition;
  - involve students in an investigation of at least one other principal religious tradition (ie Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish or Sikh);
  - provide students with the opportunity to explore another religious tradition which should be either a minority religious tradition (eg Baha'ism or Rastafarianism) or a sub-set of a major religious tradition (eg the Roman Catholic tradition, Zen Buddhism);
  - engage students in an exploration of philosophical, moral, theological and ethical issues;
  - include opportunities to study secular world views; and
  - include assessment tasks which enable students by the end of the key stage to respond creatively to the question, 'What might it mean for a person to belong to this/these religious/secular traditions today?'

15. At **Key Stage 4** (ages 14-16), the agreed syllabus states that RE is a statutory requirement for pupils during Years 10 and 11. This agreed syllabus requires that each school provide a course of study in RE for all pupils in each year group.

Schools might achieve this by enabling students to follow a publicly accredited course in Religious Education/Studies, such as GCSE short or full course, or certificate of achievement/entry level qualification.

Alternatively, schools might wish to design their own courses of study, which must meet the following criteria:

- the course must be studied in clearly discernible units in the curriculum of both Years 10 and 11;
  - the course must be planned in units which follow the approach to RE set out in this document;
  - at least eight units must be studied at Key Stage 4: six in year 10 and two in Year 11, ensuring that pupils are provided with 5% of curriculum time in RE each year in this key stage. Ideally units should take about 6 hours of curriculum time.
  - a unit might consist of either a series of taught activities or an event (such as a conference or visit) which takes an equivalent amount of time;
  - units must include exploration of material drawn from Christianity and some or all of the other principal religious traditions and world views; and
  - units must encourage students to respond by way of analysis, reflection and synthesis, evaluation, and by drawing on their own experiences.
16. For students in their **post-16** stage of secondary education (ages 16-19), the agreed syllabus states that RE is a statutory requirement for students attending school up to and including the age of 19.

Although the schools in Newham who are required to follow this Agreed Syllabus do not provide Post-16 education, the search for meaning and purpose does not end when pupils leave school.

# Appendix B

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## Progress in Religious Education



**B1 Grids showing Newham RE levels of attainment**  
**B2 The levels expressed in simplified terms in order to explain to pupils what they need to do to achieve at a higher level**  
**B3 National P scales for RE**

		AT1 Learning about religion: How pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding with reference to:				AT2 Learning from religion: How pupils, in the light of their learning about religion, express their responses and insights with regard to questions and issues about:		
Level (Flavour)	beliefs, teachings and sources	practices and ways of life	forms of expression	identity and belonging	meaning, purpose and truth	values and commitments		
1 (Name and talk about)	<b>I can</b> remember a Christian (Hindu etc) story and talk about it	<b>I can</b> use the right names for things that are special to Buddhists (Jews etc)	<b>I can</b> recognise religious art, symbols and words and talk about them	<b>I can</b> talk about things that happen to me and my feelings	<b>I can</b> talk about what I find interesting or puzzling	<b>I can</b> talk about what is important to me and to other people		
2 (Making sense of and responding sensitively)	tell a Christian (Sikh etc) story and say some things that people believe	talk about some of the things that that are the same for different religious people	say what some Christian (Muslim etc) symbols stand for and say what some of the art (music etc) is about	ask about what happens to me and others with respect for our feelings	talk about some things that make people wonder and ask questions	talk about what is right and wrong to me and to others and why		
3 (Make links, describe)	describe what a believer might learn from a religious story or a sacred text	describe some of the things that different religious people do and why they do them	use religious words to describe some of the different ways in which people show their beliefs	compare some of the things that influence me with those that influence other people	ask important questions about life and compare my ideas with those of other people	link what I and other people think are right and wrong with how we think and behave		
4 (Show understanding, apply ideas)	show how the beliefs and teachings of different religious groups are similar and different, and how they affect people's lives	use the right religious words to describe what people do in different religious groups and how they live their lives	show understanding of why believers use different ways of expressing what they believe (e.g. symbols, sounds and language)	identify what things and people have inspired me and others, and the groups to which we belong	ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life, and give a range of answers that I and other people might give	understand that moral decisions that people make have different consequences, and show that different choices are often based on different beliefs and values		

