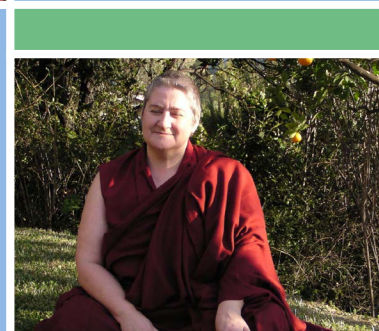
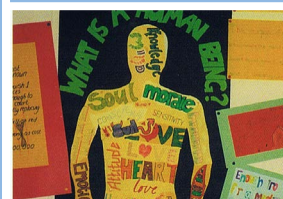
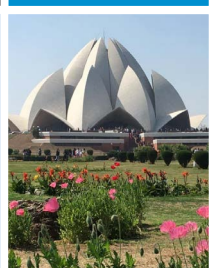
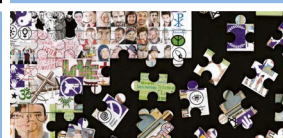
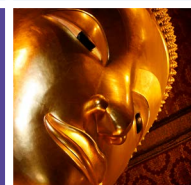
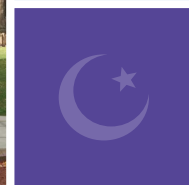
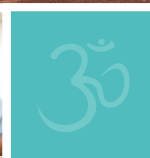
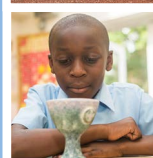
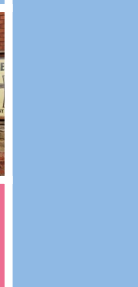
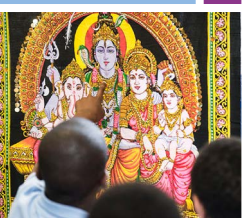
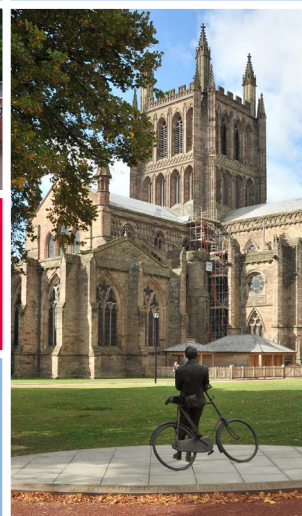
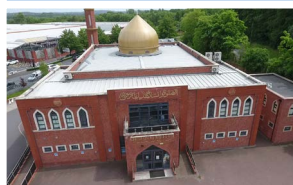


RE



Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus 2025–2030



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Forewords

The responsibility to deliver an agreed syllabus is the most important role for any SACRE and the syllabus we have developed through consultation with teachers and in partnership with RE Today represents a realistic step forward. There has been appreciation for the existing syllabus, although its implementation was disrupted by the Covid pandemic. In our consultation teachers assured us that they wanted to see ‘development and evolution’, rather than ‘revolution’ hopefully this is what this new syllabus delivers.

Several exciting developments have taken place in RE curriculum design over recent years, in particular moving towards a multidisciplinary, religion and worldviews approach to the subject. What we now have, hopefully, is a syllabus that prepares us for another review in five years’ time. It offers development with continuity: rigour with flexibility, and I believe it provides our teachers and young people a syllabus that will support them and helps their growth as they move forward into the future they deserve.

My thanks go to all the teachers who, at a time of enormous pressure on time and resources, have generously given of their experience to help us get this right.

Geoff Sallis, Chair of SACRE

I am pleased to recommend this revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education to all Maintained and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Herefordshire. I also encourage Voluntary Aided Schools, Foundation Schools, Free Schools, and Academies within the county to consider adopting this syllabus for their pupils.

This syllabus has taken account of recent developments in education and religious studies. It outlines the statutory requirements for Religious Education (RE) and provides valuable resources and guidance to support the delivery of high-quality RE in schools.

The syllabus is designed to engage and inspire pupils, encouraging them to explore their own beliefs, values, and traditions while gaining an understanding of others’. It allows pupils to reflect on how beliefs influence actions and ways of life, fostering meaningful discussions and personal growth.

In addition, this syllabus contributes significantly to pupils’ personal development, supporting schools’ responsibilities for Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) education and promoting British Values.

I would like to thank all involved in the development and production of the agreed syllabus that serves as a vital tool to help children and young people appreciate diversity, uphold shared values, and actively challenge racism and discrimination in all forms.

Liz Farr, Director of Education, Skills and Learning

Introduction

The 2025 Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus has been created for Herefordshire SACRE and approved by Herefordshire County Council. It provides a syllabus for RE for all our schools. Since 1944, all schools have been required to teach RE to all pupils on roll (except those withdrawn by their parents, see p. 10). 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 the subject. It builds on the good practice established in the previous Herefordshire syllabuses over many years.

