Somerset Agreed Syllabus



Towards Glastonbury Tor – Oil. Chris Adler

Somerset Council

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Forward

It is with great pride and anticipation that I introduce the 2025 Somerset Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. This syllabus marks a significant evolution in how we approach Religious Education (RE) in our county—one that is grounded in academic rigour, inclusivity, and a deep respect for the diverse worldviews that shape our communities.

In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, the ability of young people to understand and engage with a wide range of religious and non-religious worldviews is more important than ever. This syllabus adopts a Religion and Worldviews (RW) approach, equipping pupils with the tools to explore how worldviews operate, including their own, through a multi-disciplinary lens. It fosters critical thinking, empathy, and reflexivity, preparing learners to navigate and contribute meaningfully to the diverse society in which they live.

A distinctive feature of this syllabus is its strong emphasis on locality. Rooted in the rich cultural, historical, and spiritual landscape of Somerset, the syllabus encourages schools to explore how belief and identity are shaped by place. From sacred springs and ancient traditions to contemporary expressions of faith, the local context becomes a powerful lens through which pupils can examine broader global themes. This place-based approach ensures that Religious Education is not only academically robust but also personally relevant and meaningful.

We are deeply grateful to our colleagues in Norfolk and Cumbria SACREs for their generosity in sharing their work, and to the Religious Education Council for the invaluable REC Toolkit, which has guided the development of this syllabus. Special thanks also go to the late Dawn Cox, whose insight and support have been instrumental throughout this process.

This syllabus is not a static document but a living framework—one that invites ongoing professional dialogue and curriculum development. It supports teachers in delivering high-quality RE that reflects both the local character of Somerset and the wider world, ensuring that every pupil can see themselves in the curriculum and understand the perspectives of others.

I commend this syllabus to all educators, leaders, and communities across Somerset. May it inspire thoughtful teaching, rich learning, and a deeper understanding of the diverse world we share.

Many thanks,

Alison Jeffery
Head of Service, Curriculum and training

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Abbreviation reference as of this point…

REC: Religious Education Council

NCS: National Content Standard

ASC: Agreed Syllabus Conference

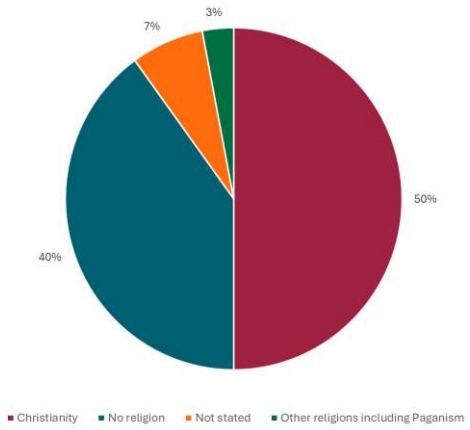
RW: Religion and Worldviews

Context Summary: Somerset Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE)

Somerset is a county steeped in history and natural beauty, from the ancient spiritual landscapes of Glastonbury and the Somerset Levels to the rugged coastlines of Exmoor and the rolling Mendip Hills. Its rich cultural heritage and diverse geography have long inspired spiritual reflection and community traditions, making it an ideal setting for a dynamic and inclusive Religious Education curriculum.

Religious Landscape: Insights from the 2021 Census

The 2021 Census data highlights a significant transformation in religious affiliation across Somerset. While Christianity remains the most commonly identified religion, there has been a notable rise in those stating, **"no religion"**, now comprising around **40%** of the population. Importantly, **Paganism has emerged as the largest non-Christian religion in Somerset**, reflecting the county's deep-rooted spiritual traditions and its strong connection to nature and ancient belief systems.
This shift underscores the need for a syllabus that not only includes major world religions but also embraces contemporary and local belief systems such as Paganism, Humanism, and other philosophical worldviews.



Somerset Schools Overview

Within the Somerset Council area there are 268 schools including:

- **167 Primary Schools**
- **29 First Schools, 17 Infant Schools, 10 Junior Schools and 5 Middle Schools**
- **28 Secondary Schools**
- **27 Independent Schools**
- **A number of Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units**

These schools serve over **141,800 pupils** and include a mix of **maintained schools**, **academies within Multi Academy Trusts (MATs)**, and **non-maintained independent settings**. This diversity in governance and educational approach presents both opportunities and challenges for delivering consistent and high-quality RE across the county.

By reflecting the lived experiences and beliefs of Somerset's communities, the syllabus will support pupils in developing **respect, understanding, and critical thinking**, preparing them for life in a diverse and interconnected world.

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Purpose

A Somerset syllabus.

The Somerset syllabus has been guided by the NCS for Religious Education, which is structured in a similar way to a National Curriculum and is based on a Religion and Worldviews approach. It has guided our creation of six key concepts which should run through your curriculum and be built upon over time (see p.14-15):

Origins and expression
Personal and collective
Place and time
Meaning and purpose
Ethics and values
Influence and power

We have used the REC Handbook to help us help you understand what excellent quality RE looks like in a new and exciting multi-disciplinary, Religion and Worldviews approach.

Purpose of Study

According to the REC toolkit and we agree:

'The key purpose for RE in an RW approach is for pupils to understand how worldviews work in human experience, including their own, through the study of religion and non-religion, using rigorous scholarly approaches that equip them for adult life in a diverse world. This incorporates several other purposes for the subject, drawn from the strong traditions of RE and the wider purposes of education.'

24-25698-REC-Handbook-A4-DIGITAL-PAGES.pdf

From this point on a Religion and Worldviews approach (which includes non-religious worldviews) will be referred to as **RW**.

