

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SUPPORTING FRAMEWORK

GUIDANCE

Note: This is a draft document and a work in progress

FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR 3 TO 16 YEAR-OLDS IN WALES 2022

INTRODUCTION

Religious education will be a statutory requirement in the new curriculum for all learners from age 3 to 16.

Religious education forms part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) within the new Curriculum for Wales. Humanities encompasses religious education, business studies, geography, history and social studies. *(A hyperlink will be inserted here to the Humanities AoLE documents)*

This supporting framework offers further information on how religious education can be taught within Humanities, following the matters approach. It has been written by practitioners and religious education experts and produced by Welsh Government. The ethos and philosophy of this framework corresponds to that of the Curriculum for Wales.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SUPPORTING FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The supporting framework will support the Curriculum for Wales guidance by providing further detail about how the what matters statements included in the Humanities area of learning and experience can be achieved in relation to religious education.

The framework outlines the contribution that religious education makes to the Curriculum for Wales. It emphasises the integral nature of religious education within humanities and how it contributes to the rest of the curriculum, and benefits from it.

The framework has been written to be accessible to a wide audience. It is intended for use by teachers; head teachers; governing bodies of maintained schools and non-maintained nursery settings in Wales; parents; local authorities and their SACREs; diocesan authorities; regional consortia; awarding bodies and

Estyn. In addition, it may be useful to teacher unions, religious organisations and other bodies in Wales with an interest in religious education.

Religious education in Voluntary Aided schools with a religious character will be determined by governors in accordance with their trust deed and will reflect the religious foundation of the school. These schools follow a denominational syllabus.

Religious education in Voluntary Controlled schools with a religious character should be taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, unless the denominational syllabus is specifically requested by the parents. As such, some Voluntary Controlled schools will follow the denominational syllabus of the Church in Wales and others will follow the agreed syllabus of their local authority.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WITHIN HUMANITIES

Approaches to religious education should be meaningful to learners. Religious education can either be taught discretely or in an integrated way within Humanities.

In Humanities, religious education provides opportunities for learners to explore questions of meaning and purpose in their lives and their connections with other people and the world in which we live. They should have opportunities to think critically about their own values and about how they might make important social and personal decisions. Religious education should provide learners with opportunities to explore the ways in which religious and non-religious worldviews have influenced local and world history and human experience, in both positive and negative ways. They should include opportunities for both institutional and personal religious and non-religious worldviews. Learners should have opportunities to engage with ultimate questions and responses relating to the meaning and purpose of life, the universe, human experience and the natural world, and be encouraged to explore the challenges, opportunities and response of human beings locally within their cynefin, in Wales and the wider world.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE LAW – A LOCALLY AGREED SYLLABUS

WHAT IS A LOCALLY AGREED SYLLABUS?

An agreed syllabus specifies what must be taught in religious education within a local authority and should be reviewed every five years. The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for each local authority has a legal duty to elect a group called an agreed syllabus conference to review the syllabus and to develop the curriculum content for religious education, or adopt a syllabus for religious education that is relevant to its locality. Once this has been agreed, all maintained schools are required to teach in accordance with the agreed syllabus, with the exception of voluntary aided schools and those with a trust deed which specifies otherwise.

Each Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) will need to ensure that due regard is given to the Curriculum for Wales and the supporting framework during agreed syllabus conferences, should they choose to develop their own curriculum content for religious education, in order to comply with the legislative duties placed upon them. The Religious Education Supporting Framework has been written to comply with the legal obligations for a locally agreed syllabus and therefore should an agreed syllabus conference decide to adopt or adapt this framework as the locally agreed syllabus, they may do so.

DESIGNING YOUR CURRICULUM

(Please note: A supporting annex for the progression steps in relation to religious education is currently being drafted and will be made available to support teachers in designing their curriculum).

The four purposes of the curriculum are the key drivers for developing religious education within Humanities. Teachers and practitioners must consider how their teaching contributes to the development of them.

