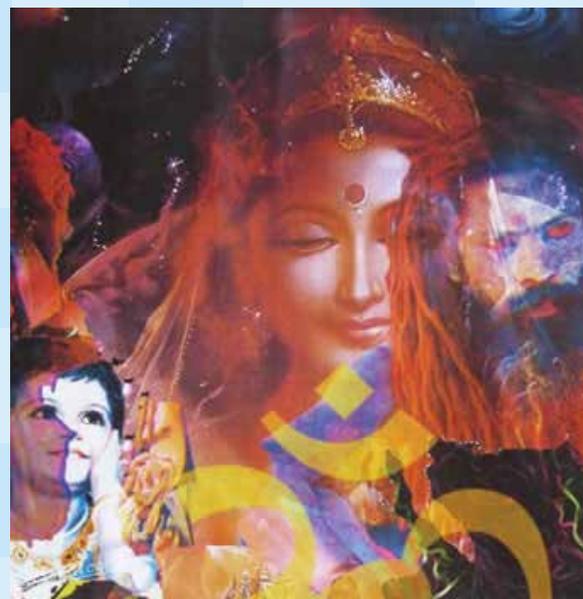


VERSION 1 - JUNE 2025

Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025-2030 Extract



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Forewords

At Gloucestershire Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) we are committed to promoting and supporting high quality RE in Gloucestershire schools and to this end, the last few years have had a strong focus on the content and design of a new agreed syllabus for Gloucestershire.

We are extremely fortunate to receive expert support and guidance from Stephen Pett, National RE Adviser and we benefit greatly from his in-depth knowledge and understanding of religious education.

In writing our new syllabus, a great deal of consideration has been given to recent developments in RE and the shift to include a religion and worldviews approach, which incorporates the use of ‘ways of knowing’.

Our new syllabus takes account of the handbook for curriculum writers, ‘Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England’, published by the RE Council of England and Wales in 2024, and has been written with the needs of our children, and the needs of those educating them, at the forefront to ensure our young people have access to high quality religious education in Gloucestershire.

As this is a considerable shift in approach, and one that we want to get right for our children and teachers, we have made the decision to stagger the roll out of the syllabus over the next academic year. This will allow teachers time to become familiar with the new approach, and it will afford SACRE the opportunity to consider your views before our syllabus is finalised.

Julia Matson – Chair of SACRE

Gloucestershire (SACRE) have for the past few years been closely following the national developments in RE. This has helped us to develop and shape a new syllabus that embraces a Religion and Worldviews (RW) approach.

One of its key features is how seriously it takes into consideration context and demographics. This is extremely important for Gloucestershire, given the diversity of our local schools, and the RE context. It was indeed a significant influence in the development of the Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus of 2017 (see Appendix 7). SACRE members hope that school leaders will recognise much of the content and also welcome the fact that there is a fresh and exciting way of engaging with it. We believe that it is a really rich and user-friendly document.

The syllabus establishes a pedagogy that explains the selection of content, equips teachers and pupils to be clear about how they are going to investigate it, and supports pupils (and teachers) to recognise how their personal worldviews both affect, and are affected by, their studies in RE.

We are delighted that the syllabus offers long-term model plans for primary schools. These exemplify the importance of understanding what pupils are learning and why, as well as supporting schools with when to teach elements so that there is a clear sequence and progression of learning.

The double-page planning units are also a welcome innovation that aim to support schools but without being restrictive. SACRE look forward to your interim feedback so that we can develop an even more robust and practical syllabus over the coming year.

Teresa Cross – Education Lead, Gloucestershire County Council, LA officer on SACRE

Introduction

The 2025 draft Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus has been created for Gloucestershire SACRE, intended to provide a syllabus for RE in all Gloucestershire schools. Since 1944, all schools have been required to teach RE to all pupils on roll (except those withdrawn by their parents, see Appendix 1). RE remains part of the basic curriculum for all pupils.

