

# Hillingdon Religious Education Syllabus 2017

## Preamble

**This Syllabus Revision is very similar to the current syllabus with one major addition of including Humanism as an option under the other Faith Strands.**

**Other changes are in the Faith and Values Strand and updates in the advice section.**

(Contents and comments pages to be completed)

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### **Purpose and entitlement to Religious Education**

Religion and beliefs inform our values and are reflected in what we say and how we behave. RE is an important subject in itself, developing an individual's knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society.

Religious Education is an important facet of Hillingdon's young people's education as it informs our students about how religious beliefs, embedded in a vast array of faiths, provides the underpinning for the ways they people live their lives and provides a significant contribution to their decision making with regard to right and wrong action. Given this, the study of religion both in terms of its content and its enactments is crucial to the achievement of an educated person in Hillingdon today.

RE can thus make a fundamental contribution to community cohesion, citizenship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Nevertheless, children and young people must have also an understanding of what it is to be someone of no religious faith. Furthermore, the fact that the locally agreed syllabus is produced with the involvement of all aspects of the local community and its schools, including those that are not tied to the locally agreed syllabus, helps ensure that it supports community cohesion, including inter-faith working.

RE equips pupils with the skills to understand and explain the human values which are shared between religious and other worldviews. They 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. To achieve this RE must be taught in an objective and pluralistic manner, and not as indoctrination into a particular faith or belief.

Teaching RE should foster and develop key discernment skills including interpreting, understanding and evaluating texts, the knowledge in the selection of authoritative texts and critical thinking skills. This will lead to a high level of religious literacy among our young people with the skills to participate positively in our contemporary society.

Every pupil in a maintained school has an entitlement to Religious Education. The place of Religious Education (RE) in the curriculum of maintained schools in England has not changed since the 1944 Education Act. While the National Curriculum excluding RE was first introduced in 1988 the distinctive place of Religious Education whose content is determined by a locally agreed syllabus for maintained schools that do not have a particular faith character has remained.

Religious Education remains as a subjects that have to be taken throughout the years of statutory education, and within schools up to the age of 19, unless parents withdraw their children from RE or the young people over 18 seek to do so themselves. The governments of the United Kingdom have continued to state that RE “is a very important subject in the school curriculum”.

By not being included within the National Curriculum, the syllabus continues to be able to reflect the local demographic of faith community.

For most people throughout the world, religious beliefs embedded in a vast array of faiths provides the underpinning for the ways they live their lives and provides a significant contribution to their decision making with regard to right and wrong action. Given this, the study of religion both in terms of its content and its practices is crucial to the achievement of an educated person in England today. RE can thus make a fundamental contribution to community cohesion, citizenship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Nevertheless, children and young people must have also an understanding of what it is to be someone of no religious faith, whether agnostic or atheist. Furthermore, the fact that the locally agreed syllabus is produced with the involvement of all aspects of the local community and its schools, including those that are not tied to the locally agreed syllabus, helps ensure that it supports community cohesion, including inter- faith working. To achieve this RE must be taught in an objective and pluralistic manner, and not as indoctrination into a particular faith or belief.

A number of legislative changes within and beyond the world of education in both Britain and Europe have implications for RE. The Human Rights Act 1998, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2006 contribute to the ‘bigger picture’ within which RE is provided in schools and experienced by children and young people.

## **The aims of Religious Education in Hillingdon**

The following aims will be delivered in all maintained schools and academies which adopt this syllabus.

To enable children and young people, according to their ability and level of development to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions, principally Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism as well as those with no faith allegiance, all of which are represented in Hillingdon
- learn from different world religions and provide opportunities to explore and express their own responses and personal beliefs
- understand the relationship between beliefs and practices
- develop an understanding of the influence of faiths, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
- develop personal learning and thinking skills pertinent to Religious Education, such as questioning, investigation, communication, expression and evaluation and to promote the ability to make reasoned, critical and informed moral judgements
- combat prejudice.

Further we expect Religious Education to:

- encourage children and young people to respect and value the right of people to hold differing beliefs, including those with no faith, and to cultivate understanding and respect in a society with a diversity of faiths.

And in line with Section 78(1) of the 2002 Education Act to:

- contribute to the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and help prepare children and young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

### **Assessment in Religious Education**

Religious education equips pupils with the skills to understand and explain the human values which are shared between religious and other worldviews and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus acknowledges that some aspects of RE are easier to assess than others. With this in mind, teachers are not expected to make judgements about pupil's moral development or spiritual insight. Nonetheless, as with other subjects, assessment can be used to help pupils to make progress in RE.