These elements will be familiar to teachers:

Continuity:

Teaching and learning approach: The clear teaching and learning approach remains at the heart of the 2025 syllabus, whereby all units enable pupils to ‘make sense’ of the religious and non-religious worldviews studied, ‘understand the impact’ of these beliefs and practices in people’s lives, and to ‘make connections’ in their learning and their wider experience of the world (see pp. 13–14).

Coherent understanding: The syllabus continues to advocate helping pupils to develop a coherent understanding of several religions, by studying one religion at a time (systematic study) before bringing together and comparing different traditions (thematic study). The thematic study allows pupils to draw together their learning each year (see the sample long-term plans on pp. 151–152).

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 are able to build effectively on prior learning as they progress through the school (see the key question overview on pp. 16–17 and concept outlines on pp. 138–149).

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 religions and beliefs. 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 worldviews are religious or non-religious, or somewhere in between. Research suggests that the majority of young people are growing up without any religious component in their upbringing, and many of them are non-religious (note the local Census statistics on p. 150).

New emphasis:

A religion and worldviews approach: The syllabus points towards a significantly new way of planning and teaching, drawing on the Handbook from the RE Council of England and Wales.¹

Language: The language of the 2025 syllabus has been adjusted to accommodate this new religion and worldviews approach (see p. 20–24). The syllabus is not presenting a fully realised ‘religion and worldviews (RW) approach’, but applying some of the principles and features.

Religion and worldviews: The 2025 syllabus maintains the required study of religious and non-religious worldviews in each key stage, in reviewing the syllabus we recognised that non-religious worldviews, and Humanism in particular, were not explained with sufficient clarity. Note that scholars are distinguishing between Humanism (linked with explicit discourses and organisations such as Humanists UK) and humanism (which may influence or feature in worldviews without any explicit association or identification with such organisations).

‘Ways of knowing’: The 2025 syllabus draws attention to the different methods that were implicit in the 2020 syllabus. Again, it is not a fully realised multidisciplinary syllabus, but it enables teachers to draw on different tools or methods from a range of disciplines, within the units they currently teach (see p. 25).

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

Teaching and learning requirements

The purpose of religious education

The Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus 2025 asserts the importance and value of religious education (RE) for all pupils, with on-going benefits for an open, articulate and understanding society. The following purpose statements underpin the syllabus,² which is constructed to support pupils and teachers in fulfilling them:

- 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 religious and non-religious 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 religious and non-religious worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- RE should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and beliefs.
- 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 worldviews – the way in which they encounter, interpret, understand and engage with the world – while respecting the right of others to be different.

The purpose of RE is captured in the principal aim, which is intended to be a shorthand version for day-to-day use. It should be considered as a doorway into the wider purpose articulated above.

Principal aim

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Schools should make use of this principal aim throughout their planning to ensure that all teaching and learning contributes to enabling pupils to achieve this aim. Schools and RE departments will find that discussing how the principal aim relates to the purpose of RE, and talking about how classroom RE can contribute to the aim, will be helpful for teachers in clarifying what RE is for in their school and classroom.

² These purpose statements are taken from *A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England* (REC 2013).

The aims of RE

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. make sense of a range of religious and non-religious **worldviews**, so that they can:

- identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religious and non-religious worldviews, using appropriate vocabulary
- explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities
- recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation

2. understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious **worldviews**, so that they can:

- examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways
- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world
- appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning

3. make connections between religious and non-religious **worldviews**, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:

- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses
- challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response
- discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding

Throughout schooling, teachers should consider how their teaching contributes towards the principal aim of RE in Herefordshire, and how they help pupils to achieve the threefold aims above.

Notes:

These aims incorporate the former attainment targets of ‘learning about religion’ and ‘learning from religion’.

This agreed syllabus builds on the good practice from the 2004 *Non-statutory Framework for RE*, produced by the then Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and also the core ideas in the RE Council’s non-statutory framework from 2013.³ It draws on the developments in RE in the last decade, and responds to national reports including Martha Shaw and Adam Dinham (2015) *RE for REal: The Future of Teaching and Learning about Religion and Belief. Project report*. (University of London: Goldsmiths); Commission on RE (2018) *Religion and Worldviews: The way forward* (London: RE Council); Céline Benoit, Timothy Hutchings and Rachael Shillitoe (2020) *Worldview: a multidisciplinary report*. (London: Religious Education Council); Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2019); the Ofsted Research Review in Religious Education (2021); Stephen Pett (2024) *Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England: a Handbook for curriculum writers* (London: RE Council).

3 A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England (REC 2013).

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).⁴
- 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’.⁵
- 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.⁶
- 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 Herefordshire 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’.⁷
- 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’.⁸ Note that the term ‘religion’ encompasses both religious and non-religious beliefs.⁹

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.

⁴ School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 19; Education Act 2002, section 80.

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

⁶ Education Act 1996 Schedule 31.

⁷ Education Act 1996 section 375.

⁸ www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/r-fox-v-ssfe.pdf. ‘Equal respect’ does not entail equal time.

⁹ In accordance with Human Rights Act 1988.

Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2025–2030

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 curriculum¹⁰ 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 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/religious-education-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 and collective worship. 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 [draft National Content Standard from the RE Council \(2023\)](#).¹¹

The Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus 2025–2030 fulfils the legal requirements set out above, and builds upon the REC's curriculum framework (2013) [and the Handbook for Curriculum Writers \(2024\)](#)¹². 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.

¹⁰ School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S71 (3).

¹¹ <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resource/national-content-standard-1st-edition-2023/>

¹² <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/rec/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/24-25698-REC-Handbook-A4-DIGITAL-PAGES.pdf>

Time for religious education

Schools have a statutory responsibility to deliver religious education to all pupils, except those withdrawn by parents (see p. 10).

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.
- **Flexible 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 not usually 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. Where creative curriculum planning is used, schools must ensure that RE objectives are clear. 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 meet the expectations set out in this agreed syllabus to provide coherence and progression in RE learning.

What religions are to be taught?

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 Islam, [the Hindu Traditions](#), [Sikhi](#), 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 in thematic units.

Pupils are to study in depth the religious traditions of the following groups:

4–5s Reception	Children will encounter Christianity 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 religions 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, Jews, Muslims.	
7–11s Key Stage 2	Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and non-religious worldviews (e.g. Humanists).	
11–14s Key Stage 3	Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and non-religious worldviews (e.g. 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. ¹⁰	
16–19s RE for all	Religions and 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 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. 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: F4, 1.9, 1.10, L2.11, L2.12, L2.13, U2.10, U2.11, U2.12, [U2.13](#), 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16 and 3.17.
- [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.
- **Flexible thematic units.** The thematic units offered in this syllabus allow for schools to draw in different traditions, where they fit the theme and question, and where there are representatives of those traditions in the school and local community.

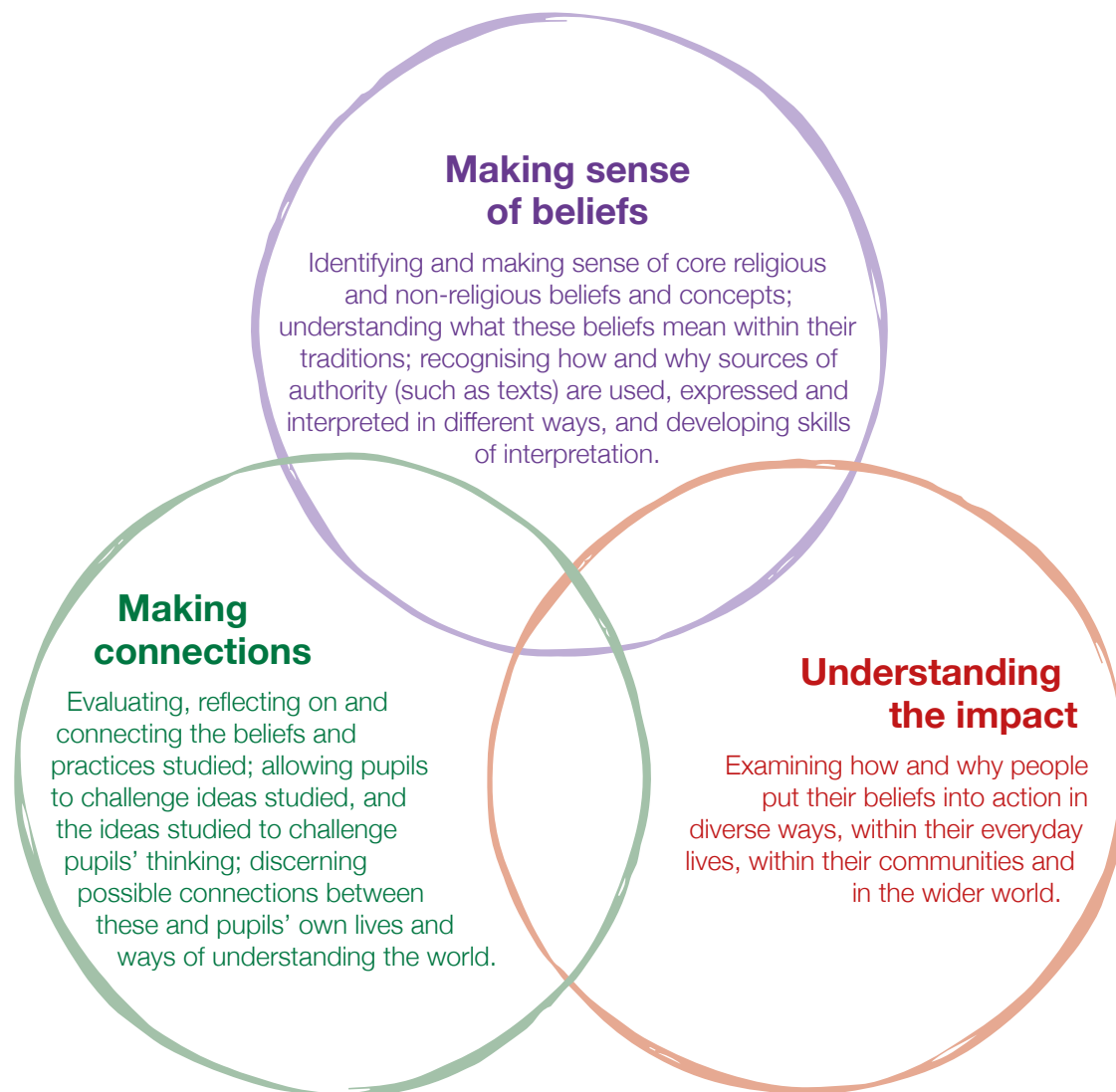
The RE teaching and learning approach in Herefordshire