This syllabus explains the value and purposes of RE for all pupils and specifies for teachers what shall be taught in each age group. It provides a coherent framework for setting high standards of learning in RE and enabling pupils to reach their potential in this subject. It builds on the good practice established in the previous Gloucestershire syllabuses over many years.

Continuity:

- **Coherent understanding:** This syllabus continues to advocate helping pupils to develop a coherent understanding of several religions, by studying one religious or non-religious worldview on at a time (systematic study), before bringing them together and comparing different traditions (thematic study). The thematic study allows pupils to draw together their learning each year, recalling and embedding it as they revisit content and extend their understanding (see the [model long-term plan](#), section 9).
- **Religious and non-religious worldviews studied:** This syllabus retains its emphasis on going deeper rather than broader, examining four religious worldviews in primary, alongside non-religious worldviews held by pupils. Humanism, as an example of an organised non-religious worldview, is given more space in the 2025 syllabus.
- **Core concepts:** Clarity about identifiable core concepts of religions and beliefs helps teachers and pupils to understand how beliefs and practices connect, so that pupils can build effectively on prior learning as they progress through the school (see the [key question overview](#) in section 8 and concept outlines in Appendix 11 – *updated versions of 2017 outlines to follow*).
- **RE and personal development:** The 2025 syllabus retains its emphasis on RE contributing to the personal development of pupils. RE is not simply about gaining knowledge and understanding about religion and worldviews. It also helps pupils to develop their personal worldviews and reflect on how to live, in the light of their learning, developing understanding, skills and attitudes. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as important opportunities for exploring British values.
- **Open, enquiring RE:** The 2025 syllabus continues to offer open, enquiring, exploratory RE, suitable for all pupils, whether their personal worldviews are religious or non-religious, or a more complex jigsaw of elements of both. Research suggests that most young people are growing up without any religious component in their upbringing, and many of them are non-religious (note the [local Census statistics](#) in Appendix 7).

New emphasis:

- **A religion and worldviews approach:** The syllabus applies a significant new way of planning and teaching, basing its new pedagogy on the *Handbook* from the RE Council of England and Wales, in particular, its National Statement of Entitlement.¹ The approach is integrated throughout the syllabus, in terms of the principal aim and the purposes of RE, the selection of content, and the pedagogical approach. It affects what is taught and how it is taught, and brings into focus how pupils' own position (their personal worldviews) both affect and are affected by their encounters in the subject (see p.13)
- **'Ways of knowing':** Ofsted² drew attention to the value of examining *how* pupils study religion and worldviews. The language of 'ways of knowing' is incorporated within the pedagogy, following the National Statement of Entitlement. These connect with disciplinary methods.
- **Diversity:** The 2025 syllabus takes opportunities to identify local examples from religious and non-religious worldviews, as well as to examples from global religion and non-religion.

¹ [Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England: a Handbook for curriculum writers](#), Stephen Pett, RE Council, 2024

² [Religious education research review](#), Ofsted, 2021

1. The purpose of religious education

The Gloucestershire syllabus 2025 asserts the importance and value of religious education for all pupils, with on-going benefits for an open, articulate and understanding society.

The principal aim for religious education in Gloucestershire is for pupils to understand how worldviews influence people's lives, including their own, through the study of religious and non-religious worldviews, so that they better understand themselves and the world around them, and become better equipped to contribute to and flourish in society.

This principal aim incorporates a religion and worldviews (RW) approach. RE following this approach will help pupils to understand:

- a variety of responses to and understandings of the world as presented by religious and non-religious worldviews
- relationships between beliefs, teachings, forms of expression within organised worldviews, and the lived experience of adherents
- questions of meaning, purpose and truth, including about ultimate reality, and how these questions may be posed, addressed, understood, evaluated and responded to differently within worldviews and across disciplines
- the concepts, language and ways of knowing that help organise and make sense of religion and worldviews
- how to deploy a range of different tools and methods used to investigate religious and non-religious worldviews
- how their own personal worldview shapes their encounters with and responses to the world, and how their context, experiences and study can shape their personal worldview.

