

## 2.1 The Purposes of the Barnsley Local Agreed Syllabus

**The Barnsley Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS) for Religious Education (RE) has five purposes, which mirror the purposes of the National Curriculum.**

### 1. To establish an entitlement

RE is for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, religion, gender, differences in ability and disabilities. They have an entitlement to learning in RE. This contributes to their developing knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes, which are necessary for their self-fulfilment and their development as active and responsible citizens. It is expected that few, if any, parents will wish to withdraw their children from this entitlement.

### 2. To establish standards

The LAS sets out expectations for learning and attainment that are explicit to pupils, parents, teachers, governors, employers and the public, and establishes standards for the performance of all pupils in RE. These standards may be used in assessment for learning, and to help pupils and teachers set targets for improvement and evaluate progress towards those targets.

### 3. To promote continuity and coherence

The LAS seeks to contribute to a coherent curriculum that promotes continuity. It facilitates the transition of pupils between schools and phases of education and can provide foundations for further study and lifelong learning.

### 4. To promote Community Cohesion

'RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion in the school community, the community within which the school is located, the UK community and the global community'.\*

\*Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010 and 2023

### 5. To promote public understanding

The LAS aims to increase public understanding of, and confidence in, the work of schools in RE

## 2.2 The Aims of the Barnsley Local Agreed Syllabus

The aims of religious education in Barnsley are to enable pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the five other principal religions represented in Great Britain
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
  - developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them
  - responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and other belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience
  - reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study
- Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions
- The 2002 and 2011 Education Acts encourages schools to follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broadbased curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims

## 2.3 Time for Religious Education

**In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus, the Agreed Syllabus Conference strongly recommends an estimated allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education (RE). Curriculum time for RE is distinct from the time schools may spend on collective worship.**

A minimum 5% of curriculum time is strongly recommended for teaching Religious Education. This means in practice that schools are expected to allocate:

Key Stage 1: 36 hours of tuition per year.

Key Stage 2: 45 hours of tuition per year.

Key Stage 3: 45 hours of tuition per year.

Key Stage 4/14-16: 5% of curriculum time, or 70 hours of tuition across the key stage.

16-19: Allocation of time for RE for all should be clearly identifiable.

‘RE is a distinctive but core part of the basic curriculum for maintained schools in England<sup>1</sup>’

‘The curriculum is less prescriptive as to content than it was. Schools have the flexibility to provide more coherent and integrated crosscurricular learning experiences to complement discrete subject teaching tailored to the needs of their pupils and community. In practice this means that subjects such as RE, history or citizenship might be taught discretely but also together within a humanities framework, with links to history and citizenship. Some schools might choose to focus on intensive teaching of RE in particular years. Consequently individual subjects may not feature in the curriculum under their traditional names or indeed be taught always in discrete subject areas<sup>2</sup>’

**Any school in which governors do not plan to allocate sufficient time for RE is unlikely to be able to enable pupils to achieve the standards set out in this syllabus.**

<sup>1</sup> Section 80(i), Education Acts 2002 and 2011

<sup>2</sup> Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010 and 2023

## 2.4 About Religious Education in the curriculum

### Supporting the aims of the curriculum

**Aim 1:** The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.

Religious education (RE) should be a stimulating, interesting and enjoyable subject. The knowledge, skills and understanding outlined in the Barnsley Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS) are designed to promote the best possible progress and attainment for all pupils. RE develops independent and interdependent learning. It makes an important contribution to pupils' skills in literacy and information and communication technology. RE promotes an enquiring approach in which pupils carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion. It also enhances the capacity to think coherently and consistently. This enables pupils to evaluate thoughtfully their own and others' views in a reasoned and informed manner.

**Aim 2:** The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

RE has a significant role in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At the heart of this LAS is a focus on ultimate questions and ethical issues. This focus enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. RE seeks to develop pupils' awareness of themselves and others. This helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of the significance of religions and beliefs in the world today and learn about the ways different faith communities relate to each other.

The LAS aims to promote religious understanding, discernment and respect and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping. RE enables pupils to explore the significance of the environment, both locally and globally, and the role of human beings and other species within it. A central concern of RE is the promotion of each pupil's self-worth. A sense of self-worth helps pupils to reflect on their uniqueness as human beings, share their feelings and emotions with others and appreciate the importance of forming and maintaining positive relationships.

### The legal position

By law, religious education

- must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools and school sixth forms, except to those withdrawn by their parents, and should be offered by colleges for those who wish to receive it.
- is a component of the basic curriculum to be taught alongside the national curriculum in all maintained schools. In all such schools, other than aided schools, it must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus.