In Religion and Worldviews approach we should aim to include **substantive** content which teaches students the…							
global nature of RW	local nature of RW	understand what is 'in front of' and 'beyond' all worldviews	importance of being religiously literate in a pluralistic society	the influence and impact RW on society	the meaning and purpose claims made within RW	conceptual threads that weave through RW	broad diversity of beliefs and practices that is found within RW

In a Religion and Worldviews approach we should aim to include **disciplinary** knowledge which teaches students the…			
multi-disciplinary nature of RE	tools to encounter and interpret RW sources of authority	tools to analyse claims made within RW	critical thinking and communication skills.

In a Religion and Worldviews approach we should aim to allow students to understand and explore their own **positionality** by understanding…			
the reflexivity of their own worldviews and those of others	how to empathise with what may seem 'other'	their part to play as citizens in a pluralistic society	how to notice and respond to their own biases and those of others

Aims

What do we mean by worldview? Taken from REC.

There are many definitions of 'worldview'. Alongside religion, it is another term that sparks debate. Fundamental to the RW approach advocated in this Handbook is the idea that everyone has a worldview – or at least, the idea that 'no one stands nowhere': everyone experiences the world from their own context, experience and position. This does not mean:

- that everyone has a ready set of coherent, consciously held responses to a set of ultimate questions about life, the universe and everything. A person's worldview may be unconsidered and even unconscious, drawing on a wide variety of influences and implicit assumptions, and containing contradictions.

- that only people with a religious worldview have a worldview. As part of a religious community's nurture, religious people may have consciously learnt about and practised their tradition and may have a considered worldview that reflects this. Alternatively, they may have unconsciously absorbed ideas and ways of living and being that have shaped and coloured their worldview, so that it is recognisably a religious worldview, even as they may well have absorbed non-religious influences too. Non-religious people – sometimes in transparent and deliberate ways, such as through membership of an organisation such as humanists UK, and sometimes unconsciously – will also have absorbed ideas and ways of living and being from their own context, which may have had non-religious or religious influences, to different degrees. These will shape the way non-religious people encounter, view, and live in the world. The RW approach balances what the CoRE report called personal and organised worldviews.

What do we mean by a personal worldview?

A personal 'worldview' describes the way in which a person encounters, interprets, understands and engages with the world.

What do we mean by organised and institutional worldview?

There are many definitions offered of organised worldviews. For example, Jacomijn C.van der Kooij et al. (2013) offer this definition: An organised worldview is 'a view on life that has developed over time as a more or less coherent and established system with certain (written and unwritten) sources, traditions, values, rituals, ideals, or dogmas … [it] has a group of believers who adhere to this view on life'.

Continued on next page...

What do we mean by a non-religious worldview?

Non-religious worldviews are diverse and complex, with fluid boundaries. People may draw upon a wide range of influences, and there are no rules about what should or should not be incorporated into a non-religious worldview. Some influences are part of a person's cultural or social background; consumerism may not be a conscious choice for a person's non-religious (or religious) worldview, but it is difficult to escape in the contemporary UK. Other influences may be more deliberately chosen, such as ethical veganism, environmentalism or Sentientism. These may equally align with some religious worldviews but adopting them does not require any assent to religious beliefs or teachings. The term non-religion itself does not entail any particular attitude towards religion

What is a religion and worldviews approach?

An RW approach examines the dynamic between these terms.
Part of that dynamic allows for encounter with, and study of, diverse voices and the experiences of individuals within wider 'organised' worldviews. Thus, the individual worldviews of adherents within such organised worldviews come under the content to be studied.

For further infomation please go to: 24-25698-REC-Handbook-A4-DIGITAL-PAGES.pdf

The NSE and Ofsted's three types of knowledge

The Ofsted 2021 Religious Education Research Review outlines three types of knowledge that pupils should make progress in:

substantive knowledge: this includes knowledge about religious and non-religious traditions, e.g. core concepts, truth claims, teachings and practices, behaviour and responses of adherents, wider concepts such as spirituality and secularity, and how worldviews work in human life

ways of knowing: this is where pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and nonreligion, incorporating methods from academic disciplines

personal knowledge: pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study, and of the lived experience of adherents. The study of the relationship between religion and worldviews is thus a core element of the substantive content of the subject. This substantive content includes organised/ institutional/ community/ individual worldviews. These range from precise credal expressions and central teachings to the complex fluidity of individual worldviews within wider Traditions.

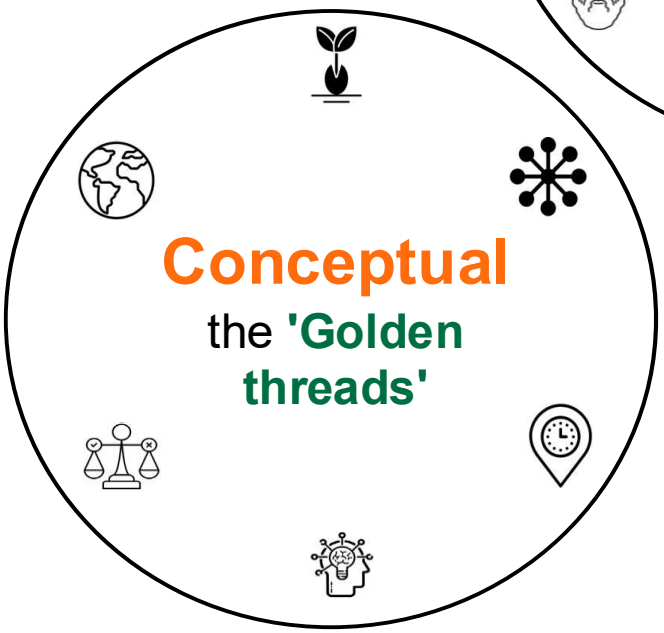
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Creating your curriculum

Your curriculum must include three elements:

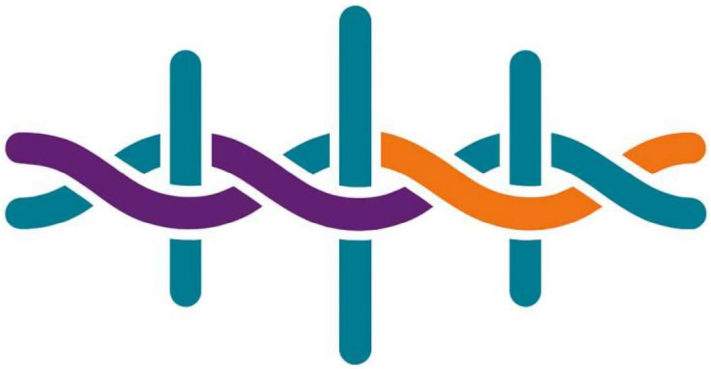






The **Substantive** and **Conceptual** knowledge weave together over time. The **Disciplinary** holds the weave together by ensuring depth of knowledge when taught explicitly…

Disciplinary



Substantive

Conceptual

Using Appendix 1 (outlining tool) and the 'planning your curriculum' section in the supporting documents, you build a balanced and inclusive curriculum.

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Planning your curriculum

Planning your whole curriculum

(come back to this when you have read through the syllabus)

Step 1	Content	Substantive knowledge Conceptual knowledge
Step 2	Ways of knowing	Content through the disciplinary lenses
Step 3	Positionality	Students and teachers Prior and post
Step 4	Enquiry questions	Create challenging enquiry questions for individual units
Step 5	Plan assessments	Planned simultaneously or before step 1

Selecting Content NCS

Legal Framework	The relevant legal requirement operates (see page 11), which for most schools and academies without a religious character is that RE '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' (Education Act 1996 Section 375). For most schools and academies with a religious character RE is determined by the governors and in their trust deed or equivalent. This primary legislation along with case law, set an expectation that pupils will develop knowledge and understanding of the matters of central importance for the religious and non-religious worldviews studied.
Intention	The National Content Standard must frame the intent behind the content selection. The treatment of that content then contributes to the progression of understanding of the elements in the National Content Standard, and the links between them.
Inclusive Principle	Best practice in RE, as well as European and domestic legislation, has established the principle that **RE in schools without a religious character 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 (noting that this does not imply equal time between religious and non-religious worldviews). All religious and non-religious worldviews studied must have fair and accurate representation.
Contextual Factors	Local context is important, including school character, local community character, pupil knowledge and experience, teacher knowledge and experience. **Local context also includes the history of local areas, allowing opportunities for local studies that connect teaching and learning with the geographical and historical background**
Collectively Enough Principle	**Pupils need to gain 'collectively enough' or 'cumulatively sufficient' knowledge (OFSTED 2021), not total coverage.** In this context, 'collectively enough' needs to relate to the National Content Standard, with its three broad strands of content, engagement and position.
Coherency	Schools should be able to give a clear account of their curriculum choices and carefully consider how they will enable the construction of a coherent curriculum for pupils

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Concepts weaving through the curriculum

Syllabus Concepts	 Origins and expression		 Personal and collective	 Place and time
REC Core statement	**Nature/ formation/ expression (a)**		**Organised /individual (b)**	**Contexts (c)**
Content	What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences		How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews	How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change
Examples	**rituals**	**practices**	**how individual worldviews may be consciously held or tacit**	**The fact that worldviews have contexts, reflecting their time and place**
	texts	**teaching**		
	stories	**inspiring people**	**how they develop in relation to wider communities**	**shaping and being shaped by these, maintaining continuity and also changing**
	creative arts	**family**		
	Tradition	**Culture**	**how individual and organised worldviews are dynamic**	**ways in which they are highly diverse and often develop in interaction with each other.**
	everyday experiences and actions	**relations with others and in society.**	**the degree to which individual worldviews may be influenced and shaped by organised worldviews**	**This applies to organised worldviews as well as to individual worldviews**

Concepts weaving through the curriculum

 Meaning and purpose	 Ethics and values		 Influence and power
Meaning and purpose (d)	**Values, commitments and morality (e)**		**Influence and power (f)**
How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience	How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life		How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies
questions of….	how to be a good person	how to live a good life	grand narratives (stories)
ultimate reality / existence			
meaning / purpose	justice	right and wrong	How these narratives influence societies
knowledge / truth			
creativity / identity diversity	value	beauty	How worldviews shape society
Ways in which worldviews may play different roles in providing people with ways of making sense of existence and/ or their lives.	truth	commitment	How society shapes worldviews

Disciplinary Content REC

'ways of knowing: this is where pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and nonreligion, incorporating methods from academic disciplines' REC

Core statement	Ways of knowing (g)	Lived experience (h)	Dialogue/ interpretation (i)
Explanation	The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing. Questions and methods should be carefully chosen, recognising that there are different understandings of what knowledge is deemed reliable, valid, credible, truthful etc.	The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people (e.g. religious, non-religious, embodied, diverse, fluid, material, experiential) in relation to local and global contexts. Recognising the complex reality of worldviews as they are held, shared and expressed by people in real life.	The field of study of worldviews is to be encountered as a dynamic area of dialogue and debate, and one which engages pupils with practices of interpretation and critical judgement.

It's not possible to go from RE in schools to its equivalent at university, so students tend to go for **theology**, **philosophy** or one of the **social sciences.** Although, it is possible to teach RE through these disciplines and others, for example, History or Geography at all key stages. These are the 'ways of knowing' according to OFSTED, the 'how' to teach RE to students. For further help on disciplines, please go to supporting documents.