In Hillingdon we wish to empower our teachers to use their professional skills and judgement in the task of assessment for Religious Education. Assessment is complex, and there is no one method or approach that can be applied to all contexts. This guidance brings together a range of current best practice to support schools in developing their assessment of RE. The Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus for RE is broadly in line with the national non-statutory framework provided by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (2013). (Add Appendix)

Good assessment requires continual dialogue and revision. Schools are strongly advised to provide opportunities for all teachers of RE to collaborate, making use of exemplification materials and to moderate pupils' work.

Assessment is divided into the following three categories.

Aim A: Know and Understand

Aim B: Express and Communicate

Aim C: Gain and deploy skills

The key issues when assessing a piece of student's work are:

1. Does the pupil directly address the question asked?
2. Does the pupil's work reflect the objective(s) being taught?
3. Does the pupil give good and sound detail and explanation?
4. Does the pupil show good use of relevant terminology and a comprehensive coverage of the material?

**Appendix\*** The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (2013) A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England 13-

## **Reporting on Religious Education**

Headteachers at maintained schools, including maintained special schools must prepare annual reports for every pupil's parents. The school must make arrangements for parents to discuss the report with their child's teacher, if the parents wish to do so.

Religious education is a statutory subject for all pupils registered at a maintained school, except for pupils:

- in nursery classes
- who have been withdrawn by their parents under section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

It is a general requirement that schools report pupil's progress in religious education to parents. There is no required format for reports.

Therefore, schools will need to ensure that, as a minimum, annual reports to parents, carers and guardians include a statement about the pupil's progress and achievement in Religious Education, and that a copy of the annual report is retained within the pupil's file.

Information based on such reports must be given to the Governing Body and that statutory requirements, as laid down by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual), with regard to the transfer of information between schools is met.

## **Academies**

Academies should fully comply with these assessment and reporting arrangements.

## **Governing Bodies**

Governing Bodies of maintained schools have a duty to ensure the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, including assessment and reporting arrangements.

## **Curriculum provision for Religious Education**

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum which includes RE and the National Curriculum. This includes provision for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with schedule 19 to the School Standards and Frameworks Act 1998.

Hillingdon SACRE is available to support a school where a request to withdraw from RE has been made.

The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus within the LA concerned. Schools designated as having a religious character are free to make their own decision in preparing their syllabuses. LAs must ensure that the agreed syllabus in their area is consistent with section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996, which requires the syllabus to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking into account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

Schools are not obliged to provide RE to pupils who are under compulsory school age (section 80(2)(a) of the Education Act 2002) although there are many instances nationwide of good practice where RE is taught to these pupils. Separate legislative provision on RE is made for maintained special schools where require them to ensure that as far as practicable, a pupil receives RE.

By not including RE in the National Curriculum, the importance of it being able to reflect the local nature of faith and belief was recognised. The Hillingdon Agreed Conference wants the syllabus to helpfully reflect on the changing demographics of schools in Hillingdon and offers the inclusion of the Faith Strand as a useful way of reflecting on the diverse range of faith and beliefs in Hillingdon.

## **Curricular requirements**

The revised Agreed Syllabus continues to be based on the recommended minimum time allowance for the teaching of Religious Education in schools of 5%.

In practice this generally works out as about:

- 30-36 hours per year Key Stage 1
- 38-45 hours per year Key Stage 2
- 38 – 45 hours per year Key Stage 3
- 30 - 36 hours per year Key Stage 4
- No specific proposal is made for Key Stage 5.

In setting this syllabus, the Agreed Syllabus Conference recognised the pressure

on schools in finding the time for all the requirements on the curriculum but would restate that the importance of RE and its specific opportunity to recognize and celebrate each person beliefs makes it difficult to see how this can be delivered other than as an separate and independent subject on the curriculum.

Where schools include RE within a cross-curriculum 'package', RE should be treated and staffed accordingly as an independent element with its specific aspects of learning about and learning from faith and beliefs.

Normally, Key Stage 3 covers years 7, 8 and 9 and Key Stage 4 covering years 10 and 11 although some schools have redefined this, starting Key Stage 4 in year 9. Schools should use the above as a guide both across and within Key Stages.