This syllabus is designed to support schools in developing and delivering excellence in RE. It responds to national calls for deepening pupils' knowledge about religions and for developing their 'religious literacy'.¹⁴ It does this by studying one religion at a time ('systematic' units), and then including 'thematic' units, which build on learning by comparing the religions, beliefs and practices studied.

In order to support teachers in exploring the selected worldviews, this syllabus sets out an underlying teaching and learning approach, whereby pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and their ability to handle questions of religion and belief.

The teaching and learning approach has three core elements, which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religion and worldviews, underpinning the aims of RE outlined on p. 8. Teaching and learning in the classroom will encompass all three elements, allowing for overlap between elements as suits the religion, concept and question being explored.

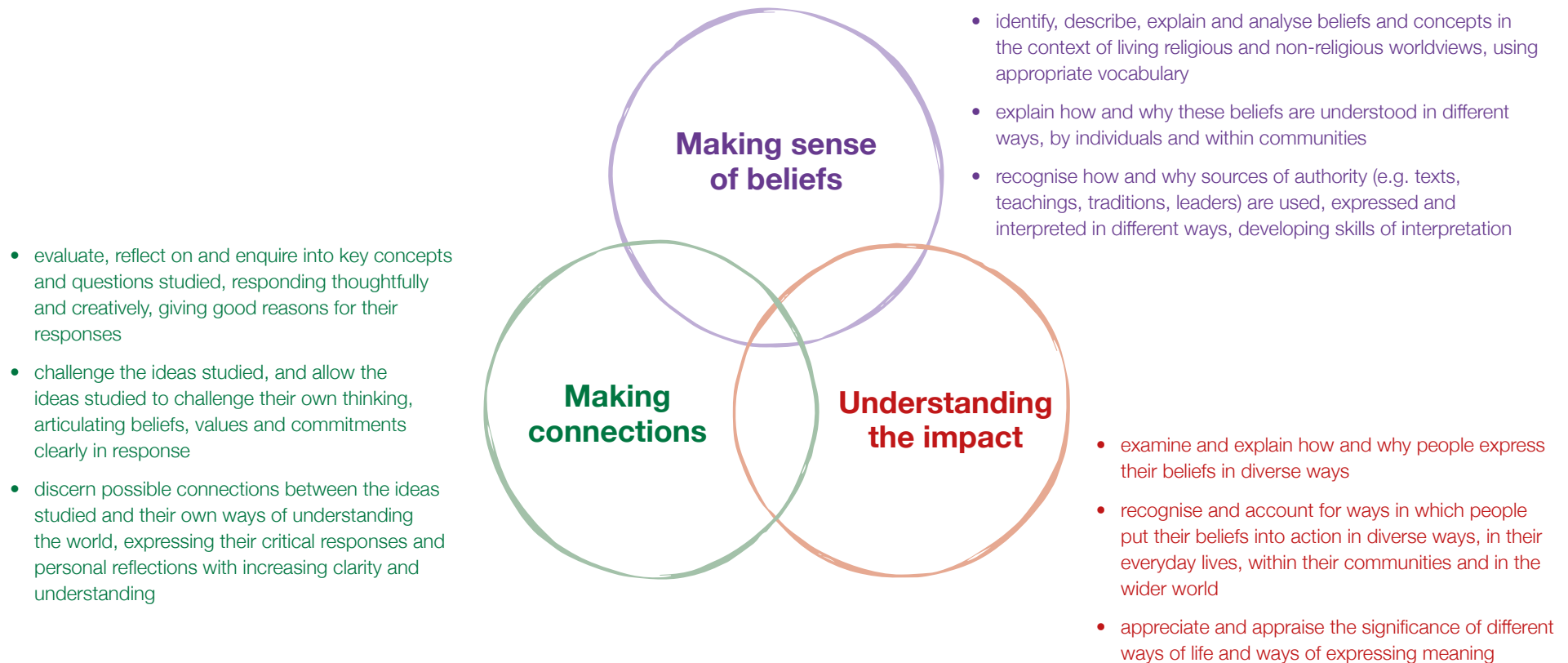
These elements set the context for open exploration of religion and worldviews. They offer a structure through which pupils can encounter diverse religious traditions alongside non-religious worldviews – which reflect the backgrounds of many pupils in our schools. The elements present a broad and flexible strategy that allows for different traditions to be treated with integrity. These elements offer a route through each unit while also allowing for a range of questions reflecting different approaches, for example, from religious studies, philosophy, sociology, ethics and theology.