According to Dawn Cox and Louise Hutton in '*Making every RE lesson count*' (p.8), most agree that these fall into three categories:

Theology:	Philosophy:	Social Sciences:
Questions about belief: what it is, where it has come from, how it has changed over time and how it is applied in different contexts. 	*Questions about the nature of reality, existence and knowledge.* 	*Questions about the way that religion and beliefs are lived and the impact they can have at an individual, communal and societal level.* 

According to Ofsted:

…. 'personal knowledge': pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study'.
'Of the 3 forms of knowledge that pupils build through the RE curriculum, personal knowledge is the least straightforward to assess in isolation. There are cognitive aspects of this knowledge that can be assessed. For example, pupils may express the assumptions that they brought to the study of a particular topic or how their own vantage point changed as a result of new content that they learned. But other aspects of personal knowledge, such as the development of personal qualities, beliefs and values, are far less straightforward to assess. There are, of course, pioneering research methods and instruments that attempt to assess pupils' attitudes. However, these are not of the same order as models of assessment for pupils' progress in schools. As with other aspects of pupils' development, schools are not the sole factor in how well they develop their personal qualities and values. It may well be that personal knowledge, due to its highly individualised personal, intimate or abstruse nature, might be an aspect of RE that ought to be 'unencumbered' by assessment.'

Core statement	Personal worldviews reflexivity (j)	Personal worldviews impact (k)
Explanation	Pupils will come to understand their own worldview in greater depth, and how it relates to the worldviews of others, becoming more reflective and reflexive. As they develop this awareness of their positionality in relation to that of others, they will be equipped to make informed, justifiable judgements on how (far) this understanding prepares them for life in a diverse world.	Pupils will develop their understanding of how their encounters with the subject content of RE are affected and shaped by their worldviews, whether conscious or not, and that this is also true for everyone else. They will reflect on how (far) their learning may have an impact on their worldview.

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Standards at EYFS…

During their time in the EYFS, children will begin to explore different religions, worldviews, beliefs and cultures through special books and stories, places, festivals and objects. They will experience different celebrations, special times and days, and use their own imagination and curiosity to explore different beliefs. They will visit places of worship and have visitors of different worldviews. Children will be introduced to specific vocabulary to support these experiences and stories. It is important that these opportunities reflect the local community and special times throughout the year, as well as the wider world.

Syllabus EYFS

Core statement	Origins and expression (a)	Personal and collective (b)	Place and Time (c)
Possible Key enquiry questions	What do different people think about how the world started?	How is Christmas celebrated by different people?	What makes places special to different people?
	Who is Jesus to some Christians?	How is Harvest celebrated locally?	How is our local church important to some people?
	Who is Moses to some Jewish people?	How do some local people celebrate nature together?	How is Glastonbury Tor important to some people?
	Why are some stories special?		
	What makes a Church/temple special?		

RE aims to promote children's own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and children should be encouraged to ask questions, to reflect on their own feelings and experiences, as well as to appreciate the different views of others. It is important that RE is available through normal classroom provision. RE may happen through planned purposeful play, as well as through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. These should provide purposeful and meaningful learning opportunities.

The teaching of RE in the EYFS will provide teachers with many opportunities to assess children against the statutory Early Learning Goals (ELGs) within the EYFS Profile. Below are some specific examples of this. Children at the expected level of development will:

- ELG: Self-regulation - Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others
- ELG: Comprehension - Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary
- ELG: Past and Present - Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society
- ELG: People, Culture and Communities - Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class

 **Meaning and purpose (d)**	 **Ethics and values(e)**	 **Influence and power (f)**
Who am I? What is important to me?	How and why do some people care for the world?	What makes Jesus special to _____?
What makes me special?	How do some people decide what is right and wrong?	How are vicars important to some people?
What makes different people happy?	What makes something fair/unfair?	Why are some stories special to different people?
Should we always be kind?		How is the Bible special to some Christians?
What do you dream about doing one day?		

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Standards at KS1…

5-7 year olds might look at some religious artwork from a diverse range of contexts (such as pictures of Jesus from around the world) and connect them with some stories or texts that help to interpret the artwork (e.g. gospel accounts pictured). They notice how the different ways of expressing the stories in art are more or less familiar and think about why (e.g. according to their own contexts). They are introduced to a selection of voices to help them find out that such stories may be important in some people's lives as part of organised worldviews, and find out why (e.g. they may include important people, and ideas about how to live). They find out that all kinds of different people may see the stories as important, but not everyone, and that sometimes this is to do with belief in God. (a, b, c)

Core statement	Origins and expression (a)	Personal and collective (b)	Place and Time (c)
Possible Key enquiry questions	What do different people think about how the world started? Who is Jesus and why is he important to some people? Who was Moses and what was important to him? Who was Esther and how did she help her people? Why is prayer important to some people?	How do Christians locally celebrate Christmas? How do Christians celebrate Easter in Norway? How and why do some people pray together or alone?	Why is Jerusalem important to religious people? Why do people go on pilgrimages? What happened after Jesus ascended? Why is Glastonbury important to the Somer people?

Syllabus KS1

 **Meaning and purpose (d)**	 **Ethics and values(e)**	 **Influence and power (f)**
Why do we like what we like? Is it important to always show respect? Why?	Should we care for the world and why does it matter? Does visiting a sacred place make someone a better person? What is the impact of Christmas celebrations on the environment, and does it matter?	What makes a religious leader and what power do they have? How do women influence religion? Who is the Pope and what influence does he have?

You must teach:

The diversity within Christianity plus **ONE** other religion, from: Dharmic or other Plus, knowledge of a non-religious worldview. Developments in philosophical thinking and a study of at least one ethical issue.