Level (Flavour)	beliefs, teachings and sources	practices and ways of life	forms of expression	identity and belonging	meaning, purpose and truth	values and commitments
5 (Explain and express)	<b>I can</b> suggest reasons why people hold different and similar beliefs, whether religious or secular, and their impact on people's lives	<b>I can</b> describe why people belong to religious and secular groups and explain how similarities and differences within and between these groups can make a difference to the lives of individuals and communities	<b>I can</b> use the right specialist terms in describing and explaining the similar and different ways in which religious and secular groups express themselves	<b>I can</b> I can describe and explain some of the commitments and challenges that belonging to a religious or secular group will lead to	<b>I can</b> give reasons to support my own and other people's questions relating to meaning, purpose and truth	<b>I can</b> identify the values and commitments that are important to me and others giving reasons for their importance
6 (Interpreting and expressing insight)	interpret different people's beliefs and teachings by explaining what might be behind them and with reference to a variety of sources and arguments	interpret people's different ways of life by referring to underlying key beliefs and ideas held by individuals, communities and societies	show insight into the similar and different ways in which people express themselves, using the right religious and philosophical terms	I can by reference to my own and other people's views consider the challenges of belonging to a religious or secular group today	can by reference to my own and other people's views use reasoning and examples to express insights about the meaning and purpose of life and the search for truth	consider the extent to which people's responses to world issues are shape/affected by their values and commitments (or understanding)
7 (Coherence patterns, how things fit together) & independent research)	show how beliefs and teachings both religious and secular, can often be linked together to form patterns, bringing in material from my own research into various sources	show how what people do and how they live their lives is affected by tradition, custom and culture, bringing in material from my own research into various sources	I can connect actions and symbols with patterns of beliefs and ideas that lie behind them, using appropriate religious and philosophical terms	I can investigate my own and other people's understanding of who we are by reference to connected beliefs and traditions that have influenced us	I can investigate my own and other people's responses to questions of meaning, purpose and truth, identifying some of the connected reasons for those responses	I can investigate my own and other people's values, commitments with reference to the connected experiences of beliefs that have influenced them
8 (Interpreting Coherently Overview, insight)	I can analyse how key beliefs and teachings can be interpreted in different ways within and between different groups	I can analyse how different practices and ways of life within and between groups can be based on different interpretations of key beliefs and values	using appropriate religious and philosophical language, I can analyse and interpret the different ways in which people express themselves within and between groups	weigh up in detail a wide range of viewpoints on questions about who we belong, and come to my own conclusions based on evidence, arguments, reflections and examples	weigh up in detail a wide range of view-points on questions about truth and the meaning and purpose of life, and come to my own conclusions based on evidence, arguments, reflections and examples	weigh up in detail a wide range of view-points on questions about values and commitments, and come to my own conclusions based on evidence, arguments, reflections and examples

Level	beliefs, teachings and sources	practices and ways of life	forms of expression	identity and belonging	meaning, purpose and truth	values and commitments
EP	<p><b>I can</b></p> <p>provide a consistent and detailed analysis of religions and beliefs and of how religious, spiritual and moral sources are interpreted in different ways, with an evaluation of the different methods of study used to conduct the analysis</p>	<p><b>I can</b></p> <p>evaluate in depth the importance of religious diversity in a pluralistic society and demonstrate how religion and beliefs have had a changing impact on different communities over time</p>	<p><b>I can</b></p> <p>use a complex religious, moral and philosophical vocabulary in effectively synthesising my accounts of the varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression</p>	<p><b>I can</b></p> <p>analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions about who we are and where we belong and provide independent, well informed and highly reasoned insights into my own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, with well-substantiated and balanced conclusions</p>	<p><b>I can</b></p> <p>analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions about truth and the meaning and purpose of life, and provide independent, well informed and highly reasoned insights into my own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, with well-substantiated and balanced conclusions</p>	<p><b>I can</b></p> <p>analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions about values and commitments and provide independent, well informed and highly reasoned insights into my own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, with well-substantiated and balanced conclusions</p>

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## B2 How to progress in RE

To move onto the next level in RE, here are the targets that you need to meet.

### Level 1-2

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- I can...
- Explain something that people believe.
  - Say what something stands for.
  - Talk about something that is important to someone else, with respect.

### Level 2-3

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- I can...
- Explain what someone might learn from religion, using key words.
  - Describe, with examples, similar or different ways religious people do things.
  - Link my beliefs with how I behave and things that influence me and other people.