¹⁴ e.g. OFSTED (2013) *Religious Education: Realising the Potential*; Clarke, C. and Woodhead, L. (2015) *A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools*, London, Westminster Faith Debates; Dinham, A. and Shaw, M. (2015) *RE for REal: The future of teaching and learning about religion and belief*, London, Goldsmiths University of London/Culham St. Gabriel's; Commission of Religion and Belief (2015) *Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good*, The Woolf Institute.

Teaching and learning approach and the aims for RE in Herefordshire

This diagram shows how the three elements of the teaching and learning approach in this syllabus reflect the aims for RE set out on p. 8. Units of study offer content and ideas for enabling pupils to achieve these aims.



Note: The three elements of this teaching and learning approach also incorporate the elements of the teaching resource, *Understanding Christianity: Text Impact Connections* (RE Today 2016) which is being used in a significant number of local schools. Schools that are using *Understanding Christianity* will find that they are delivering the Christianity sections of this agreed syllabus.

How to use this agreed syllabus: 12 steps

1. Key to implementing this revised syllabus is getting to **know the purpose and principal aim**, p. 6. Is this the understanding of what RE is in your school? How well embedded is the principal aim? If teachers are to teach RE effectively, it is vital that they understand what they are doing RE *for*. Reflect on how fulfilling the principal aim will contribute to SMSC and wider school priorities.
2. For each key stage, go carefully through the **Programme of Study** pages (EYFS p. 30; KS1 p. 44; KS2 p. 60; KS3 p. 94.). These give the statutory requirements of the syllabus. Note that the syllabus is structured around the three aims (see p. 8) and the three elements: *Making sense of beliefs*, *Understanding the impact* and *Making connections* (see p. 13). The three aims/elements form the basis of the end of key stage outcomes, and the progressive 'learning outcomes' in each unit of study. The overview of questions (pp. 16–17) shows how questions are based on core concepts in a spiral curriculum.
3. Review the **legal requirements** (see p. 9–10) and **curriculum time** for RE (see p. 11). Are you fulfilling the legal requirements for RE for all pupils? Are you giving sufficient time to allow pupils to make good progress in understanding and skills?
4. Review the **religions and worldviews** studied at each key stage (see p. 12 for overview). Are you following the syllabus requirements? Are you meeting the needs of your children and young people?
5. The syllabus is based around a **key question approach**, where the questions open up the content to be studied. The syllabus gives **key questions** to help you to deliver the statutory Programmes of Study. All of the questions are found on pp. 16–17, with EYFS p. 30; KS1 p. 44; KS2 p. 60; KS3 p. 94. These are followed by detailed unit outlines for each question. These are designed to support you in delivering high-quality RE that enables coherence and progression. The unit outlines give structured support in terms of learning outcomes and suggested content, to enable good planning and progression.
6. **Review** in your existing long-term plan. Ensure that this **meets the principal aim, reflects the key question approach** and **secures progression in relation to the end of phase outcomes**. To this end, use the planning steps.
7. The **planning process** is at the heart of the syllabus (p. 46, 63, 96). The five steps are designed to help teachers to make best use of the units and plan excellent RE. As a staff/department, go through the planning process, following the steps and one example of a unit key question. Note that there is flexibility in terms of choosing content, but that all steps need to be followed.
8. Take the opportunity of the new syllabus to audit your schemes of work to **consider the new religion and worldviews approach** (see p. 20–24) with its exploration of the relationship between organised and individual worldviews. **Also draw attention to the ways of knowing** in each unit (see p. 25). These can be highlighted for teachers and made explicit to pupils: 'we are using *this* method, because it helps us in *this* way, and it generates *this* knowledge, which can be checked/tested in *this* way'. **Links to disciplines** can be made where appropriate. (See p. 25 for more on this.)
9. Work to create a coherent **long-term plan** to begin in September 2025. Ensure RE is true to the principal aim and the Programmes of Study. Ensure that units are **sequenced** in ways that help your pupils to (read pp. 122ff) make good sense of their learning, building on what has been learnt before and preparing for what is to come.
10. If you are a special school or have significant numbers of SEND pupils, read pp. 122ff and the additional guidance on pp. 173ff. There is freedom in the syllabus to adapt your RE to meet the needs of SEND pupils.
11. Share the positive adaptations and changes in RE with the governing body and other interested parties. This is an ideal chance to raise the profile of RE.
12. Use September 2025 – July 2026 to implement the syllabus. Adapt what works well and create a scheme of work that fits with your methods of curriculum delivery and delivers the principal aim of the syllabus. Use the year to train staff who teach RE, improve and review.