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Standards at KS2…

7-9 year olds might ask questions about meaning and purpose in life, expressing their own ideas and saying where these ideas come from. They might explore how religious worldviews help some people make sense of life and affect how they live day to day. For example, they might talk to adherents about what it means to believe there is a God, or to believe in salvation, or submission, or karma and samsara – how these ideas can transform a person's life. They might examine some texts and stories that illustrate these big concepts and find out ways in which they are interpreted. They may reflect on the difference it makes to these interpretations if someone is an adherent or not, including pupils' own perspectives. (a, c, d)

Core statement	Origins and expression (a)	Personal and collective (b)	Place and Time (c)
Possible Key enquiry questions	What is the nature of God in Christianity and what is the incarnation? What is God like according to Hindu Dharma? What does salvation mean to Christians? What is the Torah? What are the Vedas?	What is a worldview? Why do people have different worldviews? Why are places of worship important to some people? How and why might prayer strengthen people's faith?	What is it like to be a Muslim in the UK today? What is significant about how Jesus treated people? What impact has that had on the world today? What is it like to be a Muslim in Indonesia?

Syllabus KS2

Standards at KS2…

9-11 year olds might ask a question about the difference that context makes to one's worldview. For example, after thinking about their own context, they might use and interrogate data, interviews and visual images to examine the differences it makes to be a Muslim in a Muslim majority country (e.g. Indonesia) and a Muslim minority country (e.g. UK), including opportunities and challenges, and how these shape their lived experience – not just intellectual ideas. They might reflect on whether it is similar if someone is nonreligious (e.g. Humanist) in a secular society or a religious society. They might reflect on their own context again and consider how it influences their own worldviews. (a, c, e)

 **Meaning and purpose (d)**	 **Ethics and values(e)**	 **Influence and power (f)**
How do religions help people make sense of life? What does ahimsa mean in Buddha Dharma? What does the Covenant tell religious people about their purpose?	How do people understand good and evil? What helps people make good decisions? What do Christians learn from the Bible about right and wrong? What do ancient philosophers tell us about suffering?	How have religious texts influenced views on how we treat the environment? How have religious texts influenced views on gender roles? What influence do some religious and community leaders have over issues of social justice?

You must teach:

The diversity within Christianity plus **TWO** other religions, from: Dharmic or other. Plus, knowledge of a non-religious worldview. Developments in philosophical thinking and a study of at least one ethical issue..

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Standards at KS3…

11-12 year olds might ask a question such as 'what is religion?' They might examine a range of common features of religion and carry out some research into their importance in the lives of members of the school and local community, and reflect on the role any of these features play in their own lives.

By analysing these, they get an insight into the flexible role of religion in people's lives and worldviews, including their own responses. Having looked at the diversity of expression of religion in people's lives, they can then analyse and evaluate a range of contested academic definitions of religion, reflecting on the impact of a person's worldview on their understanding of 'religion'. (a, b, c)

Core statement	Origins and expression (a)	Personal and collective (b)	Place and Time (c)
Possible Key enquiry questions	What are worldviews and how and why do they differ? How do different religious and non-religious people interpret sacred texts? What do sacred texts tell us about the nature of the divine? How do people interpret their beliefs though the arts? How do beliefs impact the lived experience?	How do certain beliefs emerge when they are not directly mentioned in sacred texts? What does it mean to be spiritual, but not religious? How is everyday life influenced by certain beliefs? How may ahimsa/the great commission affect lived experience?	How did the early fathers shape Christian thought? How did ideas around the Day of the Dead in South America develop? What led to the creation of the Nicene Creed? How has Islamic practice/Buddha Dharma developed in the West over the last 50 years? How did the destruction of the Temple in the 1st century impact Jewish belief and practice?

Standards at KS3…

12-14 year olds might ask questions about how religions change over time. They might explore how significant concepts developed through the ages (e.g. using theological methods to understand Trinity as expressed in art, or theories of atonement in Christian traditions; or the miraculous nature of the Qur'an in Islamic traditions) and how practices develop in place (e.g. RS methods to explore how the Buddha's teaching was adapted as it spread to, for example, Sri Lanka, China, Tibet and the West, exploring how the importance of the story of the life of the Buddha varies across these contexts). They might use these studies to inform their understanding of how such ideas shape cultures and worldviews and enable them to examine questions of power and influence. They might reflect on which methods were most effective in getting to the heart of the matter, and examining why they think so, reflecting on the impact of their personal worldviews on their choices and responses. (a, c, f)

 **Meaning and purpose (d)**	 **Ethics and values(e)**	 **Influence and power (f)**
How do religious people explain the existence of suffering? How do we know what we know? How do we understand beauty? How do worldviews shape our understanding of existence?	How do ethical theories help us understand how to live a good life? How to ethical theories help us understand how we approach difficult issues in society? How do ethical theories help us understand right and wrong? How do communities and individuals express their values through commitments?	How has history impacted worldviews? How has religion been influence by changes in society? How has religion influenced society? How has power influenced worldviews?

You must teach:

The diversity within Christianity plus **TWO** other religions, from: Dharmic or other. Plus, knowledge of a non-religious worldview. Developments in philosophical thinking and a study of at least one ethical issue.

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Standards at KS4…

Note: Religious education is statutory for all pupils at key stage 4, unless withdrawn by their parents, whether or not they study a course leading to an accredited qualification in the subject, such as GCSE Religious Studies. This National Content Standard assumes that all pupils will have the opportunity to make progress in RE, just as would be expected if they continued to study any other subject in the curriculum, and that teaching time will be provided commensurate with its status as part of the basic curriculum.

Syllabus KS4

Core statement	Origins and expression (a)	Personal and collective (b)	Place and Time (c)
Possible Key enquiry questions	Is the Bible the most important source of authority to Christians? How important is Isa to Muslims? What part do angels play in human lives? Is Baptism the most important sacrament? What do Buddhist learn from the Wheel of Life?	How to Christians worship if they don't go to Church? How do people worship in a country where their religion is forbidden? Why may religious people be committed to the same faith, but have very different views on society? Why may some religious people say they do not believe in God?	How did the 3CE shape Christianity? What part did women play in the Islamic Golden Age? How did the tenth Guru shape Sikhism in the 17CE? How did Aquinas shape Christian thought in medieval times?