Where Key Stages are redefined, the guidance should be taken across the years involved.

There is no requirement for the teaching of Religious Education in nursery classes, but it is statutory that children under five in reception classes are taught Religious Education. For students in post-16 education

Collective worship is not part of Religious Education though it may contribute to the delivery of the subject.

### **Beliefs and Values Strand**

The introduction of the renamed Beliefs and Values strand in the last review was welcomed by schools and has been revised in this latest revision. It contains material shared by everyone with a faith or faith background but also by others who would perhaps claim not to have a faith. It is a compulsory strand at each Key Stage.

In addition to the religions below, other religions, philosophies and belief systems may be referred to within this strand. Schools should consider the needs of their communities in both extending their knowledge and understanding of the wide and divergent faiths throughout the known history of man as well as those beliefs and practices within our own culture.

### **Other Strands**

The syllabus identifies six world religions and one non-faith as central to the study of Religious Education: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Humanism.

Faith and Values and Christianity must be taught at each key stage.

Schools are free to determine which of the other strands, in addition to Christianity, they will teach at each key stage, subject to the following recommendations.

In order that pupils encounter a wide range of faith beliefs, at least one non-Abrahamic faith should be studied at Key Stage 1-2 and at least one in Key Stage 3.

Schools should not attempt to cover more than those recommended at each key stage.

### **Key Stage 1**

Faith and Values, Christianity and only one other, from Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism or Humanism.

## **Key Stage 2**

Faith and Values, Christianity and at least two, but no more than three, other strands should be taught.

Schools should monitor to ensure that at least one non-Abrahamic strand has been studied within Key Stages 1 and 2

## **Key Stage 3**

Faith and Values, Christianity and at least one, but no more than four, other strands should be taught.

## **Key Stage 4**

At Key Stage 4 all pupils, except those withdrawn by their parents, should pursue a course in Religious Education. Some schools have translated this in delivering the subject within a GCSE course in either year 10 or 11. This is acceptable as long as it meets the criteria required in covering the external examination syllabus within the time allowed.

## **Key Stage 5**

It is a requirement that all registered 16-19 year old pupils in maintained schools study Religious Education unless withdrawn by parents or by request from students themselves, if over 18 years of age.

Schools should ensure that all students have the opportunity to full access to Diploma courses which include Religious Education, A/S and 'A' level courses in Religious Studies or similar.

At this stage ,Religious Education offers students a great deal. Carefully planned and thoughtfully delivered it can allow students an opportunity to reflect on religious, philosophical, moral and ethical issues and relate these to the work they are doing within other areas of the curriculum.

Equally, they may be given the opportunity to develop their own beliefs and opinions and the ability to make sound and reasoned judgements in preparation for life beyond school. The aims of Religious Education remain the same as for pupils in other key stages, however as there is considerable diversity of needs, interests and attitudes among this age group there is no prescribed programme of study. Schools must determine the most appropriate courses for their pupils.

The subject provides a unique and valuable opportunity to allow students to participate in setting the topics to be covered, reflecting opportunities to explore their own beliefs as well as others.

There Are examples of excellent practice through this opportunity.

The time allocation for Religious Education for pupils in years 12 and 13 should be flexible, but Religious Education must be delivered as part of a coherent and identifiable programme. Schools might consider offering various Religious Education topics as modules within a cycle of complementary studies units, as weekly sessions or as day conferences, but needs to be alongside or within a general programme of Religious Education.

Schools are free to use any of the material set out in earlier key stages or to devise a course based on the themes mentioned in the Post 16 section. Similar recommendations are that schools review the diplomas on offer.

### **Faith Experience**

Previous Agreed Syllabi have strongly recommended the benefit from visiting faith communities.

This continues to be the advice of this revision, specifically that all students should have opportunities to visit at least two places of worship at each of the Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Where this contributes to an understanding that the faith is a vibrant important part of the lives of the participants, the visit helps appreciate the importance of the building in the community.

On a more pragmatic level, there are a limited number of non-Christian buildings within easy reach of most schools in the borough.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference continues to recommend another way of helping students appreciate that religion is an important part of people's lives; by inviting colleagues, parents, members of faith communities as well as faith leaders to come into school and be asked to talk about their personal faith journeys within lessons.

An additional route is for schools to consider holding their own Inter Faith Networking events. The termly inter faith events for schools continue to offer excellent opportunities for schools.