### Level 3-4

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- I can...
- Connect beliefs and teachings of different groups and explain what it means to belong to a religion.
  - Use key words to describe religious beliefs and practices,
  - Suggest how religious people might respond to questions about life and compare this with my own ideas.

### Level 4-5

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- I can...
- Suggest reasons for similar and different beliefs within and between religions, showing how religious sources are used by believers.
  - Use a wide range of key words to explain similarities and differences in how religious people express themselves.
  - Compare my beliefs with those of others and analyse the challenges of belonging to a religion or belief system.

### Level 5-6

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- I can...
- Suggest reasons for similar and different beliefs within and between religions, using different religious sources and arguments to explain the reasons for diversity.
  - Explain how beliefs have had different effects on individuals, communities and societies.
  - Compare my beliefs with those of others and evaluate one challenge of belonging to a religion or belief system, supporting my views with reasons and examples.

### Level 6-7

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- I can...
- Explain what religious people believe and value, showing personal research and using a number of sources and evidence.
  - Explain how beliefs today have been affected by the past and traditions and how belonging to a religion may mean different things to different people.
  - Compare my beliefs with those of others and analyse the challenges of belonging to a religion or belief system, supporting my views with reasons and examples.

### Level 7-8

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- I can...
- Explain and analyse what different people believe and value, showing personal research and placing beliefs in their historical, cultural, social and philosophical contexts.
  - Weigh up in detail a wide range of beliefs and their meaning to different communities and societies in different times and places.
  - Compare my beliefs and conclusions about the purpose and value of life with a wide range of others, coming to my own conclusions based on evidence, arguments, reflections and backed up with examples.



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## B3

### P Scales Religious Education

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- P4** Pupils use single elements of communication, for example, words, gestures, signs or symbols, to express their feelings. They show they understand 'yes' and 'no'. They begin to respond to the feelings of others, for example, matching their emotions and laughing when another pupil is laughing. They join in with activities by initiating ritual actions or sounds. They may demonstrate an appreciation of stillness and quietness.
- 
- P5** Pupils respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences and communicate simple meanings. They respond to a variety of new religious experiences, for example, involving music, drama, colour, lights, food, or tactile objects. They take part in activities involving two or three other learners. They may also engage in moments of individual reflection.
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- P6** Pupils express and communicate their feelings in different ways. They respond to others in group situations and cooperate when working in small groups. Pupils listen to, and begin to respond to, familiar religious stories, poems and music, and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals. They carry out ritualised actions in familiar circumstances. They show concern and sympathy for others in distress, for example, through gestures, facial expressions or by offering comfort. They start to be aware of their own influence on events and other people.
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- P7** Pupils listen to and follow religious stories. They communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases. They evaluate their own work and behaviour in simple ways, beginning to identify some actions as right or wrong on the basis of the consequences. They find out about aspects of religion through stories, music or drama, answer questions and communicate their responses. They may communicate their feelings about what is special to them, for example, using role play. They begin to understand that other people have needs and to respect these. They make purposeful relationships with others in group activity.
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- P8** Pupils listen attentively to religious stories or to people talking about religion. They begin to understand that religious and other stories carry moral and religious meaning. They are increasingly able to communicate ideas, feelings or responses to experiences or to retell religious stories. They communicate simple facts about religion and important people in religions. They begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts, symbols and places. They reflect on what makes them happy, sad, excited or lonely. They demonstrate a basic understanding of what is right and wrong in familiar situations. They are often sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and show respect for themselves and others. They treat living things and their environment with care and concern.
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# Appendix C

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## Overview for key questions: Key Stage 1-4



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## C1 Overview

### RE units to be included in the Year 1 curriculum

There are six units that have been developed by Newham teachers to help support the Big question in Year 1 **‘What does it mean to belong?’**

Please note that these units can complement the Citizenship and PSHE education programme of study.

- How do Christians celebrate Christmas?
- What does it mean to be Muslim?
- What does it mean to belong to Christianity?
- What can be special about living with family and friends? All faiths.
- How do we express meaning through cards, candles and actions? All faiths.
- What does it mean to belong to Sikhism?