Standards at KS4…

14-16 year olds3 might examine the relationship between institutional and individual religious and non-religious worldviews by exploring ethical issues (e.g. Roman Catholic doctrines on sanctity of life and data on Catholic people's attitudes to birth control), or by considering how religion/non-religion is presented in RE in comparison with lived realities (e.g. textbook presentations of religions alongside sociological data on the diverse adherence and practice of religions in India; data on the permeable boundary between religion and non-religion in the UK). They suggest different explanations for these relationships, reflecting on questions of tradition, continuity, change, power and culture. They select and apply appropriate disciplinary tools to evaluate the explanations, recognising the impact of context. Throughout the unit, they reflect on the sources of their own worldviews in the light of their learning. (b, c, e, f)

 **Meaning and purpose (d)**	 **Ethics and values(e)**	 **Influence and power (f)**
Is the ontological argument convincing? Do we have a soul? How do we understand knowledge? How do we understand aesthetics?	Is AI a person? Why does autonomy matter when discussing Euthanasia? Does the eightfold path provide a good guide to living a moral life? Is the 'no harm principle' a clear directive of behaviour?	What can we learn about politics from Aristotle? How did medieval religion impact society at the time? How important was the Catholic faith to Polish people post WWII? How convincing is the claim that Liberation theology could help change society?

You must teach:

The diversity within Christianity plus **TWO** other religions, from: Dharmic or other. Plus, knowledge of a non-religious worldview. Developments in philosophical thinking and a study of at least one ethical issue.

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Syllabus KS4

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Standards at KS5…

Note: Religious education is statutory for all pupils at key stage 5, whether or not they study a course leading to an accredited qualification in the subject, such as A level Religious Studies. The exception to this rule is that pupils may choose to withdraw themselves from the subject once they reach 18 years of age or parents may withdraw them before this age.

Core statement	 Origins and expression (a)	 Personal and collective (b)	 Place and Time (c)
Possible Key enquiry questions	To what extent can the historical origins of a religion be separated from its mythological narratives? How do sacred texts reflect both the historical context of their origin and the theological aims of their authors? How do new religious movements reinterpret the origins and expressions of older traditions? How do visual and material cultures (e.g. iconography, architecture, ritual objects) express theological concepts?	To what extent can personal faith exist independently of religious institutions? How do sacred texts mediate between personal interpretation and collective doctrine? Can the rise of 'spiritual but not religious' identities be seen as a rejection of the collective in favour of the personal?	To what extent is religious experience shaped by geographical and cultural context? In what ways do religious calendars structure communal and individual life? How do pilgrimage traditions illustrate the relationship between place and spiritual transformation? Can a religion maintain its identity when removed from its original geographical context?

Syllabus KS5

Standards at KS5…

16-19 year olds4 might reflect on the legal and political dimensions of worldviews, in relation to religious, ethical and social concerns. They might examine the influence of religious and non-religious traditions on attitudes to the environment, to medical advances, to justice and equality in relation to gender, sex and race, and account for the changes across different contexts, using theological and philosophical methods and applying ethical theories (e.g. changing interpretation and application of ancient texts/ teachings to accommodate technological advances and societal changes; contrasting responses between secular and religious contexts to the growth of Pentecostalism in, for example, the USA, Britain, Africa or East Asia). Students might examine their own worldview assumptions and how they affect their responses to these issues, with a growing awareness of the impact of context on their own and others' worldviews. (b, c, d, e, f)

 Meaning and purpose (d)	 Ethics and values(e)	 Influence and power (f)
Is it possible to find meaning in existence? How do eschatological beliefs shape a believer's sense of purpose in the present? What role does narrative play in constructing religious meaning? Is belief in God irrational in the face of evil?	Are religious views outdated when discussing sexual ethics? Do Businesses have a moral obligation to their stakeholders? Can divine command theory provide a sufficient foundation for moral decision-making? To what extent are religious moral teachings culturally relative?	To what extent is religious expression shaped by gender, class, and ethnicity? How has religion been used to justify both peace and conflict? How do religious institutions maintain their influence in a secular world?
You must teach: The diversity within Christianity plus ONE other religions, from: Dharmic or other. Plus, knowledge of a non-religious worldview. Developments in philosophical thinking and a study of at least one ethical issue.		

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Somerset Council

Syllabus KS5

Introduction to Locality Units – Journeys of the Somer People

The REC states that:

'Local context is important, including school character, local community character, pupil knowledge and experience, teacher knowledge and experience. Local context also includes the history of local areas, allowing opportunities for local studies that connect teaching and learning with the geographical and historical background.'

The locality units within the agreed syllabus are based on the theme **'Journeys of the Somer People'.** They ask how our religious heritage developed and adapted over time. How has Somerset's geography influenced its development? How has water influenced them? How and why did different groups of people move around Somerset? **And what does that look like today?** This is the golden thread throughout these units. Some of the themes and concepts that can be found within these units are:

- Water; Sacred springs (St Andrews Risings), Glastonbury springs (Chalice Wells) Spirituality
- Journeys; journey of Somerset through time, how did we get to this point, why people believe what they believe?
- Landscape; how religious communities formed in different areas, flooding, faith and the natural world
- Social injustice; witchcraft, enslavement
- People; Paganism, diverse religions, pilgrimage, development of the Christian faith.

