

# Brent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

2023

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## Chair's Foreword

Issues relating to faith continue to dominate global and national news headlines; and our lives are often impacted by beliefs we hold as well as those of others around us. A recent ComRes poll conducted for Theos ([“Religious London – A city of surprises”](#)) and published on the 24th June 2022 reveals that Londoners are significantly more religious than the rest of Britain. Those with allegiance to Christianity are more ethnically diverse and more likely to engage in positive civic activity (give charity, volunteer for community initiatives, assist neighbours etc). A [plethora](#) of evidence-based [research](#) highlights the seminal role of religious literacy in the public realm and its positive effects on wider society when it is equipped to engage with the plurality and pervasiveness of religion and belief, whatever individual's own stance(s) may be.

Working towards this aim is both an immense privilege and a weighty responsibility - the greater share of which falls squarely within the remit of schools in England; and by extension, SACREs (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) and their Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

This document follows a much-loved, substantial [syllabus](#) which has served teachers and students well, providing clear direction for all our schools during somewhat turbulent times for RE, with energetic debates on the need or otherwise for a [national curriculum for RE](#).

Times change – Brent's physical geography and demographic makeup are entirely different to its profile in 2002, prime examples being the iconic Wembley Stadium and our own Civic Centre. The borough's educational profile continues to evolve in parallel, leading through excellence in many ways. [2020's London Borough of Culture](#), Brent SACRE were selected for [first place recipients of the ACCORD coalition's national inclusivity awards in 2017](#). We are home to the [world's best teacher 2018](#) and young people graduating from Brent schools continue to [achieve well above national average](#), particularly in schools that are sincerely invested in delivering meaningful, transformational RE as part of a holistic curriculum. Brent is a unique borough, with a proud history of [diversity](#), [resilience](#) and [inclusion](#) which is reflected in the rich mix of community, academy, grant maintained/VA, faith, foundation and supplementary institutions that collectively offer our young people the best of all life perspectives.

Similarly, it would be greatly remiss not to acknowledge that this foreword was initially solicited during unprecedented times, with the [impact](#) of the global [COVID-19 pandemic](#), conflict in the [Middle East](#) and the [#BlackLivesMatter](#) movement affecting Brent in particular. [Properly resourced](#) and [taught with integrity](#), RE offers a precious opportunity and a safe space through which young people may be invited to explore and address very real personal and philosophical questions that impact them directly and the world they live in, to challenge stereotypes and prejudices, and to seek peace and justice.

We are truly blessed to work with an incredible team, collectively forming a formidable fund of knowledge, expertise and professional networking. SACRE is a voluntary body; and as such I continue to be inspired and motivated over the years by the phenomenal generosity of members who give unstintingly of their time and experience with no recompense. This is unparalleled; and is a true testimony both to the critical importance of RE and to their very real dedication to enriching the education of young people in Brent.

Sincere, heartfelt thanks are due to all our committee members, councillors and RE Advisors who are named individually elsewhere in this document. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the very real contributions made by the following people; and to thank them too - both in a personal

capacity and on behalf of Brent SACRE. I would like to thank a number of colleagues who have left Brent for their invaluable support and advice including Gail Tolley, Brian Grady, Stephen McMullan and John Frankis; Helen Mooney, for unparalleled generosity of spirit and for holding the fort during times of crisis in my absence; Helen Tulloch, for her tireless hard work and meticulous attention to detail and Stacey Burnham, who helped to breathe life into this document and deliver it safely into the world – thank you for being a stellar “midwife”. The process was far more protracted than anyone anticipated and I am certain that colleagues will agree that there is huge potential for it to grow from strength to strength. Other colleagues who were present when the was convened but are sadly no longer with us include the Revd. Laurence Hillel, former vice chair, who often went well beyond the call of duty in supporting the work of primary schools in particular. Finally, I would also like to honour the memory of our former Chair, the late Josh Kutchinsky whose influence continues to live on in much of our work today.