### RE units to be included in the Year 2 curriculum

There are six units that have been developed by Newham teachers to help support the Big question in Year 2 **‘Can stories change people?’**

Please note that these units can complement the Citizenship and PSHE education programme of study.

- Where did the world come from and how should we look after it? All faiths
- Why did Jesus tell stories?
- Why are different books special for different people? All faiths.
- How do we know that Easter is coming? What special story is told at Easter?
- What is fasting and why do people do it? All faiths.
- Why do some people eat special food? All faiths.

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## C2 Overview

### RE units to be included in the Year 3 curriculum

There are six units that have been developed by Newham teachers to help support the Big question in Year 3 **'How are symbols important in religion? Investigating the relationship between religion and symbols:**

Please note that these units can complement the Citizenship and PSHE education programme of study.

- How do Jews celebrate their beliefs at home and in the Synagogue?
- How are special symbols used in religions? Focus on Islam and Sikhism.
- How and why do Hindus celebrate Holi (or Diwali)? What celebration can we design to mark a special time in our class or year group? All faiths.
- What does art, signs and symbols tell us about Christian beliefs.
- What is the significance of light in religion? All faiths.
- How did Jesus and Buddha make people stop and think?

### RE units to be included in the Year 4 curriculum

There are six units that have been developed by Newham teachers to help support the Big question in Year 4 **'What is special to me and the people in my community?'** Investigating the relationship between religion and our neighbourhood.

Please note that these units can complement the Citizenship and PSHE education programme of study.

- Why is Easter important to Christians?
- How and why do Hindus worship at home and in the mandir?
- What religions are represented in our neighbourhood?
- Why is the Bible special for Christians?
- What makes me the person I am?
- What happens when someone gets married? All faiths.

### RE units to be included in the Year 5 curriculum

There are six units that have been developed by Newham teachers to help support the Big question in Year 5 **'How do beliefs influence actions?'** Investigating the relationship between beliefs and actions.

Please note that these units can complement the Citizenship and PSHE education programme of study.

- How is Christmas celebrated around the world?
- How do Christians try to follow Jesus' example?
- What do religions believe about God? All faiths.
- What inner forces affect how we think and behave? All faiths.
- Why are Muhammad and the Qu'ran important to Muslims?
- 'Should all living creatures be treated equally?' and 'What it means to be human'.

### **RE units to be included in the Year 6 curriculum**

There are six units that have been developed by Newham teachers to help support the big question in Year 6 'How important are the similarities and differences between and within religions?' Investigating the relationship between secular and religious world views.

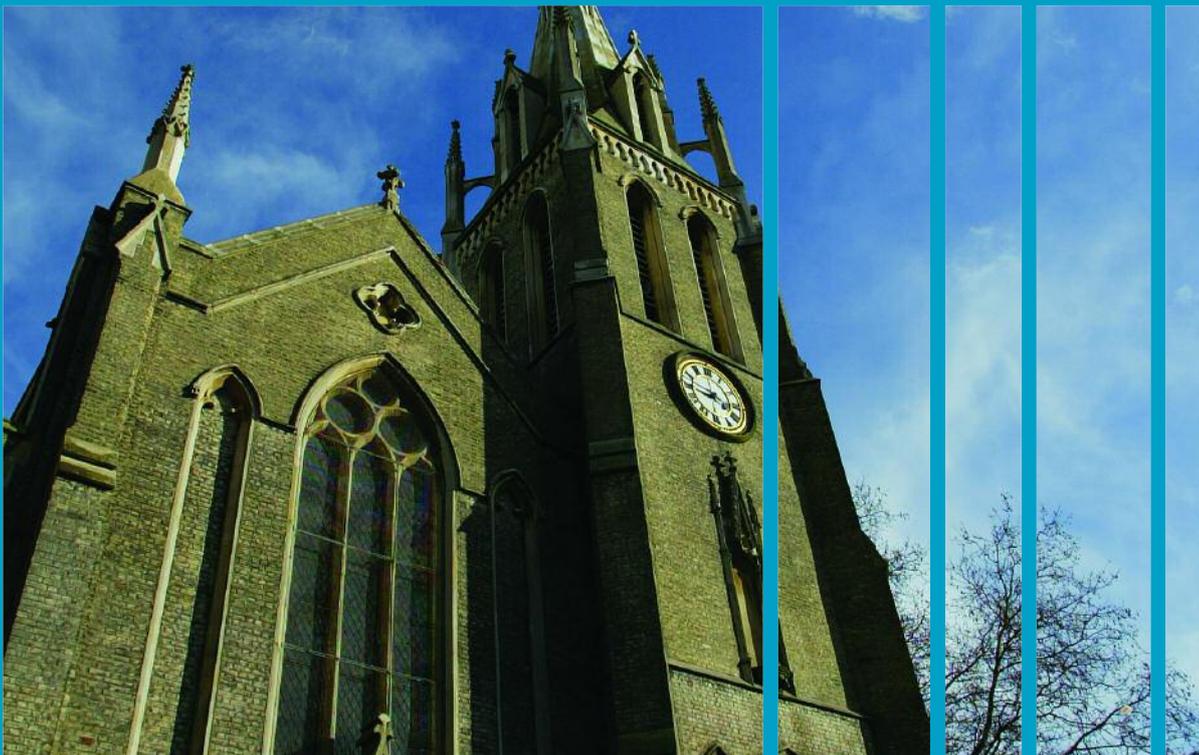
Please note that these units can complement the Citizenship and PSHE education programme of study.

