

BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL AND THE LEGAL CONTEXT

We follow the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus for 2019-2024. We recognise that Religious Education (RE) is a significant curriculum subject and a key component of a broad, balanced and rich curriculum. Religious Education in North Yorkshire is supported by SACRE (The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) and the School Improvement Service. A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by SACRE through an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by the local authority. This agreed syllabus has been developed with RE Today following consultation with SACRE and the young people and teachers of North Yorkshire.

Religious Education, through this Agreed Syllabus, will encourage and enable pupils to explore their own and other people's beliefs, values and traditions in meaningful and engaging ways. It will encourage pupils to share their diverse range of experiences and grow individually and together with sensitivity and respect towards people of all faiths and none.

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all registered pupils. As RE is not nationally determined, the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. It is the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2019-2024 that we use as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

Religion in North Yorkshire and the Region: Census figures from 2011

We know that it is crucial that our pupils are aware of the diverse religious beliefs and worldviews of people in North Yorkshire and the wider population. Census figures are one source for this kind of enquiry. The tables below provide some basic information, but much more information and more detail is available from the website: www.statistics.gov.uk.

Note that while some populations may be numbered in hundreds or the low thousands in our immediate area, we are educating pupils to live in a region, nation and world – not merely in a village.

Since 2001, the biggest change has been a 10% increase in the number of people identifying themselves as non-religious in the UK and a 12% fall in the number identifying themselves as Christians. But Christianity was still selected by 59% of the population as their chosen description of religious identity.

Religion in North Yorkshire, the region and the UK (rounded to hundreds or thousands)

Religion / Belief	North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humberside	England and Wales
Christianity	415 200	3 144 000	33 243 000
Islam	2 146	326 000	2 706 000
Hinduism	1 181	24 000	816 000
Sikhism	192	22 200	423 000
Judaism	563	9 900	263 000
Buddhism	1609	14 300	247 000
Other religious groups	1889	16 500	240 000
No religion	133 000	1 366 000	14 097 000
Unstated in Census	42 500	360 000	4 038 000

Our Aspiration

Here at Leavening, we aspire to inspire curiosity in our children to understand and embrace people from different backgrounds, faiths and ethnicities. The population of North Yorkshire is predominantly a white Christian community. We are aware that it is, therefore, unlikely that our children will have had significant exposure to people from other faiths and ethnic minorities in the local community. A key way that we help them to compensate for this is through teaching them to understand and recognise differences in faith, customs and appearance within an ethos of equality and mutual respect. We also embrace first hand learning opportunities such as visits to places of worship, visits and inviting visitors into school that will enhance our RE teaching and learning of RE.

We aspire to help the children to develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues which is an essential skill in our 21st century multi-cultural society.

We share in the North Yorkshire vision of a community where people of different beliefs and religions live side by side, displaying mutual respect, understanding and friendship. We recognise that it is essential that our children are supported in developing these qualities and, whilst growing in confidence, achieve a level of critical awareness that helps them to become builders and shapers of a better North Yorkshire and a better world.

We recognise that Religious Education plays a crucial part in developing our children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. Through the teaching of Religious Education, children gain a better understanding of themselves and their beliefs and also develop a knowledge and understanding of the differing beliefs of others.

Religious Education offers our children the means by which to understand how other people choose to live and to respect why they choose to live in that way. As well as developing factual knowledge of a variety of religions, Religious Education also encourages students to ask questions about life and develop self-reflection. We recognise the importance of developing the individual child culturally, spiritually, morally, and socially.

This Agreed Syllabus provides many opportunities for RE teaching and learning to challenge stereotypical views and to appreciate difference positively. The syllabus enables all pupils to consider the impact of people's beliefs on their actions and ways of life. The syllabus contributes to pupils' personal development and the schools' provision for spiritual, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC) and British Values. It provides a key context to develop children and young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge all forms of racism and discrimination. Increasing diversity and pluralism is part of the demographic picture, and the wider region is home to many diverse and active faith communities. We are educating children in their own locality, but also to live in a wider region, the UK and as world citizens.

Religious Education is a statutory subject for all pupils aged 5-18 and must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over). It is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.

The legislation in England specifies that:

RE is for all pupils:

- RE must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over). It is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.
- This requirement does not apply for children below compulsory school age (although there are many examples of good practice of RE in nursery classes).
- Special schools should ensure that every pupil receives RE 'as far as is practicable'.

RE is determined locally, not nationally:

- A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by a local authority.

- Local authority maintained schools without a religious character must follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus.
- Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.
- Religious Education is also compulsory in faith and non-faith academies and free schools, as set out in their funding agreements.
- Academies may use their locally agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with permission of the SACRE concerned), or devise their own curriculum.

RE is plural:

- The RE curriculum drawn up by a SACRE, or by an academy or free school, 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.
- The agreed syllabus has a duty 'to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner' and 'must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious belief'.⁸ Note that the term 'religion' encompasses both religious and non-religious beliefs.

