

The Doncaster SACRE Agreed Syllabus for RE 2018

Foreword

World events in the 21st century draw attention to the continuing power and significance of religious belief and other beliefs and philosophies in shaping human minds and communities. An understanding of different faiths and beliefs has never seemed more relevant. The **Doncaster Growing Together** prospectus asserts that ‘everyone has a part to play in recognising and valuing the benefits of diverse and inclusive communities.’ RE plays a part in this priority.

Many local authorities, Doncaster included, are a microcosm of the wider world, so it is important that our syllabus for RE should promote understanding between all people.

We are pleased to commend this revised syllabus for religious education to all the schools of Doncaster. The syllabus reinforces the importance of religious education as an academic discipline. It will enable understanding of concepts and the development of skills and attitudes so that our pupils can explore wider issues of religion and belief in religiously literate ways. This syllabus prepares the children and young people for active citizenship in a diverse and rapidly changing world, exploring some aspects of British values in relation to religions and world views.

Doncaster is a vibrant and unique community in a region of wide diversity of religion and belief. The population of Yorkshire and Humberside includes large communities of Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Jewish people, Buddhists and Sikhs. Many children come from families that hold non-religious life stances. RE taught using this syllabus allows all learners to share their experiences and to learn from one another and the religions and beliefs in our community.

This syllabus makes space for all pupils to explore their own beliefs, values and traditions, and those of others in engaging ways. RE taught using the new RE Agreed Syllabus aims to support children to develop positive attitudes of respect towards people from all religions and worldviews.

The Doncaster Children’s and Young People’s Plan 2017 makes a priority of:

a broad and balanced curriculum equipping pupils with the life skills they need to be independent and successful’.

This syllabus continues in the tradition of ensuring that RE is responsive to the changing nature of schools and education. The syllabus enables schools to respond effectively to the Government’s Prevent Strategy and to the Ofsted Framework for Inspection which requires schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum that ensures high standards of achievement, learning and behaviour for pupils, as well as contributing to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

We are grateful to the many people who have contributed to this document, especially the members of the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Doncaster’s Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

This revised syllabus for religious education (RE) builds on the strengths of previous syllabuses and provides a vision of, and the legal basis for, the development of RE over the next five years, 2018-2023.

SACRE’s Agreed Syllabus Conference is the statutory body charged with the task, every five years, of reviewing provision of RE in our schools.

RE alongside the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum states the legal requirement that:

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which: Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and:

Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

And:

All state schools... must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage... All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online.

(DfE National Curriculum Framework, July 2013, page 4).

This new RE Syllabus for Doncaster pupils establishes what shall be taught in RE providing teachers with practical support and guidance about how to teach RE effectively.

Actively promoting values, including British values:

- We want RE in our schools to be challenging, inspiring and engaging.
- We want pupils to develop their levels of religious literacy and conceptual understanding.
- We want them to be able to articulate with confidence, their ideas about religion, beliefs and spirituality – and then to change their minds, if they choose to do so.
- We want learners to understand religious and belief systems' commitment to morality and social justice, to responsible stewardship of the environment and to deepening the experience of being human.
- Promoting social and ethnic harmony and awareness of British values is a moral imperative for schools and RE has a significant contribution to make to this. Through the exploration of multiple identities and local communities, through visits to places of worship and meeting people from religious and belief communities, and through a deepening understanding of beliefs and practices, our aim is for young people to come to an informed and empathetic understanding of different groups which will help promote cohesion and integration. Pupils will explore British values in relation to religions and beliefs.
- Religion has a major position in public life so it is crucial that young people are educated to understand and to engage critically with religions and beliefs, and their representation in the media.
- Breadth and balance are essential in RE, as in the whole curriculum. There are greater possibilities in this syllabus and its accompanying materials for creative cross-curricular development, as well as for high standards within RE when taught as a discrete subject.

- We want to encourage teachers to bring academic rigour into the study of religion and beliefs. They are complex and controversial, they demand multi-disciplinary study and they require understanding of difficult language and concepts. Such learning is rewarding at all levels. But this is not just a dispassionate approach to study. Both teachers and learners can develop personally through RE, challenging preconceptions, asking for justification of opinions, re-assessing their own stance on issues and recognising the vast, fascinating and challenging nature of religious study.
- RE is an exciting subject, contributing to learners' lives and therefore to their communities and to society. We hope that this new syllabus, and its accompanying support materials, will help teachers to fulfil their pupils' potential.

The statutory basis of the agreed syllabus

Religious Education is, by law, locally determined and the syllabus is agreed by an Agreed Syllabus Conference. This document is the basis on which all work in RE should be planned in Doncaster's community and voluntary controlled schools. It is a requirement on schools and governing bodies to ensure that all learners gain their statutory entitlement to RE throughout all years of compulsory education and in the sixth form. This has been part of statute since 1944, it was reinforced in the 1988 Education Reform Act and it remains so today. The requirement to teach RE does not apply to nursery classes but does apply to all pupils of statutory school age. Collective Worship is not part of the taught curriculum and cannot be considered as part of the recommended time for teaching RE. RE does not seek to convert or urge a particular religion or belief on pupils.