Key concepts and ideas in religious education should regularly and explicitly be revisited in order to consolidate and deepen understanding. Schools should select content to ensure there is increasing breadth and depth for learners as they progress through school so that the key concepts of religious education can be explored more thoroughly. Revisiting concepts should not be repetitive however, but should provide ever more complex challenges, allowing learners to access new experiences, knowledge and skills. Revisiting concepts within religious education will increase the level of sophistication of the way learners think about their world.

School curriculum design and religious education within it, should ensure that learners' locality, cynefin and Welsh contexts are significant and central to planning.

Content should also be selected to ensure that learners are able to make connections within and between the matters statements in Humanities and to ensure progression in the skills identified in the progression steps. When planning for religious education, schools and practitioners should also ensure that they select content that meets with the requirements set out within this document.

Between ages 14 to 16, Humanities will allow learners to follow their interests in more depth as they progress, so that they can specialise in one or more disciplines, including religious education. Schools may also offer learning which is more integrated within Humanities.

The individual disciplines including religious education will naturally become more visible in progression steps 4 and 5, and such specialisation will involve an increase in depth of disciplinary knowledge, complex skills and enriched experiences. This will also pave the way for further specialisation during further and higher education, and in the world of work.

Using key concepts for religious education

The disciplines within Humanities share many common themes. The concepts outlined in this area of learning and experience reflect this and are interconnected. The Humanities disciplines provide a variety of lenses through which to view the same human experiences and have their own subject specific concepts for so doing. The interrelatedness of these concepts support a holistic approach to learning.

Religious education enables all learners to understand human experience, engage with the natural world and to understand their own place within it through the exploration of a range of subject specific concepts and contexts that relate to the overarching concepts in Humanities.

School curriculum design for religious education within Humanities should:

- Provide rich contexts for learners to be curious, to explore ultimate questions, and to search for an understanding of the human condition. It should provide opportunities for learners to reflect, and to experience awe and wonder, in a range of meaningful real world contexts.
- Develop a rich context for enquiry into the concepts of religion, worldview, secularity, spirituality, life stance, identity and culture to develop learners' well-rounded understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Provide a rich context for engaging with concepts of belief, faith, truth, purpose, meaning, knowledge, sources of authority, self, origin, life, death and ultimate reality. This enables learners to develop an understanding of personal and institutional worldviews about the nature of life and the world around them.
- Develop a rich context for exploring the concepts of identity, belonging, relationships, community, cynefin, diversity, pluralism and interconnectedness which can enable learners to gain a sense of self and develop spirituality.
- Enable learners to explore the concepts of equality, sustainability, tolerance, freedom, prejudice, discrimination, extremism, good and evil which can give learners an insight into the challenges and opportunities that face societies.
- Provide opportunities for learners to consider the contexts of religiosity practice, ritual, tradition, worship, sacredness, symbolism and celebration.

- Provide a rich context for exploring the concepts of ethics, morality, justice, responsibilities, authority, humanity, rights, values and social action.
- Enable learners to develop an understanding of lived religion and belief through the exploration of these concepts.

Considerations for teachers when designing their curriculum

- Where planning takes place at an AoLE level, religious education should be considered alongside other disciplines.
- Relate planning for religious education to the Humanities what matters statements and the rationales that accompany them.
- Use high level concepts in planning and when selecting appropriate themes.
- Use overarching themes, concepts or transferable questions that are appropriate to religious education.
- Consider lower level concepts that naturally link with the theme, concept or question used.
- Plan in opportunities for cross curricular natural links and interdependencies with other subjects in Humanities and in other Areas of Learning and Experience.
- Take account of all learners' needs.
- Consider the locality, cynefin, Wales and the wider world.
- Provide opportunities for learning experiences e.g. visits and visitors and spiritual development.
- Plan for progression.
- Ensure there is a continuum of learning in religious education.

ENRICHMENT AND EXPERIENCES

Where learners will participate in experiential learning in religious education.