The aims of RE

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim. The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. Understand how religious and non-religious worldviews influence people's lives, so that they can:

- identify and make sense of religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, teachings and traditions that shape organised, communal and individual worldviews
- explain how and why worldviews both form and express people's ways of being, behaving and belonging
- explain a range of ways in which worldviews offer responses to fundamental questions, provide guidance and influence people in how to live

2. Engage with religious and non-religious worldviews in thoughtful and scholarly ways, so that they can:

- select and use an appropriate range of research methods, weighing up their findings
- recognise how the lived experience of individuals and communities relates to the teachings and traditions of organised religious and non-religious worldviews
- understand the role of dialogue and interpretation in the dynamic development of organised worldviews, and developing their own skills of dialogue and interpretation

3. Understand themselves, and others, and their personal worldviews better, so that they can:

- use scholarly methods to come to informed judgements about the answers reached through their study, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses
- draw attention to their own position, and others', in their learning, both in terms of impact on their encounters and also the effect of the encounters of their own worldviews, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response
- challenge ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, being and ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding, including potential choices and responses to the world.

2. What religious and non-religious worldviews are to be taught?

The Law states that an 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'.³

This agreed syllabus requires that all pupils develop understanding of Christianity in each key stage. In addition, across the age range, pupils will develop understanding of the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Buddhism, the Hindu Traditions, Islam, Judaism and Sikhi. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study in thematic units.

Pupils are to study in depth the religious and non-religious worldviews of the following groups:

4–5s Reception	Children will encounter Christian worldviews and other religious and non-religious worldviews, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.	Consideration of other religious and non-religious worldviews can occur at any key stage, as appropriate to the school context. Humanism is a recognised example of a non-religious worldview to be studied within this syllabus.
5–7s Key Stage 1	Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims	
7–11s Key Stage 2	Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Jews and non-religious worldviews, such as those of Humanists	
11–14s Key Stage 3	Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs and non-religious worldviews, such as those of Humanists	
14–16s Key Stage 4	Two religions are required, usually including Christianity. This will be through a course in Religious Studies or Religious Education leading to a qualification approved under Section 96. ⁴	
16–19s RE for all	Religious and non-religious worldviews to be selected by schools and colleges as appropriate.	

Important notes:

This is the **minimum requirement**. Many schools may wish to go beyond the minimum.

- **The range of religious groups in the UK.** Groups such as Quakers, the Bahá'í faith, Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or the Jains are not excluded from study in this scheme for RE. Schools are always advised to make space for the worldviews of the local community, which is why the table above expresses minimum requirements.
- **Notice the language.** 'Christians' rather than 'Christianity', 'Hindus' rather than 'Hinduism'. This is to reflect the fact that RE starts with encounters with living faiths and beliefs rather than the history and belief structures of traditions. This also recognises the diversity within and between religions and other traditions.
- **Non-religious worldviews.** Good practice in RE, as well as European and domestic legislation, has established the principle that RE should be inclusive of both religious and non-religious worldviews.

³ Education Act 1996 section 375.

⁴ Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This requires maintained schools to provide only qualifications approved by the Secretary of State. See www.dfes.gov.uk/section96/uploads/download_records_full.xls

Schools should ensure that the content and delivery of the RE curriculum are inclusive in this respect.

- This syllabus requires that, in addition to the religions required for study at each key stage, non-religious worldviews, including Humanism as an example, should also be explored in such a way as to ensure that pupils develop mutual respect and tolerance of those with different worldviews. This is enabled through the following units: F3, F4, F5, F6, 1.9, 1.10, L2.9, L2.10, L2.11, L2.12, U2.9, U2.10, U2.11, 3.16-22.
- Humanism is an important example of a non-religious worldview and should be studied within this syllabus. Non-religious worldviews are very diverse, and some of this diversity should also be encountered, not least because most pupils will have non-religious worldviews of their own.
- **Depth rather than breadth.** Learning from four religions across a key stage is demanding: the syllabus does not recommend tackling six religions in a key stage. Depth is more important than overstretched breadth. *Current guidance (e.g. Ofsted report 2024⁵) emphasises that where the curriculum prioritises depth of study, pupils learn more.*
- **Flexible thematic units.** The thematic units offered in this syllabus allow for schools to draw on different traditions, where they fit the theme and question, and where there are representatives of those traditions in the school and local community.