Despite continuing cuts in funding, Brent SACRE remains committed to supporting colleagues through high quality CPD (Continual Professional Development), the provision of a dynamic, resource platform hosted on Best BRENT and above all the sharing of excellent practice through termly meetings for subject leaders. Furthermore, we encourage schools to avail themselves of the myriad of unique opportunities for enhancing learning out with traditional classroom practices such as the incorporation of student voice, parental engagement, linking & twinning initiatives, visits to places of worship and external visitors as recommended by [NASACRE](#), the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education.

With this in mind, I commend the current document to all Brent schools; secure in the knowledge it is an iterative offering that colleagues will seek to enhance and tailor uniquely to their own settings whilst continuing to work in partnership in order to ensure that our young people receive the highest quality RE that will help equip them live as positive, proactive global citizens who work together to heal a fractured world. May the legacy we leave them be one of sincerity, dignity and courage.

Basma Elshayyal FCCT

Chair, Brent SACRE

## The Importance of Religious Education in Brent

Brent is one of the most diverse boroughs in England with a wide range of religious traditions and belief systems held within our communities and amongst the children in their schools. Our long history of ethnic and cultural diversity is one of Brent's greatest strengths.

Whether we are religious or not there are signs of religion all around the borough: the landscape is full of churches and of other places of worship, and continues to evolve. We want Brent pupils to have a positive understanding of religions and other belief systems in their community, by first understanding how belonging to an organised religion can affect many aspects of a person's life, their beliefs, traditions, clothes, food, names, times and ways of celebration and what is considered important in life.

Having learned about different faiths and beliefs, pupils should build on this 'cultural capital' to not only have an understanding of the multicultural and multifaith society that we live in today, but an understanding of how we can interact with each other and collaboratively explore interfaith issues for our contemporary society. Brent pupils should be encouraged to celebrate diversity and positive coexistence and be empowered to positively contribute to this cultural synthesis.

Effective Religious Education should inspire pupils with curiosity and imagination, and develop their skills of communication, interpretation, application, analysis and evaluation when exploring and testing their own beliefs or responses to ultimate questions and those of fellow pupils in a 'safe space'. Religious Education therefore contributes more than 'cultural capital' to a school curriculum: it effectively enables higher level achievement through the development of conceptual thinking and reasoned critical analysis.

In this way, Religious Education is more than simply an academic subject, it plays a key part in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; helping them to value themselves, to explore their own beliefs and understand the world around them.

## 1. Purpose of the Brent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020

### **To establish entitlement**

This syllabus sets out the entitlement to learning Religious Education for all pupils in community and voluntary controlled schools in the borough, whatever their background, culture, race, religion or belief, gender, academic or learning ability.

### **To establish standards**

This syllabus sets out for the benefit of parents, teachers, governors, employers and the public the expectations for learning requirements and standards of attainment in Religious Education that are explicit. These standards should be used to plan, sequence and monitor learning, to support assessment for learning and to set targets for improvement and evaluate the progress towards them.

### **To promote continuity and coherence**

This syllabus seeks to contribute to and support a coherent curriculum. The learning in this syllabus has been set out to support the transition of pupils between phases and stages of

education and between schools and can provide a foundation for further study and lifelong learning.

### **To promote public understanding**

The syllabus aims to increase public understanding of, and confidence in, the work of schools in Religious Education. It recognises the extent to which local stakeholders (religion and belief communities, teachers, local Councillors and the Local Authority) are already involved in defining, monitoring and advising the Religious Education curriculum in schools through Brent SACRE and the Brent Agreed Syllabus Conference. It also encourages those who are interested to participate in enriching the provision of Religious Education, for example through contributing to visits to places of worship and providing speakers from belief and faith communities.

## **3. Requirements for Religious Education in Brent**

It is a statutory requirement since the 1988 Education Reform Act that Religious Education must be taught according to this syllabus to all registered pupils in community schools funded by the local authority and academies, unless specifically stated otherwise in their funding agreements, as part of a curriculum that is 'broad and balanced', consisting of religious education and the National Curriculum. The curriculum provided must 'promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils' and provide the 'cultural capital' to prepare them 'for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.'