Religious education key questions: an overview

	FS (Discovering)	KS1 (Exploring)	Lower KS2 (Connecting)	Upper KS2 (Connecting)	KS3 (Applying/Interpreting)
Religion/belief	Christianity plus others	Christians, Jews and Muslims	Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jews		Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs
Christianity God Creation Fall People of God Incarnation Gospel Salvation Kingdom of God	F1 Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians? [God] F2 Why is Christmas special for Christians? [Incarnation] F3 Why is Easter special for Christians? [Salvation]	1.1 What do Christians believe God is like? [God] 1.2 Who do Christians say made the world? [Creation] 1.3 Why does Christmas matter to Christians? [Incarnation] 1.4 What is the 'good news' Christians believe Jesus brings? [Gospel] 1.5 Why does Easter matter to Christians? [Salvation]	L2.1 What do Christians learn from the creation story? [Creation/Fall] L2.2 What is it like for someone to follow God? [People of God] L2.3 What is the 'Trinity' and why is it important for Christians? [God/Incarnation] L2.4 What kind of world did Jesus want? [Gospel] L2.5 Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'? [Salvation] L2.6 For Christians, what was the impact of Pentecost? [Kingdom of God]	U2.1 What does it mean if Christians believe God is holy and loving? [God] U2.2 Creation and science: conflicting or complementary? [Creation] U2.3 Why do Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah? [Incarnation] U2.4 How do Christians decide how to live? 'What would Jesus do?' [Gospel] U2.5 What do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' people? [Salvation] U2.6 For Christians, what kind of king is Jesus? [Kingdom of God]	3.1 What does it mean for Christians to believe in God as Trinity? [God] 3.2 Should Christians be greener than everyone else? [Creation] 3.3 Why are people good and bad? [Fall] 3.4 Does the world need prophets today? [People of God] 3.5 What do people do when life gets hard? [Wisdom] 3.6 Why do Christians believe Jesus was God on Earth? [Incarnation] 3.7 What is so radical about Jesus? [Gospel]
Buddhism Buddha Dhamma Sangha					3.8 The Buddha: how and why do his experiences and teachings have meaning for people today? [Buddha/dhamma/sangha]
The Hindu Traditions Samsara and moksha Brahman (God) and atman Karma and dharma			L2.7 What do Hindus believe God is like? [Brahman/atman] L2.8 What does it mean to be Hindu in Britain today? [Dharma]	U2.7 Why do Hindus want to be good? [Karma/dharma/samsara/moksha]	3.9 Why don't Hindus want to be reincarnated and what do they do about it? [Samsara/moksha/atman/karma/dharma]
Islam God/Tawhid Iman (faith) Ibadah (worship) Akhirah (life after death) Akhlaq (virtue/morality)		1.6 Who is a Muslim and how do they live? [God/Tawhid/ibadah/iman]	L2.9 How do festivals and worship show what matters to a Muslim? [Ibadah]	U2.8 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today? [Tawhid/iman/ibadah]	3.10 What is good and what is challenging about being a Muslim teenager in Britain today? [Iman/ibadah/akhlaq]

Religion/belief	FS (Discovering)	KS1 (Exploring)	Lower KS2 (Connecting)	Upper KS2 (Connecting)	KS3 (Applying/Interpreting)
Judaism God Torah The People and the Land		1.7 Who is Jewish and how do they live? [God/Torah/People]	L2.10 How do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people? [God/Torah/People/the Land]	U2.9 Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people? [God/Torah]	3.11 What is good and what is challenging about being a Jewish teenager in Britain today? [People and the Land]
Sikhi God Values (Nam Simran, kirat karna, vand chhakna, seva) The Gurus Panth (community)					3.12 How are Sikh teachings on equality and service put into practice today? [God/the Gurus/values/Panth]
Non-religious worldviews				U2.11 ^b What does it mean to be a Humanist in Britain today?	3.13 What difference does it make to be non-religious in Britain today?
Thematic	F4 Being special: where do we belong?	1.8 What makes some places sacred to believers?	L2.11 How and why do people mark the significant events of life?	U2.10 What matters most to Humanists and Christians?	3.14 Good, bad; right, wrong: how do I decide?
	F5 Which places are special and why?	1.9 How should we care for others and the world, and why does it matter?	L2.12 How and why do people try to make the world a better place?	U2.12 How does faith help when life gets hard?	3.15 How far does it make a difference if you believe in life after death?
	F6 Which stories are special and why?	1.10 What does it mean to belong to a faith or belief community?	L2.13 ^a How do people from religious and non-religious communities celebrate key festivals?	U2.13 ^c What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help?	3.16 Why is there suffering? Are there any good solutions?
				U2.14 ^c What do religious and non-religious worldviews teach about caring for the Earth?	3.17 Should happiness be the purpose of life?
					3.18 How can people express the spiritual through the arts?

a This is an additional unit that models a multidisciplinary approach.

b This is an adjusted question and unit to explore Humanism more directly.

c Two additional, optional units addressing contemporary moral issues.

End of phase outcomes

Each of the three elements of the teaching and learning approach is important and pupils should make progress in all of them.

Below are the end of phase outcomes for each element. Each unit provides learning outcomes specific to each question, leading to these end of phase outcomes.