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-religious-education/deep-and-meaningful-the-religious-education-subject-report

3. What is a religion and worldviews approach?

This syllabus applies a religion and worldviews (RW) approach, in line with developments in RE over the last few years. It offers a new way of handling religious and non-religious beliefs and ways of living in the RE classroom and represents a significant shift in the subject. It reshapes the subject away from a focus on gathering information about ‘world religions’ toward gaining an understanding of how worldviews influence people’s lives, including pupils’ own. (More information about these developments can be found in [Appendix 3](#).)

The RW approach is set out in the RE Council publication, *Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England: a Handbook for curriculum writers* (2024). At its heart is a National Statement of Entitlement (see [section 5](#) and [Appendix 4](#)).

This sits behind the principal aim, the three aims and the pedagogical approach taken in this syllabus.

Components of a religion and worldviews approach

An RW (RW) approach looks at worldviews as objects of study, as part of how we study them, and as part of the experience of those doing the studying.

- As **objects of study**, an RW approach examines organised religious and non-religious worldviews, including (for example) their doctrines, rituals, creative expression, ethics and spirituality, expressed through institutions and in the responses offered to existential and philosophical questions. These organised worldviews are also studied through the experience of individuals, whose relation to the organised traditions will vary. Not all adherents are equally orthodox, for example.
- As **part of how we study them**, pupils engage with this content in scholarly ways. They reflect on how the kinds of questions we ask require different ways of finding out the answers, and different measures to check the reliability or truth of the findings. There is a balance between engagement with the theology of traditions and the lived experience of adherents.
- As **part of the experience of those doing the studying**, an RW approach brings into focus the personal worldviews of pupils (and teachers) and examines how they affect and are affected by the encounter and engagement with subject content.

Some differences the RW approach brings

- An RW approach moves on from the emphasis on the ‘world religions paradigm’, where religions are presented as having neatly comparable beliefs and practices. It emphasises instead the fluid lived reality of adherents alongside formal or doctrinal aspects of religions, and the interplay between orthodoxy and lived experience.
- An RW approach addresses the changing demographics of the world, our nation and our region, such as by exploring the diversity of non-religious worldviews that shape the lives of many of our pupils, teachers and communities.
- An RW approach supports pupils in recognising, reflecting on and developing their own personal worldview, as part of inducting them into scholarly virtues, methods and processes with which we can study religious and non-religious worldviews.

What do the changes look like in practice?

The REC Handbook suggests some differences between ‘world religions’ questions and those asked in an RW approach.

Some key features of ‘world religions’ questions:

- the focus tends to be on the communication of information, transmitting a form of settled knowledge that is overly reduced and unsustainably simplified
- they tend to be abstract and context-free, as if there are answers that might apply universally

An RW approach is looking more for questions that:

- include an interpretive element (e.g. how do these people understand and apply this?)
- offer a clear context (e.g. how do these two people/groups respond at an identified time and place, and why?)
- recognise that there are different answers that are valid (e.g. different individuals, groups, or traditions may have different responses, and that these may change across time and place)
- include an evaluative element, recognising that different answers may be acceptable in different contexts. (REC Handbook p. 63)

These features can be seen in the revised key questions in this 2025 Gloucestershire syllabus.