It is the duty of the Headteacher or school leader to secure the provision of Religious Education for all their pupils on roll from Reception classes up to and including sixth form, except when they are withdrawn by their parents. Religious Education remains a legal requirement for pupils in KS4 and KS5 and special schools are also required to provide Religious Education 'so far as is practicable' (section 71(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) [School Standards and Framework Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

This law excludes voluntary controlled schools. However, these schools, with foundation and voluntary controlled schools of a religious character are encouraged to also provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews according to the locally agreed syllabus for RE as per, for example, the Statement of entitlement to Religious Education (by Church of England Education Office February 2019).

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Every state-funded school must offer a **broad and balanced curriculum**, which promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2019). Religious Education plays an important part in addressing these aspects both in terms of the academic curriculum and as a means for supporting personal development. Religious Education can therefore contribute to, but not be wholly responsible for, pupils' development in the following:

### **Spiritual**

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs and respect for different people's faiths, beliefs, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world and universe around them

- willingness to reflect on their experiences.

## **Moral**

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives and those of others
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and the ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

## **Social**

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those with different religious or other beliefs to their own;
- willingness to cooperate with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively;
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- demonstrating skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

## **Cultural**

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and those of others
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socioeconomic groups in the local, national and global communities.

## **Religious Education for pupils with Special Educational Needs**

As per the General Teaching Requirements, and in accordance with the legal requirements for Religious Education as per the 1988 Education Reform Act, *‘so far as is practicable, every pupil attending a special school will attend... Religious Education.’* Moreover, there is a moral duty of equity to ensure all pupils are able to access and engage with the key concepts involved in Religious Education.

Therefore, teachers should create a curriculum that builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences that pupils bring, ensuring it is accessible by all pupils and meets all pupils’ learning needs, including those with Special Educational Needs, covering the whole range of learning difficulties: physical, emotional and intellectual, as well as all degrees from mild to profound.

Further guidance and ideas are available on the Best Brent website.



## Religious Education for Early Years Foundation Stage

Religious Education - in accordance with the requirements of this locally agreed syllabus - is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll, including children in Reception.

Whilst the statutory requirements do not extend to pupils in Nursery, key aspects of Religious Education, when taught through the three characteristics of Early Learning (playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically), can contribute significantly to areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage and can support pupils with the following:

### Communication and language by:

- giving children opportunities to experience a rich and diverse language about religions and beliefs
- developing their confidence and skills in expressing their beliefs, values and experiences
- speaking and listening to others
- contributing to the Early Learning Goals through:
- listening to stories/accounts, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions
- answering 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events
- talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.
- develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events

It must also be remembered that all who work with children are required to respond to the religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic persuasion of each child (Working with Children: Children Act 1989)

### Personal, social and emotional development by:

- helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others and to form positive relationships and develop respect for others
- helping to understand expected behaviour in certain places and situations

### Literacy by:

- giving access to a wide range of reading materials, including about religions and world faiths, to ignite their interest
- contributing to the Early Learning Goals through:
  - demonstrating understanding when talking with others about what they have read

### Understanding the world by:



- guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people and places
- contributing to the Early Learning Goals through:
  - recognising similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions
  - the recognition and exploration of the beliefs and home traditions, which all children bring with them, and of the religious traditions that are also part of the lives of many children, will contribute to the early stages of children's learning and development in all areas.

#### **Expressive arts and design by:**

- encouraging the sharing of their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology

Practitioners should note that creative development makes an important contribution to Religious Education. Children learn the basis of symbolic expression through their own work. They also learn to express ideas and feelings through non-verbal forms.

Through this learning our youngest pupils can start to 'value and understand themselves as a member of a wider community,' and begin:

- developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people;
- understanding that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs that need to be treated with respect;
- understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, view, cultures and beliefs with respect.

Please also see the suggested Programme of Study (page 23).

## **The Religious Education Curriculum in Brent Schools**

Schools are responsible for developing and implementing a broad and diverse curriculum that serves all pupils in the school and reflects the community they serve.