All learners should:

- Have access to a broad range of experiences and enrichment opportunities.
- Be encouraged to feel engaged in and have ownership of their learning.
- Have opportunities for meaningful engagement, which they can enjoy and remember with local communities where a range of different beliefs are likely to be present.
- Have opportunities to engage in role play and to participate in, or observe, activities such as celebrations or re-enactments.
- Have opportunities to consider what influences people as they respond to ethical dilemmas, solve real and present problems or explore past events.
- Experience the wonder and mystery of the natural world, historical locations, and religious and cultural sites.
- Have rich experiences playing, exploring and learning in outdoor and indoor environments.
- Have access to a range of educational visits within the local community and further afield as a starting point to support their learning of key concepts, or to enhance their learning through first-hand experience.
- Have opportunities to engage with visitors and experts.
- Use observation and participation in experiential learning such as cultural activities, which help them to understand human experiences.

The purpose of experiential learning in religious education must be for improving the learners understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews.

HOW RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUPPORTS THE FOUR PURPOSES

The four purposes are at the heart of the Curriculum for Wales. Religious education makes an important and distinctive contribution to supporting learners in achieving the four purposes across all Areas of Learning and Experience as well as in the broader Curriculum for Wales.

The purpose of the new curriculum in Wales is that children and young people develop as:

Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives

Learners will have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews through enquiry, exploration and evaluation relating to both interdisciplinary and disciplinary themes. Undertaking enquiries exploring complex philosophical questions about the meaning and purpose of life and engaging with ultimate questions raised by the world around them, their own life experiences and aspects of religion and belief. Engaging with sources of wisdom and philosophy, should encourage and support learners in critically evaluating the perspectives of others. Developing and expressing their own informed viewpoints will help to prepare them for lifelong learning in this pluralistic and diverse world.

Enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work

Learners will have opportunities and be encouraged to think creatively using their knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews to critically engage with the challenges and opportunities past and present that face human beings. Learners will have the opportunity to develop their curiosity about, and appreciation of, a range of environments and experiences of interacting with the natural world. They will be encouraged to reflect on the effect this has had upon them and the impact they and others have on it. They will have opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they have developed through these experiences in order to explore challenging questions (including those relating to the sustainability of the world and the improvement of the lives of people in their cynefin, in Wales and the wider world). This would enable learners to imagine possible futures and create responsible solutions that take into account the diverse needs and rights of all people.

Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world

Learners will have opportunities to undertake enquires exploring contemporary and controversial, social issues, and the ways in which people participate in society and in social action. Finding, evaluating and using evidence from a range of religious and non-religious sources to engage with contemporary, ethical and moral issues that challenge their knowledge and values. They will develop an understanding of religion and belief, culture, community, their cynefin, Wales and the wider world now and in the past, which will nurture a sense of place and belonging. Learners will be able to identify the beliefs and practices of people in Wales and the wider world, and how these might impact their actions and choices. They will be encouraged to respect, where appropriate, the needs and rights of others as members of a diverse society to which they belong, and they will have opportunities to take considered, ethical actions with the aim of creating a sustainable future for all.

Healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Learners will have the safe space for discussion and reflection to explore their own perspectives and those of others, on a range of ethical challenges and social issues. They will find the information to keep safe and well, and build their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy. Learners will have opportunities to develop secure values and establish their ethical beliefs and spirituality through the exploration of religious and non-religious worldviews on a range of issues which are relevant to all human beings. This in turn will help them to form positive relationships based upon trust and mutual respect. They will also explore their relationship with the natural world, locally, across Wales and beyond, which will encourage a sense of identity and well-being.

Spirituality within Humanities

Spirituality is concerned with the human spirit and that which is beyond the ordinary. It can create meaning and purpose in life. Spirituality can, but does not necessarily, involve religion. Spiritual development can result in a growth of awareness of self in relation to others, the world and, for some people, to a higher power or ultimate reality.