The outcomes of an RW approach in Gloucestershire schools

By following the aims and applying the RW approach set out in the key questions and units of study, this syllabus is designed to enable pupils to:

Know how worldviews influence people's lives, by:

- introducing pupils to the rich world of religion and non-religion, locally and globally, as a key part of understanding the world, what it means to be human, and how they might respond
- stimulating pupils' curiosity about, and interest in, this diversity of worldviews, both religious and non-religious
- expanding their understanding about the nature of worldviews, and how different worldviews, religious and non-religious, influence individuals, communities and society
- developing pupils' appreciation of the complexity of worldviews, and pupils' awareness of the nature of religious language and experience
- giving pupils opportunities to explore the relationship between religious and non-religious worldviews and literature, culture and the arts

Know how to study religious and non-religious worldviews, by:

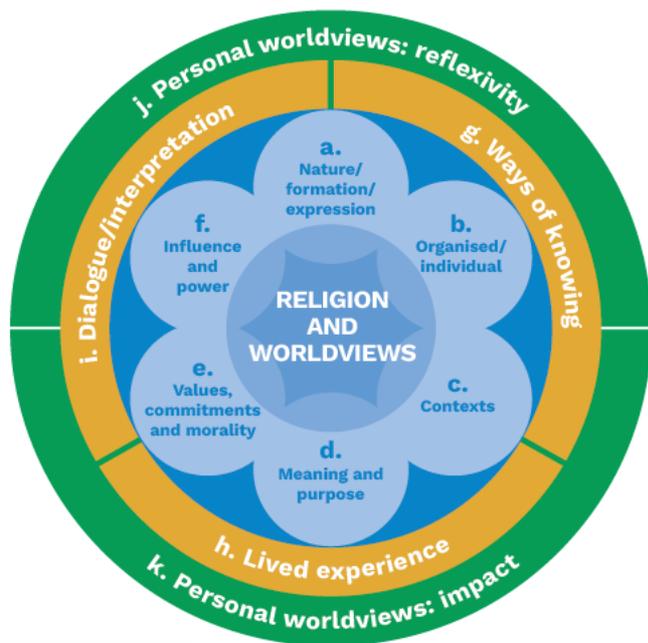
- inducting pupils into the academic processes and methods by which we can study religion and religious and non-religious worldviews
- developing pupils' awareness that learning about worldviews involves interpreting the significance and meaning of information they study
- equipping pupils with the knowledge, understanding and attributes to make scholarly and reflexive judgements about religion and worldviews
- enabling pupils, by the end of their studies, to identify positions and presuppositions of different academic disciplines and their implications for understanding

Knowing themselves, and others, better through reflecting on religious and non-religious worldviews, by:

- giving pupils opportunities for reflecting on the sources of their own developing worldviews and considering how they may benefit from exploring the profound and complex religious and non-religious heritage of humanity
- providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on the relationship between their personal worldviews and the content studied, equipping them to develop their own informed responses in the light of their learning
- helping pupils to recognise how and why people's worldviews differ, and the implications of these differences
- giving opportunities for pupils to consider how they might respond to the way the world is, and play a part in how they might want the world to be in the future
- preparing pupils for active citizenship as adults in a world where diversity of views on religion and worldviews is increasing.

5. National Statement of Entitlement: the basis for the teaching and learning approach

The teaching and learning approach is based on the religion and worldviews approach set out in the Handbook for Curriculum Writers 2024.⁶ At the heart of this is the National Statement of Entitlement (NSE) (See below and [Appendix 3](#) for details). This sets out an approach for selecting and exploring content in the classroom, around three broad elements. These elements of **content**, **engagement** and **position**, form the basis for the Gloucestershire syllabus 2025.



The **content** strand (blue) sets out six core features of worldviews that pupils need to understand in deepening ways through their RE lessons.

The **engagement** strand (gold) is about *how* the pupils encounter the worldviews studied.

The **position** strand (green) is about the pupils' growing awareness of how their own personal worldviews play a role in their learning and living.

The different strands of the NSE are labelled a–k. Each unit of work will draw on the three elements (content, engagement, position) and a selection of the strands (a–k). These strands shape the selection of content and the way the content is handled in the classroom.

These strands are *not* to be seen as a tick-list. They weave together across the curriculum. This syllabus follows the Handbook for Curriculum Writers in applying the metaphor of the mixing desk to explain how the strands are used. See below and [Appendix 4](#).

⁶ [Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England: a Handbook for curriculum writers](#), Stephen Pett, RE Council, 2024.