The principal aim of the Brent Agreed Syllabus is to 'help pupils value and understand themselves, as well as their place and contribution to their local community'.

This syllabus requires Brent schools to create an RE Curriculum that reflects the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain, are in the main, Christian, and that the key religions represented in the Borough, which, according to the 2011 Census, has a large representation of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism\*.

Schools are expected to further adapt their curriculum to include, reflect and celebrate the demographic of their own pupils, including those of minority faiths, whilst also including the teaching of the other principal religions and worldviews (including non-religious worldviews) represented in Great Britain. These include *Christianity* and also *Buddhism*, *Hinduism*, *Islam*, *Judaism* and *Sikhism* as well as an example of an ethical, non-theistic belief system, such as *Humanism*. This is because the principle of equal opportunity entails

that all pupils should be able to learn about religious traditions or belief systems that may not be represented in their own school or encountered personally.

This syllabus also encourages schools to help pupils to consider other religions, traditions and life stances, such as the *Baha'i Faith*, *Jainism*, *Rastafarianism* and *Zoroastrianism*.

It is not intended that every one of these will be drawn upon in any individual unit of work. However, it is advised that all the principal religions mentioned above are studied in each key stage. The decision on how many will be included in a unit, whether as a major or minor focus may be determined by the:

- learning intentions and nature of the unit
- presence of pupils, teachers or other members of the school community who come from these particular backgrounds
- presence of a particular community within the immediate area
- inclusion of additional materials to extend and develop a particular unit or in response to questions and queries which arise as a result of pupils' or teachers' experiences or events of local, national or international interest
- availability of high quality resources.

Further guidance, including additional support materials for devising an RE Curriculum that supports this syllabus, is available (see Resources, p22).

Schools are reminded that all religions and world views should be presented from the perspective of the believers and not used in a way that would offend the believers/followers or to convert learners to a particular religion or belief.

To ensure the requirements of this Syllabus are met it is recommended that the following time allocation be allotted to teaching Religious Education, and is distinct from the time schools spend on the statutory requirements for collective worship or school assembly:

Key stage	Recommended time allocation
Foundation Stage (Reception)	36 hours per academic year
Key Stage 1	36 hours per academic year
Key Stage 2	45 hours per academic year
Key Stage 3	45 hours per academic year
Key Stage 4	3-5 hours per fortnight
Post 16	5 hours per fortnight

Schools are free to deliver the Religious Curriculum in their preferred format, as long as pupils receive their legal entitlement to meaningful Religious Education taught in accordance with the requirements and aims specified in this syllabus.

Schools are also required to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, standards and provision of Religious Education in accordance with this Syllabus. Please see the section on

### **Assessment in Religious Education.**

Parents of pupils under the age of 18 continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education as per the School and Standards Framework Act 1988.

(\* Census 2011, in descending order: Christianity 41%, Islam 18%, Hinduism 17%, None, 10% Judaism, 1.5% Buddhist 1.5%, Other 1% and Sikhism 0.5% )

(\* Census 2021, in descending order: Christianity 39%, Islam 21%, Hinduism 16%, no religion 14%, Judaism 1%, Buddhist 0.9%, Jain 0.7%, Sikhism 0.5%)

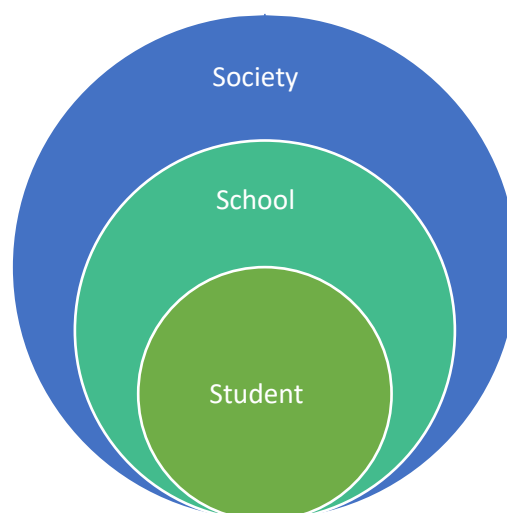
## **4. Aims for Religious Education in Brent**

This Syllabus places the experiences and expectations of our pupils at its centre. Our intention is that the pedagogy and approach to learning in Religious Education that we outline below should complement the wider school curriculum to help pupils value and understand themselves, as well as their place and contribution to their local community and the wider society. Thus in the long-term, Religious Education should support the development of responsible citizens of the future.