Teaching and learning approach	End KS1 Pupils can ...	End lower KS2 Pupils can ...	End upper KS2 Pupils can ...	End KS3 Pupils can ...
Element 1: Making sense of beliefs Identifying and making sense of religious and non-religious beliefs and concepts; understanding what these beliefs mean within their traditions; recognising how and why sources of authority (such as texts) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, and developing skills of interpretation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify core beliefs and concepts studied and give a simple description of what they mean give examples of how stories show what people believe (e.g. the meaning behind a festival) give clear, simple accounts of what stories and other texts mean to believers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and describe the core beliefs and concepts studied make clear links between texts/sources of authority and the core concepts studied offer informed suggestions about what texts/sources of authority can mean and give examples of what these sources mean to believers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and explain the core beliefs and concepts studied, using examples from texts/sources of authority in religions describe examples of ways in which people use texts/sources of authority to make sense of core beliefs and concepts give meanings for texts/sources of authority studied, comparing these ideas with some ways in which believers interpret texts/sources of authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> give reasoned explanations of how and why the selected core beliefs and concepts are important within the religions studied taking account of context(s), explain how and why people use and make sense of texts/sources of authority differently in the light of their learning, explain how appropriate different interpretations of texts/sources of authority are, including their own ideas
Element 2: Understanding the impact Examining how and why people put their beliefs into practice in diverse ways, within their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> give examples of how people use stories, texts and teachings to guide their beliefs and actions give examples of ways in which believers put their beliefs into practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make simple links between stories, teachings and concepts studied and how people live, individually and in communities describe how people show their beliefs in how they worship and in the way they live identify some differences in how people put their beliefs into practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make clear connections between what people believe and how they live, individually and in communities using evidence and examples, show how and why people put their beliefs into practice in different ways, e.g. in different communities, denominations or cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> give reasons and examples to account for how and why people put their beliefs into practice in different ways, individually and in various communities (e.g. denominations, times or cultures; faith or other communities) show how beliefs guide people in making moral and religious decisions, applying these ideas to situations in the world today

Teaching and learning approach	End KS1 Pupils can ...	End lower KS2 Pupils can ...	End upper KS2 Pupils can ...	End KS3 Pupils can ...
<p>Element 3: Making connections</p> <p>Evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the beliefs and practices studied; allowing pupils to challenge ideas studied, and the ideas studied to challenge pupils' thinking; discerning possible connections between these and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> think, talk and ask questions about whether the ideas they have been studying, have something to say to them give a good reason for the views they have and the connections they make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make links between some of the beliefs and practices studied and life in the world today, expressing some ideas of their own clearly raise important questions and suggest answers about how far the beliefs and practices studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live give good reasons for the views they have and the connections they make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make connections between the beliefs and practices studied, evaluating and explaining their importance to different people (e.g. believers and atheists) reflect on and articulate lessons people might gain from the beliefs/ practices studied, including their own responses, recognising that others may think differently consider and weigh up how ideas studied in this unit relate to their own experiences and experiences of the world today, developing insights of their own and giving good reasons for the views they have and the connections they make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> give coherent accounts of the significance and implications of the beliefs and practices studied in the world today evaluate how far the beliefs and practices studied help pupils themselves and others to make sense of the world respond to the challenges raised by questions of belief and practice, both in the world today and in their own lives, offering reasons and justifications for their responses

The outcomes for EYFS are the Early Learning Goals (see p. 31).

RE in KS4 and 5: 14–19 statutory requirements

RE for 14s–19s

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 p. 12). 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 p. 11). ('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 religions and worldviews (including non-religious worldviews), explaining local, national and global contexts. Building on their prior learning, they appreciate and appraise the nature of different religions and worldviews in systematic ways. They should use a wide range of concepts in the field of Religious Studies confidently and flexibly to contextualise and analyse the expressions of

religions and worldviews they encounter. They should be able to research and investigate the influence and impact of religions and worldviews on the values and lives of both individuals and groups, evaluating their impact on current affairs. They should be able to appreciate and appraise the beliefs and practices of different religions and worldviews with an increasing level of discernment based on interpretation, evaluation and analysis, developing and articulating well-reasoned positions. They should be able to use different disciplines of religious study to analyse the nature of religion.

Specifically students should be taught to:

- Investigate and analyse the beliefs and practices of religions and worldviews using a range of arguments and evidence to evaluate issues and draw balanced conclusions
- Synthesise their own and others' ideas and arguments about sources of wisdom and authority using coherent reasoning, making clear and appropriate references to their historical, cultural and social contexts
- Develop coherent and well-informed analyses of diversity in the forms of expression and ways of life found in different religions and worldviews
- Use, independently, different disciplines and methods by which religions and worldviews are to analyse their influence on individuals and societies
- Account for varied interpretations of commitment to religions and worldviews and for responses to profound questions about the expression of identity, diversity, meaning and value
- Argue for and justify their own positions with regard to key questions about the nature of religion, providing a detailed evaluation of the perspectives of others
- Enquire into and develop insightful evaluations of ultimate questions about the purposes and commitments of human life, especially as expressed in the arts, media and philosophy
- Use a range of research methods to examine and critically evaluate varied perspectives and approaches to issues of community cohesion, respect for all and mutual understanding, locally, nationally and globally
- Research and skilfully present a wide range of well-informed and reasonable arguments which engage profoundly with moral, religious and spiritual issues.