The National Statement of Entitlement

The National Statement of Entitlement (NSE) sets out:

- a benchmark for standards in a religion and worldviews curriculum about how worldview(s) influence human life
- a pedagogical tool for the selection of content and of appropriate teaching and learning approaches to enrich and deepen pupils' understanding of and scholarly engagement with religion and worldviews.

Note that wherever the NSE refers to worldviews, it means both religious and non- religious worldviews.

Each unit of work in the Gloucestershire agreed syllabus draws on a number of these statements, referred to by letter in the question overview. Each unit contributes to pupils' overarching understanding of elements of the NSE, and thus their understanding of how worldviews work and how they influence human life, including their own.

Content	
Core Statements	Expanded statements
<p>a. Nature/formation/ expression</p> <p>What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences.</p>	<p>The nature and variety of worldviews, and ways in which people's worldviews are formed through a complex mix of influences and experiences, including (for example) rituals, practices, texts, teachings, stories, inspiring individuals, the creative arts, family, tradition, culture, everyday experiences and actions, and interactions with others and in society. How these may also act as ways of expressing and communicating worldviews.</p>
<p>b. Organised/individual</p> <p>How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews.</p>	<p>Ways in which people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or (sometimes) institutional worldviews. For example, how individual worldviews may be consciously held or tacit; how they develop in relation to wider communities; how individual and organised worldviews are dynamic; the degree to which individual worldviews may be influenced and shaped by organised worldviews.</p>
<p>c. Contexts</p> <p>How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change.</p>	<p>The fact that worldviews have contexts, reflecting their time and place, shaping and being shaped by these, maintaining continuity and also changing; ways in which they are highly diverse and often develop in interaction with each other. (This applies to organised worldviews as well as to individual worldviews.)</p>
<p>d. Meaning and purpose</p> <p>How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience.</p>	<p>Ways in which worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience, such as questions of ultimate reality, existence, meaning, purpose, knowledge, truth, creativity, identity and diversity. Ways in which worldviews may play different roles in providing people with ways of making sense of existence and/ or their lives, including space for mystery, ambiguity and paradox.</p>
<p>e. Values, commitments & morality</p> <p>How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life.</p>	<p>Ways in which worldviews may provide a vision of, and guidance on, how to be a good person and live a good life, and may offer ideas of justice, right and wrong, value, beauty, truth and goodness. Ways in which individuals and communities may express their values through their commitments.</p>
<p>f. Influence and power</p> <p>How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies</p>	<p>Ways in which worldviews influence people (e.g. providing a 'grand narrative' or story for understanding the world) and influence the exercise of power in societies (e.g. on social norms for communities, or in relation to conflict or peace-making). How society and people can also influence and shape worldviews.</p>

Engagement	
Core Statements	Expanded statements
<p>g. Ways of knowing The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing.</p>	<p>The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing. Questions and methods should be carefully chosen, recognising that there are different understandings of what knowledge is deemed reliable, valid, credible, truthful etc.</p>
<p>h. Lived experience The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people.</p>	<p>The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people (e.g. religious, non-religious, embodied, diverse, fluid, material, experiential) in relation to local and global contexts, recognising the complex reality of worldviews as they are held, shared and expressed by people in real life.</p>
<p>i. Dialogue/interpretation The field of study of worldviews is to be shown as a dynamic area of debate.</p>	<p>The field of study of worldviews is to be encountered as a dynamic area of dialogue and debate, and one which engages pupils with practices of interpretation and critical judgement.</p>
Position	
Core Statements	Expanded statements
<p>j. Personal worldviews: reflexivity Pupils will reflect on and potentially develop their personal worldviews in the light of their study.</p>	<p>Pupils will come to understand their own worldview in greater depth, and how it relates to the worldviews of others, becoming more reflective and reflexive. As they develop this awareness of their positionality in relation to that of others, they will be equipped to make informed, justifiable judgements on how (far) this understanding prepares them for life in a diverse world.</p>
<p>k. Personal worldviews: impact Pupils will reflect on how their worldviews affect their learning.</p>	<p>Pupils will develop their understanding of how their encounters with the subject content of RE are affected and shaped by their worldviews, whether conscious or not, and that this is also true for everyone else. They will reflect on how (far) their learning may have an impact on their worldview.</p>

Stephen Pett *Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in RE in England: A handbook for curriculum writers* © REC 2024, used by permission.