### **Enquiry Learning**

We believe Religious Education should be an active enquiry process, with meaningful, well-informed and balanced conversations, using a variety of disciplines to apply, interpret, analyse and evaluate what pupils have learnt about other religions and worldviews when considering spiritual, ethical, moral and social issues.

Through enquiry, pupils should not only be able to share their own beliefs and values, but build their knowledge and gain a deeper understanding by forming a relationship with what they learn about other religions and worldviews. By comparing this with their own, they can then consider and reflect meaningfully to create a more informed view of the world and their place in it.



### **Enquiry Skills**

Many schools will have enquiry learning strategies in place already. Enquiry learning in Religious Education should enable pupils to develop skills to:

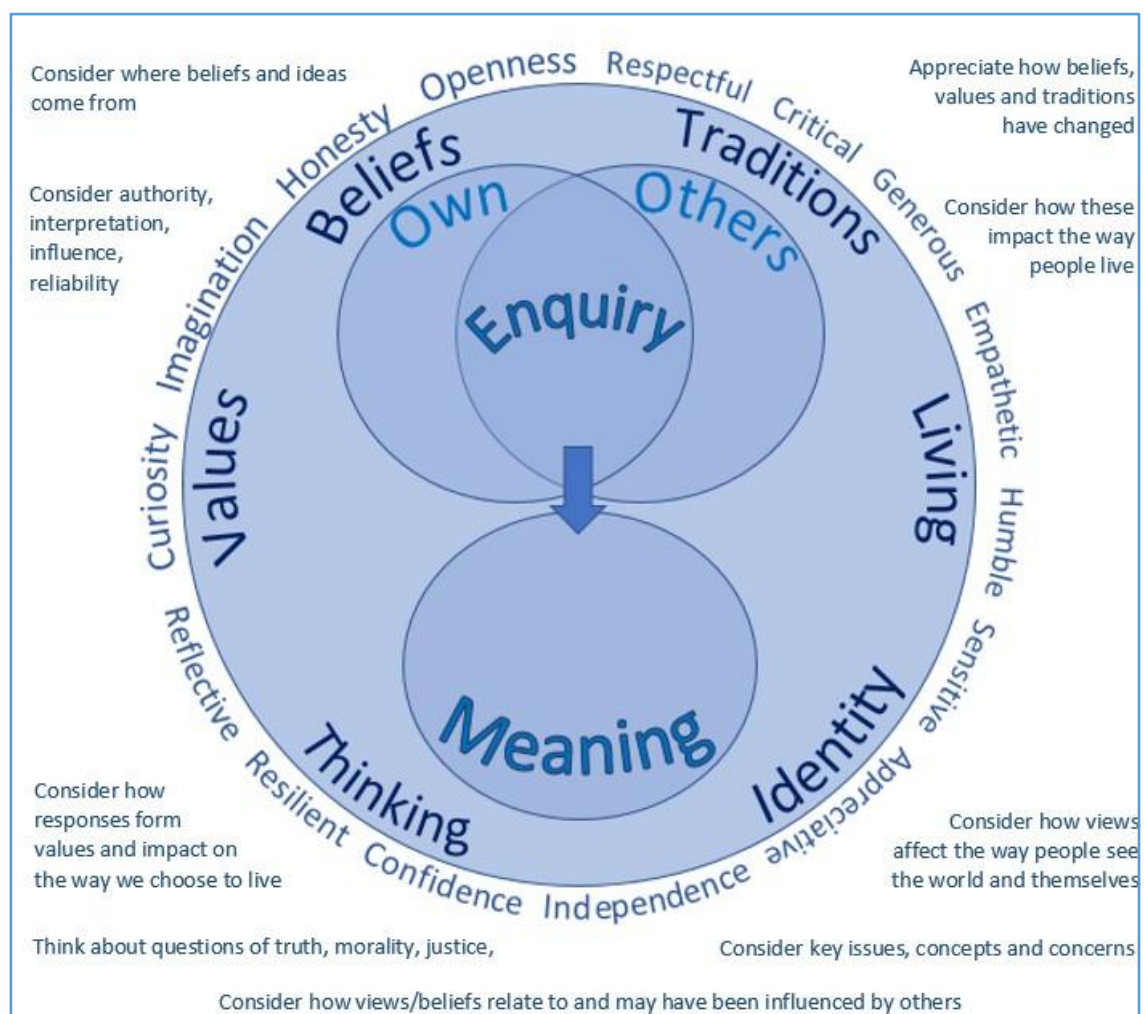
- build and use a specialist vocabulary to communicate accurately and respectfully their knowledge and understanding of what they and others believe and practice, how these differing belief systems relate to each other and may affect a way of life
- apply their broad specialist vocabulary to access, interpret, analyse and reflect on a range of written and spoken and non-religious sources and texts when investigating