- What are the sources of the story about what happened on the first Easter Sunday?
- What is a children's hospice, and how does it help people with ideas about death?
- What qualities are important to present day religious leaders? All faiths – asking pupils to compare at least 3 different religious leaders.
- How do people express their faith through the arts in Christianity?
- What similarities and differences do religions share?
- How could we design a leavers' celebration that involved everyone, whether religious or not, in a meaningful and imaginative way? All faiths.

# Appendix D

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## Dealing with requests for withdrawal and concerns in RE



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## Advise on requests to withdraw from RE lessons

This advice is to support a school if a parent asks for a pupil to be withdrawn from RE lessons.

(Please read in conjunction with DFES Circular 1/94)

These guidelines apply only to RE (not collective worship)

Text in standard type is from the 1/94 circular. Text in italics is Newham's additional guidance.

1. If a parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE in the school, then the school must comply. Parents are not obliged to give reasons for the withdrawal. *It is good to meet with the parents to discuss their concerns and in many cases, once the parents understand what RE is and is not they will want their child to continue with their RE lessons. On some occasions, it is through a lack of understanding that withdrawal is requested, and discussion allows fears to be addressed. Newham SACRE faith members are here to support a school in discussions with parents if that support is needed.*
2. A pupil may, if the parent requests this, be withdrawn from the school premises to receive RE elsewhere, so long as the Local Authority (LA) is satisfied that this will not interfere with the child's attendance at school other than at the beginning or end of any school session. If this is not possible and the parents wish their child to receive separate RE, the school is required to allow such education to take place in the school providing it does not have to meet the cost and the request is not unreasonable. *These practical implications of withdrawal should be made clear to the parents at a meeting, and the school should be clear about what is reasonable e.g. space, supervision, the parents need to organise their child's work for 1 hr a week in RE time – the school does not organise what the child does for this time – it is the parents' responsibility.*
3. The school is responsible for the child, unless the child is receiving RE elsewhere.
4. If RE is taught as part of an integrated Humanities programme or in conjunction with other National Curriculum subjects, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from the RE elements of these programmes. *It is important that parents know when RE is occurring in such programmes. A leaflet or guide to the RE curriculum may be one way to help parents and avoid withdrawals in such circumstances. If RE can not be separated easily from where other subjects are being taught children can not be withdrawn.*
5. When religious or spiritual matters come up in other areas of the curriculum – both planned and spontaneously – this does not constitute RE in the legal sense. Parents could not insist that their child be withdrawn every time such issues arise. *These issues are helping the child in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this will need to be explained to parents who want their child withdrawn.*

6. *It is best practice for a school to have a withdrawal policy statement of procedures, so that all teachers are clear how to handle such a request or demand from a pupil or parent. In your copy of the Agreed Syllabus there is a list of who has been part of making Newham's Agreed Syllabus and have given it their approval. This is a useful place to start in a discussion with parents as sometimes once they understand what is going on in their child's RE lessons, and they find out it has been passed by their faith leaders and the majority of faith groups in Newham they are not so worried about their child receiving RE.*
7. *A child or young person can not be in for the teaching of their religion in RE and out for all the others. They are either withdrawn from everything or nothing. If the parents are choosing to withdrawal their child it is often good to emphasise that this is a shame as it will mean that their child will not have the opportunity to talk about their family's faith and how they do things in their home or place of worship, the beliefs that are important to them.*