15. 14-19

Statutory requirements

All state-funded schools must teach RE to all students on school rolls, including all those in 14–19 education (unless withdrawn by their parents, or, if 18 or over, they withdraw themselves). It is important that teaching enables suitable progression from the end of Key Stage 3, in varied ways that meet the learning needs of all students.

All students can reasonably expect their learning will be accredited, and **this agreed syllabus requires that all 14–16 students must pursue an accredited course** in Religious Studies or Religious Education leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 (see footnote, [section 2](#)). The agreed syllabus does not require that every individual student be entered for this examination: that is a matter for schools.

Appropriate modes of accreditation include nationally accredited courses in RE such as GCSE and A level RS, and a wide range of enrichment courses and opportunities, such as the Extended Project Qualification. Good practice examples include many schools where all students take GCSE RS courses at 16, since these qualifications are an excellent platform for 14–16 RE.

Note that teachers must ensure that RE in these phases **accord equal respect to religious and non-religious worldviews**. Following a GCSE course does not automatically fulfil this (see [Appendix 2](#)). ('Equal respect' does not entail equal time.)

70 hours of tuition or 5% of curriculum time across Key Stage 4 is the normal requirement by which students can achieve the standards of the GCSE short course in Religious Studies. This is the minimum benchmark for RE provision at Key Stage 4 for schools using this syllabus. 140 hours of tuition is needed for GCSE RS Full Courses, in line with other GCSE subjects.

Schools should provide opportunities for those who wish to take A-levels, alongside core RE for 16–19s. The minimum requirement is ten hours of core RE across Year 12–13.

What do students gain from RE at this age?

All students should extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of religion, and of religious and non-religious worldviews, taking account of local, national and global contexts. Building on their prior learning, they will extend their understanding of ways in which religious and non-religious worldviews are both formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences. They will recognise and account for the fluid relationship between people's individual, personal worldviews and any organised worldview to which they belong or with which they identify. They will deepen their learning about how context affects worldviews, for example, historically, geographically or theologically, by drawing on a variety of case studies. They will examine ways in which religious and non-religious worldviews offer responses to fundamental questions of ultimate reality, meaning, purpose, truth, identity, for example. They will gain a sophisticated understanding of ways in which worldviews influence people's values, commitments and moral choices. They will be able to recognise how organised and personal worldviews can exert power and influence in different ways, both for good and ill. Students should be able to apply appropriate disciplinary methods to address questions, selecting suitable sources including, as appropriate, lived experience and the teachings and practices of organised traditions, and weighing up the answers. They will recognise that there are different understandings of what knowledge is deemed reliable, valid, credible, truthful etc. Throughout, students will apply a scholarly understanding of how their own position – their personal worldview – affects their encounters with the content studied, and that their learning can affect their position.

Specifically, students should be taught to... **[to follow] GCSE and Core RE**

Appendix 1: Legal requirements: what does the legislation in England say?

RE is for all pupils:

- Every pupil has an entitlement to religious education (RE).
- RE is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum' 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).¹¹
- 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'.¹²
- The 'basic' school curriculum includes the national curriculum, RE and relationships and sex education.

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.¹³
- 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 academies and free schools, as set out in their funding agreements. Academies may use the local agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with permission of the SACRE concerned) or devise their own curriculum. This agreed syllabus has been written to support academies in Gloucestershire to meet the requirements of their funding agreement.

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'.¹⁴
- According to case law, 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'.¹⁵ Note that the term 'religion' encompasses both religious and non-religious beliefs.¹⁶

As education policy changes, the legal requirement for RE for all registered pupils remains unchanged. RE is an entitlement for all pupils, unless they have been withdrawn by their parents from some or all of the RE curriculum.