beliefs, values and traditions of themselves and others, their teachings, practices and forms of expression and ways of life

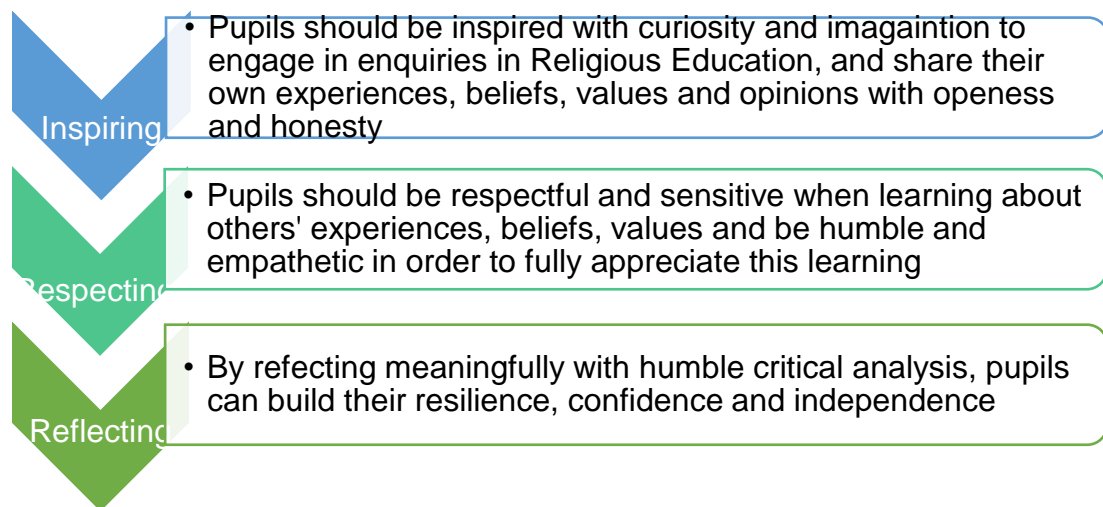
- apply, interpret, analyse and evaluate what they have learnt about their own and other religions and worldviews in relation to spiritual, ethical, moral and social issues
- develop, communicate, reflect on, apply and evaluate their views and beliefs, particularly in relation to meaningful questions such as identity and belonging, truth, morality and justice, the environment and humanity.

In addition, this enquiry based approach adopted by the Brent Syllabus will support pupils to develop a wide range of skills, including literacy, problem solving, team-work, self-awareness, imagination, language and literacy.

### Attitudes for Enquiry Learning



Throughout enquiry learning in Religious Education:



These enquiries should be inclusive and accessible to all pupils, and teachers should use a wide range of learning activities, experiences, sources and resources to help pupils use key knowledge and vocabulary to engage with the meaningful enquiry question being explored.