RE in special schools

RE in special schools

The vision of this agreed syllabus is of RE for all. Every pupil can achieve and benefit from their RE, including all pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

RE is a statutory part of the core curriculum for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Pupils with SEND are found in all contexts, and all teachers are teachers of pupils with SEND. Good-quality teaching in RE will tailor the planning of the syllabus carefully to the special needs of all pupils. RE provision for different groups of pupils will vary but all pupils should be included in RE.

For pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD)

- Good RE begins from the unique individuality of the pupils, and provides rich experiences of religion and spirituality.
- Calm and peaceful space in RE can enable learners to enjoy their RE time individually.
- RE can enable pupils with the most complex of needs to develop awareness of themselves, their feelings, their emotions and their senses.

For pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)

- Multi-sensory approaches bring the possibility of introducing spiritual experiences.
- RE makes a contribution to pupils' social development through story, music, shared experience and ritual.
- RE can enable pupils to develop their relationships with other people and their understanding of other people's needs.

For pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

- RE can provide insight into the world of religion and human experience, especially when tough questions are opened up.
- RE can provide opportunities for pupils to participate in spiritual or reflective activity.
- RE can enable pupils to make links with their own lives.

For pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD)

- RE can enable pupils to address deep issues of concern in helpful ways through exploring spiritual material and seeing how others have tackled difficult experiences.
- RE lessons can explore, in the safe space schools should provide, complex emotions or thoughts, and challenging questions.
- RE can assist in the development of pupils' maturity and self-awareness.

Planning for RE in special schools

The law says that the agreed syllabus is to be taught to pupils with SEND 'as far as it is practicable'. Given the complex and individual needs of pupils in special schools, it is important that teachers avoid a 'deficit model' of planning, where the syllabus is watered down, adapting a few units of work, or teaching units for 4–6s to 7–11s or 11–14s. Instead, we should draw on the key ideas of 'discovering, exploring, connecting and responding' from this agreed syllabus. Special school RE should explore authentic and central concepts from religions, on the basis of what will connect with pupils' experiences and enable them to respond.

The demographics of religion and belief in Herefordshire, the region and the nation

The 2021 census information sets the demographic context for the county, the region and the nation. We do not intend to educate pupils only for their current life, perhaps in a village or a town, but also for a plural nation and a diverse world. The purpose of RE includes enabling pupils to be ready to live well in a wider world: the region, the nation, the global community.

CENSUS 2021:	Population	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion	Humanist	Religion not stated
Herefordshire	187,039	102,614	646	384	142	790	117	508	68,404	70	12,962
		54.9%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.27%	36.6%	0.04%	6.9%
Worcestershire	603,679	319,892	1,691	1,882	416	10,881	2,310	1,485	228,889	99	34,958
		53%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	1.8%	0.4%	0.25%	37.9%	0.02%	5.8%
Shropshire	323,601	179,516	895	557	182	1,708	760	773	119,482	92	18,931
		55.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%	0.24%	37.0%	0.03%	5.9%
Warwickshire	596,774	300,708	2,295	10,492	591	9,235	12,259	1,799	224,478	107	33,545
		50.4%	0.4%	1.8%	0.1%	1.5%	2.1%	0.3%	37.6%	0.02%	5.6%
Gloucestershire	645,079	317,610	2,383	3,777	688	9,347	761	2,031	266,775	183	40,042
		49.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.1%	1.4%	0.1%	0.31%	41.4%	0.03%	6.2%
Birmingham	1,144,912	389,406	4,340	21,997	1,687	341,811	33,126	5,084	276,227	100	69,856
		34%	0.4%	1.9%	0.1%	29.9%	2.9%	0.44%	24.1%	0.01%	6.1%
England	56,490,038	26,167,904	262,437	1,020,539	269,295	3,801,182	520,090	332,390	20,715,648	9,575	3,400,553
		46.3%	0.46%	1.8%	0.58%	6.73%	0.92%	0.6%	36.6%	0.02%	6%
ENGLAND AND WALES	59,597,540	27,522,672	272,508	1,032,775	271,327	3,868,133	524,140	348,334	22,162,062	10,245	3,595,589
		46.2%	0.5%	1.7%	0.5%	6.5%	0.9%	0.6%	37.2%	0.02%	6%

Much more data available from the Office for National Statistics: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021

Note that the findings of the British Social Attitudes Survey 2018 (National Centre for Social Research), a national survey of around 3,000 adults, indicates a greater percentage of people (52%) identifying as having no religion. Note that the Census and BSA Survey ask different questions. More information is available here: www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1_bsa36_religion.pdf