Right of withdrawal

This was first granted when RE was actually religious *instruction* and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE is very different now – open, broad, exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. However, parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons or any part of the RE curriculum¹⁷ and the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Where the pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parents want the pupil to receive. These

¹¹ School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 19; Education Act 2002, section 80.

¹² The Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Regulation 5A.

¹³ Education Act 1996 Schedule 31.

¹⁴ Education Act 1996 section 375.

¹⁵ www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/r-fox-v-ssf.pdf. 'Equal respect' does not entail equal time.

¹⁶ In accordance with Human Rights Act 1988.

¹⁷ School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S71 (3).

arrangements will be made by the parents; the school is not expected to make these arrangements. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or by another school in the locality. If neither approach is practicable, the pupil may receive external RE teaching as long as the withdrawal does not have a significant impact on the pupil's attendance. Schools should have a policy setting out their approach to provision and withdrawal. 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. More guidance on withdrawal can be found in *Religious education in English schools: non-statutory guidance 2010*, available online at www.gov.uk/government/publications/religiouseducation-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010

RE, academies and free schools

Free schools are academies in law and have the same requirement to provide RE. In this document, any reference to academies includes free schools. As set out in their funding agreements, all academies are required to provide RE for all pupils, from Reception to Sixth Form, except those whose parents exercise their right to withdrawal. An academy must adopt a syllabus for RE. There is no requirement for an academy to adopt a locally agreed syllabus, as long as its own RE syllabus meets the requirements for a locally agreed syllabus, set out in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The requirements are that a syllabus must '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'.

RE is not subject to nationally prescribed purposes of study, aims, attainment targets and assessment arrangements, but it is subject to inspection. Where schools are not using an agreed syllabus, standards will be judged in relation to the expectations set out in the RE Council's *National Content Standard (2024)*, which is based on the National Statement of Entitlement in the RE Council's Handbook.

The Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus 2025–2030 fulfils the legal requirements set out above, and builds upon the REC's Handbook (2024)¹⁸. It is written to support academies in meeting the requirements of their funding agreements. Academies are encouraged to adopt the syllabus, taking advantage of the resources and support that it offers.

¹⁸ [Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England: a Handbook for curriculum writers](#), Stephen Pett, RE Council, 2024

Appendix 2: Time for religious education

Schools have a statutory responsibility to deliver religious education to all pupils, except those withdrawn by parents (see [Appendix 1](#)).

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 five 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

Important notes:

- **RE is legally required for all pupils.** Plural RE that conveys and accords equal respect to different religions and non-religious worldviews (e.g. Humanism) is a core subject and an entitlement for all pupils throughout their schooling, from Reception year up to and including Key Stage 5. For schools offering GCSE short course RE in Y9 and Y10, there is still a requirement that there is identifiable RE in Y11. (Note that teachers should ensure that KS4 accords equal respect to religious and non-religious worldviews. Following a GCSE course does not automatically fulfil this requirement.)
- **RE is different from assembly/collective worship.** Curriculum time for RE is distinct from the time spent on collective worship or school assembly, even though making links between the collective worship and the purposes and themes of RE would be good practice. The times given above are for RE.
- **Delivery of RE.** Current guidance (e.g. from Ofsted) emphasises the importance of regular RE lessons, to support pupils in remembering more. An RE themed day, or week of study can complement (but should not replace) the regular programme of timetabled lessons.
- **RE should be taught in clearly identifiable time.** There is a common frontier between RE and such subjects as literacy, citizenship or PSHE. However, the times given above are explicitly for the clearly identifiable teaching of religious education, meeting the requirements of the syllabus. In EYFS, teachers should be able to indicate the opportunities they are providing to integrate RE into children’s learning.
- **Coherence and progression.** Any school in which head teachers and governors do not plan to allocate sufficient curriculum time for RE is unlikely to enable pupils to achieve the standards set out in this syllabus. While schools are expected to make their own decisions about how to divide up curriculum time, schools must ensure that sufficient time is given to RE so that pupils can make sufficient progress to reach the standard set out by this syllabus.