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### **Advice on concerns about RE**

If a family wishes to raise concerns or has a complaint about RE in their child's school there are protocols to be followed. It is important in the first instance that this matter is raised with the school directly. If parents/faith communities are still unhappy with the response they receive then they can make contact with Newham's SACRE. SACRE will make contact with the school and the parents/faith community and see if they can help to resolve the matter. If the parents/faith community are still unhappy with this response then they can take their complaint onto the council's curriculum panel for their attention. Obviously we would hope that this would never be necessary. The decision of the curriculum panel would be final in all matters.

# Appendix E

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## Dealing with pupils' questions and disclosures



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## Practical guidelines

The nature of RE, particularly the second attainment target, learning from religion, may lead to pupils asking difficult questions or even making personal disclosures. Understandably, teachers can find such situations difficult to handle; it seems easy to say the wrong thing. This leads to a temptation to focus on the first attainment target, learning about religions, avoiding potentially difficult situations. However, this denies pupils access to those aspects of RE that are the most educationally rewarding.

Examples of difficult situations include pupils:

- asking questions to which the religions have no agreed answer, eg *'Was Jesus the son of God?'*;
- asking questions that raise difficult philosophical or theological issues, eg *'Why does a supposedly good God allow suffering?'* (or more concrete and personal versions);
- asking what the teacher believes, eg *'Do you believe in God?'*;
- making comments or asking questions that reflect an offensive or unreflective approach to religion, eg *'Are you one of the God squad?'*;
- making disclosures that reveal personal faith commitments, eg *'I believe that the Qur'an is the absolute word of God'*;
- making disclosures that are personal, eg *'My grandma died yesterday'*;
- making inappropriate value judgements on the faith of other people, eg *'People who believe that are stupid!'*

Such situations may be difficult for one or more reasons:

- they may cause upset or offence to other pupils;
- they may expose the pupil to upsetting comments;
- they may reveal misunderstandings that seem in need of correction;
- there may be no straightforward answer to the question;
- they may reveal an inability to cope with differences of opinion;
- they may be embarrassing;
- there may not be time to deal with them;
- the teacher may not have the training or knowledge needed to deal with them.

There are no 'off-the-shelf' ways of dealing with such classroom incidents. Teachers will need to use their professional judgement and sensitivity. The ethos of the school, and the contribution of RE to it, will be important in establishing the right climate for dealing with such questions and incidents. The following practical guidelines may be of help.

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## Practical guidelines

1. Encourage the use of ‘owning and grounding’ language such as ‘in my opinion’ or ‘some Hindus would say’. This allows belief statements to be made in the classroom with everyone feeling they have to agree.
2. Treat the question or incident as a positive rather than a negative event, wherever possible. Remember that it is the way the incident is dealt with and how the class response is managed that matters most.
3. Affirm the importance of the pupil’s contribution, even if you don’t agree with it, with phrases like ‘I’ve often wondered about that too, that is an excellent question’, ‘You’re not the only one who doesn’t know the answer to that.’
4. Help pupils to understand that diversity of opinion and the existence of unanswerable questions are aspects of life that we all have to learn to live with. Education, age or intelligence will not eliminate all of these aspects.
5. Allow for the possibility of a range of answers or opinions. For example, use ‘most Christians would probably say:...’. Encourage an awareness of diversity without undermining the pupil’s own beliefs.
6. Use the situation to open up rather than close down conversations or thinking. Encourage a ‘let’s explore this together’ approach in which the teacher is a participant, not simply an expert.
7. Encourage further exploration by suggesting other people that pupils could ask, eg faith community leaders, or places where they might find help, eg resource centre. In particular, affirm the importance of people close to the pupil, such as their family, their faith community, their friends.
8. Correct factual misinformation, wherever possible, without confrontation. But always respect the right of the pupils, their families and the members of the communities to which they belong to hold their own beliefs.
9. In the case of personal disclosure, the prime need may be for comfort rather than abstract discussion of any concepts involved. With some pupils it may be possible to suggest a follow-up to the pupil’s disclosure (eg personal tutor), but without ‘fobbing-off’ the importance of it. If this is not possible, set the class an activity that provides time to attend to the pupil or allows the pupil some personal space.
10. Throw questions back for further clarification with phrases like ‘What do you think?’, ‘Can you clarify...?’, ‘What would happen if...?’. Aim to keep the pupil pondering, rather than giving closed answers that seem clear cut when the issue is anything but clear cut.