The Four Purposes of the curriculum aim to enable learners to develop secure values and establish their ethical beliefs and spirituality. This should take place

across the whole curriculum and is not unique to Religious Education. Nonetheless, Religious Education can make an important contribution to this leading to learners' development as healthy confident individuals. To attempt to measure spiritual development in terms of progression is difficult; however, Religious Education should be rich in opportunities for spiritual development. Spiritual development could occur as learners engage in everyday life within the local and global community and learners' cynefin. Having an increased awareness of self in relation to others can lead to both spiritual and moral development.

When exploring the what matters in the Curriculum religious education will give learners the opportunity for spiritual development in a variety of ways.

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WHAT MATTERS IN HUMANITIES

The exploration of religious education within Humanities enables learners to make sense of what matters in religious education in a holistic way that enhances the development of the four purposes of the curriculum.

The Five What Matters Statements:

- Enquiry exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.
- Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways.
- Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.
- Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs.
- Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered, ethical and sustainable action.

The first what matters statement champions enquiry and discovery within Humanities, while the second encourages learners to explore and consider how they and others view, interpret and represent human experiences. What matters statements three and four focus on the key aspects of understanding in Humanities, namely of people's relationship with the natural world and with each other. The final what matters statement places a new emphasis on the individual's role and action in response to the challenges and opportunities facing humanity.

Progression

The curriculum should be designed to support progression along a continuum of learning from age 3 to 16.

Progression in religious education has the same principles of progression contained within the Curriculum for Wales Guidance. The descriptions of learning within Humanities provide further guidance on how learners should progress within each what matters. Progression is further supported by descriptions of learning which provide guidance on how learners should progress within each statement of what matters as they journey through the continuum of learning. These are arranged in five progression steps which provide reference points for the pace of that progression. These expectations

are expressed from the learner's perspective and are framed broadly so that they can sustain learning over a series of years (A hyperlink will be inserted to this document)

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KEY LINKS, DEPENDENCIES AND INTERDEPENDENCIES

There are clear links and interdependencies between Humanities and the other five areas of learning and experience.

Each area of learning and experience has been designed to operate together as part of a holistic curriculum. Learning should be coherent and planned across all the different areas building on inherent links, dependencies and interdependencies. These links should be drawn upon during curriculum planning, with practitioners working creatively and collaboratively to support learners' realisation of the four purposes of the curriculum.

There are rich opportunities for religious education across all areas of learning and experience.

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ANNEX A

SPIRITUALITY

Spiritual development can occur when pupils are given the opportunities to:

Gain awareness of self in relation to others

- develop self-awareness and awareness of the needs of others
- show empathy and consideration for others
- develop compassion and help others
- develop a voice and listen with respect to the voices of others
- form good relationships
- talk about themselves in relation to others, the world and/or a higher power or ultimate reality
- develop a sense of their uniqueness and value
- gain awareness and respect of the beliefs, teachings and practices of others and an ability to articulate their own
- explore how religious and non-religious worldviews impact on the lives of individuals, the local community and wider society
- reflect upon their own beliefs, values and actions and express and justify their own feelings and opinions
- develop aspirations and learn to live with disappointment

Be creative and go beyond the mundane

- develop creativity and use their imagination
- experience awe and wonder or be amazed by things
- foster curiosity and develop insight

Explore Ultimate questions and meaning and purpose

- ask, consider and reflect on ultimate questions (the big questions about life)
- create meaning and purpose in their own lives
- experience that which is beyond the ordinary

Connect to the wider or natural world

- develop an appreciation of belonging to their cynefin and the wider world
- experience the natural world, value the environment and work toward sustainable futures for all
- experience the richness of the stimuli around them through use of the senses
- experience being present in the moment
- develop awareness of the world around them and their place within it
- make sense of their experience of the natural world and human relationships