The local units will continue to be developed once the agreed syllabus has been published. Below are some examples of these:

Why is Glastonbury special to the Somer people?	How has the relationship between Paganism and early Christianity shaped belief and culture around the well of St Decuman?	How might data help us understand religions and worldviews in Somerset?
How might some Hindus live out their beliefs in Somerset (and around the world)?	How is Wells Cathedral linked to transatlantic slavery?	How do the Somer people celebrate Samhain and why is it important?
How has the worldviews landscape changed in Somerset in the last 100 years?	How did the ancient Somer people understand our existence?	What are the spiritual routes of the Somer people and how does it show now? pilgrimage/neopaganism

Religious Education (RE) must be taught by all state-funded schools.

Religious Education in schools (England) - House of Commons Library

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; and

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

•All state schools ... must teach religious education ... All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online'.

(National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4)

Each local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) is responsible for a locally agreed syllabus for RE. This is the basis from which schools should plan and teach their RE curriculum.

Governing bodies and headteachers must:

- Ensure sufficient time and resources are given to meet the requirements of this syllabus
- provide an annual report to parents or carers giving brief particulars of progress and achievements in all subjects including RE (Regulation 6 of the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, SI 2005/1437).

Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK

RE must be provided for all registered pupils in maintained schools and academies, including those in Reception classes and sixth forms.

In community, foundation and VC schools, RE must be provided in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE and this right should be identified in the school prospectus. RE in voluntary aided (VA) schools must be provided in accordance with the trust deed of the school and the wishes of the governing body.

Continued on next page...

Academies must provide RE in accordance with their funding agreements. The type of RE specified in the funding agreement depends on whether the academy has a religious designation. For converter academies, it depends on whether the predecessor school was a VC, VA or foundation school. Free schools are academies in law and have the same requirement to provide RE.

The model funding agreements for academies broadly reflect the provisions that apply to local authorities and schools in the maintained sector. Academies that do not have a religious designation must arrange for RE to be taught to all pupils in accordance with the general requirements for agreed syllabuses. In other words, they should also 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

The parent of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school has the right to request that the pupil be excused from all or part of the RE provided.

Schools should ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware that RE is taught in an objective way that is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs. They should be made aware of the RE syllabus learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

RE has an unusual position on the curriculum: it is part of the basic curriculum but not the National Curriculum, and is one of two subjects (along with sex and relationship education) where parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from class.

Time for RE

This agreed syllabus is constructed to follow the government advice on time allocation for religious education contained within the DfE 'Religious Education in English schools; non-statutory guidance 2010'.

The **minimum** time required to teach the syllabus in sufficient depth and breadth is provided below. This is a minimum and should not be taken as a recommendation. It refers to the delivery of discrete Religious Education. Failure to provide the following curriculum time will mean that the requirements of the syllabus are not being met. In Keys stages 1, 2 and 3 this occupies about 5% of the curriculum time. Specific amounts are:

Continued on next page...

Somerset SACRE

Statutory requirements

Foundation Stage: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 3: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 4: 40 hours per year

For **post-16** students in full-time education at community and voluntary controlled schools: 10 hours per year

Exemplar notes

The following two exemplars have been created using the syllabus. They map out the conceptual, substantive and disciplinary learning. What they don't map out is the positionality knowledge.

They are not a scheme of learning or a curriculum, just a pointer to possible ideas that stem from the concepts and aim to include a robust academic and disciplinary approach.

The locality element is in orange text and of course must be adapted for your locality.

Theology	Philosophy	Social Sciences

 **Origins and expression**	 **Personal and collective**	 **Place and time**

 **Meaning and purpose**	 **Ethics and values**	 **Influence and power**

Exemplar 1

Theology | Philosophy | Social Sciences

EYFS/KS1

Year	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
EYFS	What makes places special to different people?	How is Christmas celebrated by different people?	What makes people special?	Special people - Who was Jesus to....?	Why are some stories special?	How and why do some people care for the world?
Concepts						
1	Who was Moses and what was important to him (God)?	What is like to be a Jewish person in the UK (Somerset)?	Who is Jesus and why is he important to some people? (Jews, Christians, non-religious)	What Good News did Jesus bring for Christians?	What do different people think about how the world started?	Should we care for the world and why does it matter?
Concepts						
2	Which special books/texts are important to Jews and Christians?	What is the impact of Christmas celebrations on the environment, and does it matter?	Why is Jerusalem important to Christians, Muslims and Jewish people?		Why is Glastonbury special to the Somer people? (church, pagan, non-religious)	Does visiting Glastonbury, or other sacred places, make someone a better person?
Concepts						

Somerset Council | Somerset SACRE

The disciplines **and concepts** are **suggestions only**! They may be the main discipline **or concept,** but of course, other disciplines **or concepts** will apply. Your curriculum **DOES NOT** have to have an equal balance of disciplines **or concepts**.

Somerset SACRE

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Year	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
3	How do we study worldviews?	How and why is Diwali celebrated by Hindus today? (Applying three disciplines)	What is the nature of God in Christianity and what is the incarnation?		What is God like according to Hindu Dharma?	What is it like to be a Hindu in the UK (Somerset)?
Concepts						
4	Who was Muhammad and what was important to him (God)?	What is it like to be a Muslim in the UK (Somerset)?	What helps people make good decisions? (Religious, including Christianity, and non-religious sources of authority)?		What does Christianity and other worldviews say about how we should treat the environment?	
Concepts						
5	What does ahimsa mean in Buddha Dharma?	What is it like to be a Buddhist in the UK (Somerset)?	Why are places of worship sacred to some people?		How does data help us understand religion and worldviews in Somerset?	
Concepts						
6	How do people understand good and evil?		What is the impact of religious festivals on the environment, and which is more important?	What does salvation mean for Christians?	What part did Wells Cathedral play in the transatlantic slave trade?	
Concepts						