11. Be as honest as possible without being ruthless. For example, it does not help to tell a pupil that her grandad has gone to heaven if the teacher does not believe that, or if it would be offensive to the pupil. But a teacher could tell the pupil that many religious people believe that. In these circumstances a teacher should not normally challenge a pupil's belief. Keeping one's integrity with sensitivity is important.
12. Let a discussion develop if it is being taken seriously by the class. But have a quiet or reflective technique ready to provide a suitable close to the discussion, eg a chance for the pupils to make a private diary entry or to make a personal resolution based on the lesson.
13. Never intrude into a pupil's personal life. There should always be the freedom to remain silent in lessons where the discussion is intimate or deep. Teaching the whole class rather than small groups may reduce the risk of particular pupils being exposed to such intrusions.
14. Establish ground rules with the class for discussing controversial issues.
15. If a difficult issue arises, which is impossible to handle properly, return to it later when it can be dealt with in a more considered way.

Taken from QCA's non-statutory guidance on RE published 2000.



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## Guidance on the teaching of sensitive and controversial issues

Teachers will need to:

- ensure pupils establish ground rules about how they will behave towards each other and how the issue will be dealt with;
- judge when to allow pupils to discuss issues confidentially in small groups and when to support by listening in to these group discussions;
- ensure that pupils have access to balanced information and differing views on which they can then clarify their own opinions and views, including contributions made by visitors to the classroom;
- decide how far they are prepared to express their own views, bearing in mind that they are in an influential position and that they have to work within the framework of the school's values; and
- ensure they take due care for the needs of individuals in the class when tackling issues of social, cultural or personal identity.

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## Handling sensitive and controversial issues

Learning from real-life experience is central to citizenship, and sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise. Pupils should not be sheltered from them; through them pupils can develop an important range of skills, including listening, accepting another point of view, arguing a case, dealing with conflict, and distinguishing between fact and opinion.

Issues that are likely to be sensitive or controversial are those that have a political, social or personal impact and arouse strong feelings and/or deal with questions of value and belief. Sex education, religion and politics are all likely to fall into this category. Other issues likely to be sensitive or controversial include, for example, family lifestyle and values, law and order, financial issues, unemployment, environmental issues, bullying and bereavement.

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## Balance

In the teaching of controversial issues there is always a risk of bias, whether unwitting or otherwise. Teachers should adopt strategies that will teach pupils how to recognise bias, how to evaluate evidence put before them, how to look for different interpretations, views and sources of evidence, and how to give reasons for what they say and do.

Experienced teachers will seek to avoid bias by resisting any inclination to:

- highlight a particular selection of facts or items of evidence, thereby giving them a greater importance than other equally relevant information;
- present information as if it is not open to alternative interpretation or qualification or contradiction;
- set themselves up as the sole authority not only on matters of ‘fact’ but also on matters of opinion;
- present opinions and other value judgements as if they are facts;
- give their own accounts of the views of others instead of using the actual claims and assertions as expressed by various interest groups themselves;
- reveal their own preferences by facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, etc;
- imply preferences by a particular choice of respondents or by not opening up opportunities for all pupils to contribute their views to a discussion; and
- neglect challenging a consensus of opinion which emerges too readily.

Experienced teachers would also feel secure in establishing a classroom climate in which all pupils are free from any fear of expressing reasonable points of view that contradict those held either by their class teachers or by their peers.

### *Summary of the statutory requirements*

*The Education Act 1996 aims to ensure that children are not presented with only one side of political or controversial issues by their teachers. Section 406 of the Act requires school governing bodies, head teachers and local education authorities to forbid the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in schools; and to forbid the pursuit of partisan political activities by pupils under age 12 while in school. Section 407 requires them to take all reasonably practical steps to ensure that, where political or controversial issues are brought to pupils’ attention, they are offered a balanced presentation or opposing views. If anyone has reason to believe that a school is not complying with these requirements, they may make a formal complaint to the governing body under statutory local arrangements for considering complaints about curricular matters. If dissatisfied with the governors’ response they may refer the complaint to the local education authority, in the case of an LEA-maintained school, and, ultimately, to the Secretary of State (in the case of either an LEA-maintained or grant-maintained school).*

The need for balance should not be regarded as inhibiting a clear stand against racism and other forms of discrimination. Our common values require that there are behaviours we should not tolerate. For example, racism, bullying and cruelty in all their forms are never acceptable.