ANNEX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS	
Key Term	Definition
Artefact	An object that may be of historical, cultural and/or religious significance for a group or individual, including natural and man-made artefacts.
Authority	The idea that something or someone is in charge of what is right or wrong. We look to an authority to guide our own understanding and decision-making
Awe	A powerful feeling of wonder, amazement, dread, respect or reverence which is out of the ordinary.
Belonging	How people share a sense of identity and community.
Community	A community is a group of people who share something in common and can be defined by their shared attributes and/or by the strength of the connections amongst them
Diversity	Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. There is also diversity within each of the dimensions.
Ethics	Ethics are the moral principles that guide people's behaviour and enable them to make decisions about how to live their lives. Ethics is also a branch of philosophy.
Extremism	Believing in and supporting ideas that are very far from what most people consider normal or common
Faith	A belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof. A belief or trust in something or someone.
Justice	The treatment of people with equality and fairness, both generally and before the law.
Lifestance	How someone chooses to live out their life as a result of the relation that they have with what he or she accepts as being of ultimate importance. In religious education a lifestance could be related to concepts such as worldview.
Lived Religion	An understanding of religion as it exists in society. A framework for understanding the beliefs, practices and everyday experiences of religious and spiritual persons. In religious education learners might consider how this relates to someone's personal worldview.

KEY TERM	DEFINITION
Philosophy	A way of thinking about the world, the universe, and society. It works by asking questions about the nature of human thought, the nature of the universe, and the connections between them.
Pluralism	A system in which two or more worldviews, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist.
Religiosity	A quality that displays dedication to religious rituals and tradition and various other dimensions of religion (religiousness).
Religious and Spiritual experience	Religious and Spiritual Experience - Specific experience such as wonder at the infinity of the cosmos, the sense of awe and mystery in the presence of the sacred or holy, feeling of dependence on a divine power or an unseen order, the sense of guilt and anxiety accompanying belief in a divine judgment, or the feeling of peace that follows faith in divine forgiveness. Such experience may have religious and non-religious expressions.
Ritual	An activity that often contains a symbolic meaning and is usually performed in a specific order. E.g. religious ceremony or service.
Sacred	Something considered worthy of spiritual respect or devotion; something holy, dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity; something inspiring awe or reverence. Something sacred has a particular kind of value. A worth that is invested in it by us raising it to the status of being sacred.
Secularity	The state of being separate from religion, or of not being exclusively allied with or against any particular religion.
Spirituality	Spirituality is concerned with the human spirit and that which is beyond the ordinary. It can create meaning and purpose in life. Spirituality can, but does not necessarily, involve religion. Spiritual development can result in a growth of awareness of self in relation to others, the world and, for some people, to a higher power or ultimate reality.
Ultimate reality	Ultimate reality can mean something different in different religions. In religious education it could refer to something eternal and unchanging, a higher existence or principle that governs all things.
Ultimate questions	Questions that focus on the search for meaning, significance and value in life.
Worldview	A worldview is a person's way of understanding, experiencing and engaging with the world. In religious education this includes how a person understands the nature of reality and their own place in the world. A person's worldview is likely to influence and be influenced by their beliefs, values, behaviours, traditions, experiences, identities and commitments.

ANNEX C

Designing your curriculum -- Key Concepts for consideration by teachers and for discussion with learners:

Authority	Belief	Belonging	Cause	Cause and effect
Celebration	Change	Citizenship	Community	Compassion
Consequences	Continuity	Culture	Discrimination	
Diversity	Ethics	Equality	Evidence	Evil
Extremism	Faith	Forgiveness	Freedom	Good
Governance	Humanity	Identity	Interconnectedness	
Interpretations	Justice	Knowledge	Life and death	
Life stance	Lived religion		Love	Meaning
Morality	Objectivity	Origin	Peace	Perspectives
Practice	Prejudice	Pluralism	Purpose	Power
Reconciliation	Relationships		Religion	Religiosity
Representations	Ritual	Respect	Sacredness	Sacred places
Sacred spaces	Self	Significance	Secularity	Soul
Sources of authority		Sustainability		Symbolism
Tolerance	Tradition	Truth	Ultimate reality	
Ultimate questions	Wisdom	Worldview	Worship	

These concepts outlined above have been identified as high level and maybe explored within religious education. They should not be regarded as discrete topics, but rather as interwoven central ideas of study that provide opportunities for learners to explore religion from a variety of perspectives. This is not an exhaustive list.