THE PURPOSE OF RE

The Principal aim set out in the Agreed syllabus is as follows:

'The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.'

The following philosophy is key to our Religious Education teaching here at Leavening:

'RE explores big questions about life, in order to find out what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can make sense of religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living' (NYCC Agreed Syllabus 2019-2024)

- Religious Education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- In RE pupils learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- Pupils learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.
- Teaching therefore should equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue, so that they can participate positively in society, with its diverse religions and worldviews.
- Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

THE AIM(S) OF RE

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
 - identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses, offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
 - appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
 - express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
 - appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.
 3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
 - enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
 - articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

Strands of Teaching

Our teaching and learning of RE is based around the following 3 key strands:

1. Believing - Religious beliefs, teachings, sources; questions about meaning, purpose and truth.
2. Expressing - Religious and spiritual forms of expression; questions about identity and diversity
3. Living - Religious practices and ways of living; questions about values and commitments.

The children are also taught about the connections between these strands; encouraging them to think about the religions and world-views of others respectfully.

RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their child from the RE programme. This was first granted when Religious Education was religious instruction and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE has been very different to this for some time. It is inclusive and wide-ranging, exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. However, in the UK, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education. (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S71 (3)). This will be the parents' responsibility. However, it is good practice to talk to parents to ensure that they understand the aims and value of RE before honouring this right. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE.

Where parents have concerns about their children taking part in RE, it is beneficial to discuss their concerns with the Headteacher and/or Subject Leader. They will be able to discuss the RE programme and teaching methods in greater detail and given access to the RE unit materials and resources used. We firmly believe that Religious Education forms part of the basic curriculum in school and its teaching is enshrined in law. Our school is mindful that children growing up in North Yorkshire may have little contact with people from other faiths and cultures, and it is aware that it has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote good relations between people of different beliefs and ethnicities as part of its single equality duty.

THE PLANNING AND TEACHING OF RE

As mentioned previously, we use the North Yorkshire 2019-2024 Agreed syllabus to plan half-termly units of work for the children. The Agreed Syllabus has been integrated into our whole school curriculum and is embedded in our school ethos and values. These units of work have a clear and systematic progression both within and across the different age ranges, building on prior knowledge and skills. These units of work are focused on the Big Questions and key strands that feature in the syllabus.

As with our approach to the teaching of all subjects, we ensure that cross curricular opportunities are made with RE. We recognise that RE unlocks special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality. Children's skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision making and interpersonal skills will be developed. We also embrace visits to places of worship, visits and visitors that will enhance our RE teaching and learning of RE.

We believe that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum

What religions are to be taught?

The agreed syllabus requires that all pupils learn from Christianity in each key stage. In addition, pupils will learn from the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study.

Religious traditions are to be studied in depth as follows:

Schools should consider the pupils they serve in deciding whether to go beyond the minimum entitlements to learning about religions, which are that pupils should learn from:	
4-5s Reception	Children will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.
5-7s Key Stage 1	Christians and Muslims or Jewish people
7-11s Key Stage 2	Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people
11-14s Key Stage 3	Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists
14-16s Key Stage 4	Two religions required, usually including Christianity. This will be through a course in Religious Studies or Religious Education leading to a qualification approved under Section 96
16-19s RE for all	Religions and worldviews to be selected by schools and colleges as appropriate.

RE in EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) describes the phase of a child's education from birth to the end of the reception year at the age of five. Religious Education is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education does not extend to nursery classes in maintained schools. RE may, however, form a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the key stage. In the EYFS curriculum learning does not fit into boxes: play-based and child-centred approaches will encourage the learning to follow where the child's interest and curiosity leads.

The Agreed Syllabus for RE sets out experiences and opportunities and appropriate topics for children in the Foundation Stage. The suggestions made for the EYFS RE are good learning in themselves. These also connect to the EYFS 7 areas of learning.

Planned teaching experiences will support children's learning and development needs identified through holistic assessment. Good Early Years teaching stems from children's own experience and so many practitioners will find ways to draw on the wealth of religious or spiritual experiences that families many bring with them.

The EYFS statutory framework also outlines an expectation that practitioners reflect on the different ways in which children learn, the characteristics of effective learning:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy
- achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between
- ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

What do pupils get out of RE in this age group?

RE sits very firmly within the areas of personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. This framework enables children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships. They will do this through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. They will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community. Children will have opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness.

RE in our Nursery setting:

We recognise that activities children engage in during their nursery years are experiences which provide the building blocks for later development. Starting with things which are familiar to the children, and providing lots of hands-on activities and learning are an important part of pupils' learning at this stage.