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## Confidentiality

Pupils occasionally make personal disclosures, either in class or to individual teachers. They may disclose that they are engaging in inappropriate sexual activity, that they or their friends or relatives are using drugs, and even that they have been abused. Teachers may come to possess sensitive information about pupils, some of it about illegal activity.

A school policy about confidentiality should provide guidance for teachers. The following general principles should be considered.

- All parties need to be clear about the rules of confidentiality. Information about pupils should not be passed on indiscriminately. The headteacher may wish to be informed in all or some circumstances; staff have a contractual obligation to comply.
- Teachers are not able to offer pupils or their parents unconditional confidentiality. If staff receive information about behaviour likely to cause harm to the young person or to others, they must pass it on to the appropriate agency where relevant, following the school's child protection procedures.
- Teachers should make it clear to pupils that although most information can be kept confidential, some may need to be passed on in the young person's best interests. However, the pupils will need to know when this has to happen, what will be done with the information and who will have access to it.
- In the case of illegal activity, action should be taken in the best interests of the pupil. This does not necessarily involve informing the police. Teachers are not statutorily required to inform the police about illegal drug activity, for example. The school's police liaison officer will provide guidance about specific instances.
- Teachers are not obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents, although where the teacher believes the pupil to be at moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, they must ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage them to seek support from their parents.
- Where outside agencies and others provide support for the citizenship programme, they must be made aware of, and abide by, the policy about disclosures and confidentiality. However, they may also have a role in providing advice and support directly to pupils. The boundary between these two roles must be agreed with the school and the distinction, in terms of right to confidentiality, be made clear to the pupils.
- Other professions are bound by their own codes of confidentiality. For example health professionals, such as the school nurse, are bound by the medical code of confidentiality in their work with children and young people.
- In lessons, teachers should establish from the beginning that it is inappropriate to disclose some personal information. Pupils need to be clear about not putting pressure on one another to answer questions about their own experiences. This also applies to any adult in the school.

Taken from QCA's support materials for schools 2000.

# Appendix F

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## Membership of Agreed Syllabus Conference & acknowledgements



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## **F1 Membership of Agreed Syllabus Conference**

### **Local Education**

#### **Authority Representatives**

Councillor Quintin Peppiatt (Chair)

Councillor Ayesha Chowdhury

Councillor Lakmini Shah

Councillor Mary Skyers

Councillor Ted Sparrowhawk

Keith Carter (Governors forum representative)

#### **Church of England Representatives**

Ellen Kemp (Vice chair)

Carole Davidson

Rev Dr J Freeman

Canon P Hartley

Rob Fox

Councillor Alec Kellaway

#### **Other Denominations/ Faith Representatives**

S Husain (Muslim)

Surinder Jandu (Sikh)

Prem Nath Fing (Hindu)

Steve Wilson (Pagan)

Yael Callaghan (Jewish)

Tom Booker (Free church)

Asok Kumar (Hindu)

Rahaman Mohammed (Muslim)

David Juneta (Muslim)

Venerable Manala Makure (Buddhist)

Sister Kathleen Colmer (Roman Catholic)

#### **Teacher Representatives**

Chetna Gandhi (primary)

Carmel Widdowson (primary)

Helen Yearnshire (primary)

Leilee Shirani (secondary)

Ann Azzopardi (primary)

Paul McCarthy (secondary)

#### **Local Authority lead officers**

Claire Clinton

Lucia Devine

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## **F2 Membership of teacher working party**

Newham Local Authority would like to thank the following teachers who have worked together for two years reviewing the Agreed Syllabus text and updating the support materials. This has all been accomplished in teachers own time and we are very grateful for their invaluable input.

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Vicarage Primary School

Helen Yearnshire

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Aisha Sheikh

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Leilee Shirani  
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Claire Clinton  
Local Authority RE Advisor

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