School Leaders' responsibilities

It is the head teacher's duty to ensure that:

- RE is provided in accordance with this Agreed Syllabus for all registered pupils at the school;
- parents receive an annual written report on their child(ren)'s progress in RE;

- requests from parents for the withdrawal of their child(ren) from RE are responded to and alternative arrangements made, so long as it does not incur any additional cost to the school or the local authority.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that:

RE is included in the curriculum;

- sufficient time and resources are devoted to RE to enable the school to meet its legal obligations and to deliver an RE curriculum of quality.

All Local Authority schools - community schools and voluntary controlled schools - are required to teach RE according to their Agreed Syllabus. RE is a statutory subject in the curriculum and all schools are legally obliged to teach the subject to every pupil (except those withdrawn by their parents). This syllabus meets the needs of Academies and Free Schools in Doncaster for RE planning as well, providing a locally approved and educationally sound basis for good RE in all our schools.

In line with the law, our new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education expects that schools will enable pupils to explore Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, as well as Christianity. It also encourages the consideration of secular world views. RE makes a significant contribution to pursuing the strategic priorities of the Local Authority. These include providing high quality teaching and learning, effective leadership and effective school practice, designed to enable sustained improvement through collaborative working.

Accountability

RE also makes significant contributions to pupils' ability to engage with ideas about British values, such as tolerance and respect for people who hold varied beliefs and world views, in line with the HMI inspection focus on SMSCD and British Values.

Knowledge, learning, skills

Doncaster's Social Mobility Opportunity Area Delivery Plan prioritises brilliant teaching for our

pupils. Following the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education means that RE makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, knowledge and skills. This will contribute to pupils' readiness to participate in life in modern, diverse Britain and in a plural world. Good RE is never coercive: this area of learning is not about making pupils into believers but tries to help them become literate and articulate about religions and beliefs, and to be thoughtful members of a plural society. Thus they can make informed choices about how they want to live their lives, whilst also understanding more about the faith of other people they meet. As such, it is relevant to every pupil and every citizen of Doncaster

Every pupil has a statutory entitlement to religious education. This entitlement is for all pupils regardless of their faith or belief. Living in and growing up in the world of the 21st century will challenge all young people. It will raise questions of spirituality and identity as well as questions of morality, such as poverty, discrimination and the use of limited resources as well as raising ethical questions about human reproduction, racial and religious prejudice and the role of politics in everyday life.

Religious Education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools, provoking challenging questions about human life, beliefs, communities and ideas. In RE, pupils learn from religions and world views about different ways of life in local, national and global contexts. They discover, explore and consider many different answers to questions about human identity, meaning and value. They learn to weigh up for themselves the value of wisdom from different communities, to disagree respectfully, to be reasonable in their responses to religions and world views and to respond by expressing insights into their own and others' lives. They think rigorously, creatively, imaginatively and respectfully about their ideas in relation to religions and world views.

RE and the National Curriculum

The 2018 Doncaster RE Agreed Syllabus follows the structure of the DfE's National Curriculum (2013), so that RE has subject documentation

which parallels the subjects of the National Curriculum. RE is described in terms of purpose, aims and programs of study for each age group.

The Agreed Syllabus also takes the opportunity to give clear guidance on RE in the early years and RE for students aged 14-19.

Religious Demographics: Local, Regional and National

Regional and national figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest hundred or thousand for clarity and ease of understanding.

Religion / Belief	Doncaster	Yorkshire and Humberside	England and Wales
Christianity	199 320	3 144 000	33 243 000
Islam	4 990	326 000	2 706 000
Hinduism	881	24 000	816 000
Sikhism	1 140	22 200	423 000
Judaism	79	9 900	263 000
Buddhism	683	14 300	247 000
Other religious groups	932	16 500	240 000
No religion	73 656	1 366 000	14 097 000
Unstated in the Census	20 721	360 000	4 038 000

All pupils should build an accurate understanding of these figures, so that they can see clearly the place of religion in contemporary Britain.

Note that while some populations may be numbered in hundreds in our immediate area, we are educating pupils to live in a region, a nation and a world – not merely in a single city. Religious plurality is the context of RE in Yorkshire and in the UK. Note that the ‘Other religious groups’ include populations numbered in many millions globally, but in smaller numbers within the UK, such as members of the Bahá’í faith, Jains or Zoroastrians.

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

In Doncaster, our population includes many people who are Christians, non-religious and Muslim, and smaller numbers of other communities. RE is for every pupil, and encourages understanding of the whole community, in its diversity.

Our RE syllabus is balanced: pupils will learn from Christianity in each year of their schooling and more than half of their studies will centre on Christianity. A balanced programme of learning from others’ religions and world views is offered as well.