Barnsley LEA, through its Agreed Syllabus Conference, has produced this syllabus. The programmes of study of the LAS set out what pupils should be taught, and the attainment levels set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages. This LAS reflects the fact that "the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain", as the law requires. Barnsley SACRE will review this agreed syllabus after five years, as required by law.

## 2.5 Knowledge, Skills and Understanding in Religious Education

**The knowledge, skills and understanding specified in the programmes of study identify the key aspects of learning in religious education (RE). These are described as learning about religion and learning from religion.**

**Learning about religion** includes enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religious faith, its key beliefs and teachings, practices, their impact on the lives of believers and communities and the varying ways in which these are expressed. It also includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an

understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues. In the Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS), learning about religion covers pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.

**Learning from religion** is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on, engagement with and response to their own and others' experiences and their learning about religious faith. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion. Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of

identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments.

In teaching RE, it is vital that the skills are developed through the knowledge and understanding, and vice-versa. It is also important that pupils understand how their learning in RE is progressing, and what they need to do to improve it.

### The breadth of study

The knowledge, skills and understanding specified in the programmes of study are developed through the breadth of study. The breadth of study in the LAS contains three elements: the religions and beliefs studied, themes, and experiences and opportunities.

## A. Religions and beliefs

The LAS determines which six religions are to be studied. It is important to ensure both that the legal requirements for RE are met and that the RE curriculum is broad and balanced. Therefore:

- The Christian faith should be studied through each key stage
- The five other principal religions (here regarded as the Hindu Dharma; Islām; Jewish faith; Sikh Dharam and the Way of the Buddha) are to be studied in some depth by all pupils at some point in the 5-14 curriculum: by the end of Key Stage Three, pupils should have encountered all of these five principal religions, with at least one at Key Stage One, at least two at Key Stage Two, and at least two at Key Stage Three. At Key Stage Three we have included an additional unit on ethics (page 23-27) as a bridge between the principal religion sections and GCSE Syllabuses

It is also essential that the RE curriculum enables pupils to share their own beliefs, viewpoints and ideas without embarrassment or ridicule. Many pupils come from backgrounds with a positive moral foundation but many have no attachment to religious beliefs and practices. Effective RE ensures that all pupils' voices are heard. Therefore:

- Other religious traditions could be studied, particularly where they are represented locally
- Consideration can also be given to including examples of secular philosophies for study. Pupils should also study how religions relate to each other, recognising both similarities and differences within and between religions. Pupils should also be encouraged to reflect upon the significance of inter faith dialogue, the important contribution religions can make to community cohesion and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.

## Themes

The themes should always provide the context for 'Learning about religion' (AT1) and 'Learning from religion' (AT2). The themes may be taught separately, in combination with other themes, or as part of the religions. However they are combined, they should ensure that the knowledge, skills and understanding are covered with sufficient breadth and depth.

## B. Key experiences and opportunities

The experiences and opportunities highlight, at each key stage, the vital opportunities and experiences that pupils should encounter that will enrich and broaden their learning in RE.

It is important that careful consideration is given to balancing the three elements of the breadth of study in developing schemes of work.

## A 14-19 entitlement

For students aged 14-19, the LAS sets out an entitlement for all students to study RE and to have their learning accredited.

# 2.6 Attitudes in Religious Education

While the knowledge, skills and understanding are central to the Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS), it is also vital that religious education (RE) encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. The following attitudes are crucial for good learning in RE and need to be consistently developed at each stage or phase of RE.

## Self Awareness

In RE, this includes pupils:

- feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and their ability to share them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious and spiritual ideas
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings, affirming their self-worth

- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour upon other people

## Respect for all

In RE, this includes pupils:

- developing skills of listening and willingness to learn from others
- readiness to look at the positive potentialities of diversity and difference
- being prepared to acknowledge their own bias
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others
- willingness to make a contribution to a diverse society for the well being of all

## Open Mindedness

In RE, this includes pupils:

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably,

evidentially and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions

- being willing to go beyond surface impressions
- distinguishing between such matters as opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith
- being willing to listen to and understand the viewpoints or others

## Appreciation and wonder

In RE, this includes pupils:

- developing their imagination and curiosity
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of awe and wonder at the world in which they live
- developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose

## 2.7 Learning Across the Curriculum: The Contribution of Religious Education

**This section sets out in general terms how religious education (RE) can promote learning across the curriculum in a number of major areas, such as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), key skills and thinking skills.**

**Promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through RE provides opportunities to promote:**

- **Spiritual development through:**

- discussing and reflecting upon key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, the being of God and values such as justice, honesty and truth
- learning about and reflecting upon important concepts, experiences and beliefs which are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity
- considering how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging
- developing their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual questions and issues.