Exemplar 1

Theology | Philosophy | Social Sciences

KS2

Exemplar 1

Theology | Philosophy | Social Sciences

KS3

Year	Autumn	Spring	Summer
7	How has the worldviews landscape changed in Somerset over the last 100 years?	How did the ancient Somer people understand our existence?	What did ancient philosophers say about our existence?
Concepts			
8	How is the Covenant understood by Christians, Jews and Muslims?	How does the Genesis account influence the lived religion of Christians?	How have Patriarchal views on gender influenced our society?
Concepts			
9	How can we explain evil and suffering? Philosophical, Biblical and neo-pagan study	What does Jesus' life and teachings on Salvation teach Christians today?	How does Buddha Dharma explain the path that can lead to the end of suffering?
Concepts			

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Year	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
EYFS	What makes places special to different people?	How is Christmas celebrated by different people?	What makes people special?	Special people - Who was (an important local religious person)?	Why are some stories special?	How do people decide what is right and wrong?
Concepts						
1	Who was Abraham and what was important to him (God)?	How might following rules help people to live a good life?	Why is Jerusalem important to Jewish people?	How and why is prayer and the Western Wall important to Jewish people?	Who was Esther and how did she help her people?	What is like to be a Jewish person in the UK (Somerset)?
Concepts						
2	Who was Muhammad and what was important to him (God)?	What is it like to be a Muslim in the UK (Somerset)?	Who is Jesus and why is he important to some people? (Jews, Christians, Muslims, non-religious)	What Good News did Jesus bring for Christians?	Why is Wells special to the Somer people?	What is prayer and why is it important to some people?
Concepts						

Exemplar 1

Theology | Philosophy | Social Sciences

EYFS/KS1

Exemplar 2

Theology | Philosophy | Social Sciences

KS2

Year	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
3	Why is Glastonbury special to the Somer people? (church, pagan, non-religious)		How do we study worldviews?	Why do some people pray? (Applying disciplines)	Who is Jesus? How were his actions unusual for his time?	What do Christians learn from the Bible about right and wrong?
Concepts						
4	What is the Torah?	What is it like to be a Jewish person in the UK (Somerset)?	What helps people make good decisions? (Aquinas/Mills/Fletcher)?		What does religion say about how we should treat animals?	
Concepts						
5	What are the Vedas?	What is it like to be a Buddhist in the UK (Somerset)?	What was significant about how Jesus treated people? What impact has that had on the world today?		How does data help us understand religion and worldviews in Somerset?	
Concepts						
6	How do people understand good and evil?	How and why might prayer strengthen people's faith?	What part did Wells Cathedral play in the transatlantic slave trade?		What do ancient philosophers tell us about suffering?	
Concepts						

Somerset Council | Somerset SACRE

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Year	Autumn	Spring	Summer
7	How did the ancient Somer people understand their existence?	What does Budda Dharma say about our existence?	How has Buddhism developed over the last century?
Concepts			
8	How does political philosophy help us understand our society today?	How has Aquinas just war theory influenced our understanding of modern-day war ethics?	How do Christian holy texts influence our perception of gender roles?
Concepts			
9	How does the diversity within Judaism influence the lived experience of Jewish people?	How have Jewish people responded to Shoah over time?	How do the diverse Christian responses to suffering influence the lived experience of Christians?
Concepts			

Exemplar 2

Theology | Philosophy | Social Sciences

KS3

Somerset SACRE

Contributors

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Pages 7, 9
Stephen Pett (Religious Education Counci)l, 2024, Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England
24-25698-REC-Handbook-A4-DIGITAL-PAGES.pdf

Religious Education Council of England and Wales brings together over 60 national organisations. These comprise academic and professional associations specialising in religious education, as well as individual religion and belief organisations representative of the range of communities found nationally.
Stephen Pett is a national RE adviser for RE Today and he was the project leader for the Worldviews Project on behalf of the RE Council of England and Wales.
This Handbook offers a toolkit for developing the Commission's vision of a religion and worldviews (RW) approach to developing curriculums for religious education (RE). It is offered as a resource for those who wish to use it

Pages 9, 11, 29
Ofsted, 2021, Research Review Series: Religious Education
Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. The inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. The 2021 Research Review identified factors that contribute to high-quality school RE curriculums, the teaching of the curriculum, assessment and systems.

Page 11
Education Act 1996, Section 375
Education Act 1996

An Act to consolidate the Education Act 1944 and certain other enactments relating to education, with amendments to give effect to recommendations of the Law Commission.

Page 11
Religious Education Council, 2023, National Content Standard for Religious Education in England
National content standard for Religious education IN England

The vision of the RE Council of England and Wales is for every young person to experience an academically rigorous and personally inspiring education in religion and worldviews. The publishing of a National Content Standard for RE in England provides clarification and a benchmark for excellence in religion and worldviews/religious education (RE) thus contributing to this vision.

Page 14
Dawn Cox and Louise Hutton, 2021, 'Making every RE lesson count' (p.8)

Making Every RE Lesson Count is underpinned by six pedagogical principles - challenge, explanation, modelling, practice, feedback and questioning - and shares simple, realistic strategies that RE teachers can use to develop the teaching and learning in their classrooms.

References

References

Page 29
Robert Long, Philip Loft, Shadi Danechi, 2019, Religious Education in Schools
Religious Education in schools (England) - House of Commons Library

This briefing introduces the rules around RE in state-funded schools, whether they are academies, free schools, or maintained by a local authority.

Page 29
Regulation 6 of the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, SI 2005/1437
The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005

This provides update on previous regulations.

Page 30
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010 'Religious Education in English schools; non-statutory guidance 2010'
untitled

The purpose of this publication, produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), is to support the provision of high-quality religious education (RE) in maintained schools in England. It provides clear non-statutory guidance about RE in the curriculum and the roles of those who have a responsibility for, involvement in or interest in the subject.