Here are some examples of the approach to teaching Religious Education in our nursery setting:

- Creative play, make-believe, role play, dance and drama
- Dressing up and acting out scenes from stories, celebrations or festivals
- Making and eating festival food
- Talking and listening to each other; hearing and discussing stories of all kinds, including religious and secular stories with themes such as goodness, difference, the inner world of thoughts and feelings, and imagination
- Exploring authentic religious artefacts, including those designed for small children such as 'soft toy' artefacts or story books
- Seeing pictures, books and videos of places of worship and meeting believers in class
- Listening to religious music
- Starting to introduce religious terminology
- Work on nature, growing and life cycles or harvest
- Seizing opportunities spontaneously or linking with topical, local events such as celebrations, festivals, the birth of a new baby, weddings or the death of a pet
- Starting to talk about the different ways in which people believe and behave, and encouraging children to ask questions.

RE in KS1:

What do pupils get out of RE at this key stage?

- Pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.
- Religions and worldviews
- During the key stage, pupils should be taught knowledge, skills and understanding through learning about Christians and Muslims or Jewish people. Pupils may also encounter other religions and worldviews in thematic units, where appropriate.

RE in KS2:

What do pupils get out of RE at this key stage?

Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject specific vocabulary. They should be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils should learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

The overall aims of the curriculum at each key-stage are:

EYFS - Discovering RE; Key Stage 1 - Exploring RE; Key Stage 2 - Connecting RE.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING (see school Assessment policy)

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined in the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2019-2024, which is exemplified in detail in the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus Guidance Document D2 (A Progression overview for 5-14s) and D3 Documents (A Model for assessment).

In RE, by the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant Programme of Study, as in all subjects of the curriculum. The expectation is that pupils' achievements will be weighed up by teachers using criteria arising from the Programmes of Study.

The key question learning outcomes and end of key stage outcomes support teachers' planning for all pupils.

- Teachers in RE should plan their approach to the whole key stage with the learning intentions of the end of the key stage in clear view. Schools can make use of the suggested steps on the following pages to support their planning towards the end of key stage outcomes. Alternatively, they will need to devise their own programmes of assessment that will describe clear steps that lead to the end of key stage achievements.
- Using the learning outcomes for each key question is also essential when planning learning activities for pupils.
- Setting high expectations early in the key stage, in terms of the matters, skills and processes of RE is most likely to enable pupils to reach the highest possible standards for all groups of pupils.

The end of key stage statements can be used for reporting to parents.

- As with all subjects of the curriculum, we recognise that parents are entitled to expect an annual report which clearly describes the progress and achievement of each child in relation to the Programme of Study in RE.
- Good RE reporting is individual, positive, criterion referenced, accurate and diagnostic.

TIME ALLOCATION

We know that Schools have a statutory responsibility to deliver Religious Education to all pupils, except those withdrawn by parents. Schools must ensure that sufficient time is given in order to enable pupils to meet the expectations set out in this agreed syllabus, ensuring that the curriculum is coherent and shows progression, particularly across transitions between key stages. There is no single correct way of making appropriate provision for RE as long as the outcomes are met.

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus effectively, the expectation is that there is a minimum allocation of 5 per cent of curriculum time for RE. This is set out in the table below, and based on the most recent national guidance.

4–5s	36 hours of RE , e.g. 50 minutes a week or some short sessions implemented through continuous provision
5–7s:	36 hours of tuition per year (e.g. an hour a week, or less than an hour a week plus a series of RE days)
7–11s:	45 hours of tuition per year (e.g. an hour a week, or a series of RE days or weeks amounting to 45+ hours of RE)
11–14s:	45 hours of tuition per year (e.g. an hour a week))
14–16s:	5% of curriculum time, or 70 hours of tuition across the key stage (e.g. an hour a week for 5 terms, or 50 minutes per week, supplemented with off-timetable RE days)
16–19s:	Allocation of time for RE for all should be clearly identifiable.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Provision for RE is in accordance with the school's equal opportunities policy. In accordance with the aims of the school the pupils will develop an appreciation of and respect for the beliefs and philosophies of others. Pupils will be encouraged to value the rich variety of cultural traditions and lifestyles represented in Great Britain. It is acknowledged and respected that deep beliefs are held in the area of Religious Education. It is therefore our aim to deal with any matters arising as sensitively as possible. Provision for children with special educational needs, including more able children will follow the school's policies in these areas. Children's needs are carefully monitored and supported through teacher planning and assessment. This enables objectives, tasks, teaching methods, resources and teacher/adult input to be matched to pupil needs. It includes the use of more challenging objectives or extension materials and tasks for the more able children.

ROLE OF THE SUBJECT LEADER

The RE subject leader is Mrs Sarah Bennett. This role involves providing support and advice to other members of staff, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the responsibility for evaluating and reviewing the long-term planning and provision for RE across the school. The subject leader will also attend any relevant training and then provide updates to staff to extend their knowledge and expertise in RE.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints regarding Religious Education are dealt with in line with NYCC policy and the School's Complaint Procedure (see policy).