- **Moral development through:**

- enhancing the values identified within the national curriculum, particularly valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust
- exploring the influence on moral choices of family, friends and media and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings,

sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders

- considering what is of ultimate value to pupils and believers through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religious faiths and philosophy on values and ethical codes of practice
- studying a range of moral issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote
- racial and religious respect and the importance of personal integrity
- considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience
- exploring how people choose between good and bad, and clarifying ideas such as moral strength, moral courage, the rejection of temptation.

- **Social development through:**

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns
- investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions, as well as common ground between them
- articulating their own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues, in the light of their learning about religion.

- **Cultural development through:**

- exploring some of the ways in which artistic, cultural and creative expression link to religious beliefs and practices
- promoting cultural understanding from a religious perspective through encounters with people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing cultures
- considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religious beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices
- promoting racial and inter-faith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing

positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how inter-faith co-operation can support the pursuit of the common good.

### **Promoting citizenship through RE**

RE plays an essential part in promoting citizenship through:

- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding regarding the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
- enabling pupils to think about topical issues.
- spiritual moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly
- exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally
- developing understanding of global issues of wealth, poverty, fairness and equality
- enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about such issues, problems and events.

### **Promoting personal, social and health education through RE**

RE plays a significant part in promoting personal, social and health education through:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by being taught what is fair and unfair, right and wrong, and being encouraged to share and explain their opinions
- **developing a healthy, safer lifestyle** by being taught about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, the purpose and value of religious beliefs



and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views

- **developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people** by being taught about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people, with beliefs, views and lifestyles that are different from their own.

### Promoting key skills through RE

RE provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **Communication** through:
  - developing a broad and accurate religious vocabulary
  - reading and responding to a range of written and spoken language, including sacred texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy and worship
  - communicating ideas using the creative and expressive arts
  - talking and writing with understanding and insight about religious and other beliefs and values, reflecting critically on ultimate questions of life, using reasoned arguments.
- **Application of number** through calendrical reckoning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting data, involving graphs, charts and statistical analysis.
- **ICT** through the selective and appropriate use of CD ROMs and the Internet, researching and interpreting information about religious beliefs, teaching and practices, using

email to communicate and analyse information with people of differing beliefs and cultures, using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present data relevant to the study of RE.

- **Working with others** through sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices, collaborating with each other and developing respect and sensitivity.
- **Improving own learning and performance** through setting targets as part of RE development, reviewing their achievements and identifying ways to improve their own work.
- **Problem solving** through recognising key issues and problems to do with religious belief, practice and expression, interpreting and explaining findings and making personal decisions on religious issues (for example, considering their own and religious ideas on good and evil), moral dilemmas and priorities in life.

### Promoting other aspects of the curriculum

RE provides opportunities to promote:

- **Thinking skills** through helping pupils to research, select, interpret and analyse information from religious traditions reflect and question their own views and ideas and those of others and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways.
- **Financial capability** through considering the responsible use of money, the importance of charitable giving and the ethics of wealth, debt, poverty, gambling, business and investment.
- **Creativity and culture** through considering the scope of human nature, sources of inspiration and discovery, connections

between beliefs, values, worship and forms of artistic expression, appreciating the value of cultural distinctiveness and reflecting upon beauty, goodness and truth in creative and expressive arts.

- **Education for racial equality and community cohesion** through studying the damaging effects of xenophobia and racial stereotyping, the impact of conflict in religion and the promotion of respect, understanding and co-operation through dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs.
- **Effective contributions to scientific, medical and health issues**, for example, exploring philosophical and ethical questions of the origin, purpose and destiny of the cosmos and life within it; the nature of humanity, the sanctity of life and human interaction with the world, developments in genetics and medicine and their application and use; concepts of health and wellbeing and their promotion.
- **Links to employment vocations and work-related learning** through a focus on individual sense of purpose and aspiration in life, and through considering the appropriateness and relevance of RE to a wide range of employment opportunities and the development of spiritual and ethical issues linked to the world of work.
- **Education for sustainable development** through helping pupils consider the origins and value of life, the importance of looking after the environment and studying the ways in which religious beliefs and teachings have influenced attitudes to the environment, world development and other species.