This deeper learning takes time. However, it is more important that this learning is done effectively rather than ensuring wider coverage of only superficial learning, which would need to be constantly repeated.

## Enquiry Questions

The Religious Education curriculum in Brent schools should be formed around meaningful and engaging enquiry questions. These enquiries should be set so that pupils are not merely being introduced or recalling superficial facts about their own and others' religions and belief systems.

For example, pupils knowing 'what' the Shabbat (Sabbath) rituals are, is different to them having an appreciation of 'why' they might be important for Jewish people. Exploring relevant values about family and Jewish beliefs about God and Creation are necessary before pupils can fully consider 'how' these Shabbat rituals reflect these beliefs and may make a difference to those who complete them. Pupils can then begin to have meaningful reflections on how this learning may impact on their own beliefs, values and lives.

Effective enquiry questions will need to take into account the following:

- Religions and worldviews are not static, but are diverse and evolving, being influenced by, and impacting on, the lives of individuals, communities and society. Pupils should explore the beliefs, values and traditions of religious and world views and gain an understanding of the relationship these have with the way people lived and live.
- When considering fundamental beliefs and ideas, pupils should consider where these come from, whether through reasoned thought, from authoritative sources, or traditions and experiences. Pupils should investigate the reliability of these

influences and how they may have been interpreted differently and affect the way believers see the world.

- Pupils should appreciate that religions and beliefs throughout history and around the world have been shaped in response to the thinking about and understanding of reality, including questions of truth, morality, justice, humanity and how we engage with the world. Pupils should engage with these questions, which continue to be relevant today, and consider how responses will impact on the way people choose to live.
- Pupils should engage with questions about key issues, concepts and concerns relating to what they have learnt about believing, living and thinking. They should have the opportunity to express their own experiences, beliefs and values, and consider how these relate to and have been influenced by others. They should be provided with chances to reflect how their views affect the way they see the world and themselves as part of a community.

## Planning an Enquiry

An effective and meaningful enquiry in Religious Education has three main components:

- a. Suitable enquiry questions
- b. Definition of the key subject knowledge and vocabulary that is required/developed for pupils to consider their responses
- c. Clarification of the teaching and learning strategies and resources that will be used to support pupils to respond effectively

### a. Suitable Enquiry Questions

It is up to schools how they arrange and form their enquiry learning in Religious Education and many will have strategies in place already. However, this Syllabus requires that all school planned units and enquiries in Religious Education should reflect the model shown above (page 11), by incorporating all the 6 elements of Beliefs, Values, Traditions, Thinking, Identity and Living within enquiry questions.

An enquiry only about 'what are the Five K's that Sikhs wear?' will likely only allow a superficial recall of the items. However, by taking into account the historical and geographical context of their origin i.e. the ongoing conflict between Muslims and Hindus in India, it gives pupils a deeper appreciation of the significance of the *Kirpan* (dagger) and the *Kachera* (shorts).

Further, this background knowledge adds to the significance of both Hindu and Muslim teachings being included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the religious scripture of Sikhism. Pupils will also have a greater appreciation of the story about *Bhai Kanhaiya* helping both Sikh and enemy soldiers and of the key Sikh belief of equality and of using wealth to help humanity, which is represented through serving the *Langar* in the *Gurdwara*.

If the learning of this key knowledge has taken place effectively, pupils can then better compare this learning and understanding with their own experiences and views, including the UK Laws regarding the freedom and acceptance of other religions. They can then give an informed response about how these Five Ks demonstrate the three pillars of Prayer, Working and Giving and how they show what it may mean to be Sikh in our society today.



Enquiry questions for a school's planned unit should therefore be phrased to include a wider scope, and the teaching and learning of key knowledge planned accordingly to allow for deeper understanding, in order that a more informed and meaningful response can be considered by pupils.

## **b. Definition of key subject knowledge and vocabulary**

In order that all of this wider learning is understood by the pupils and used to inform their responses to the enquiry questions devised by the school, they need to be identified in a sequenced 'learning journey.' Pupils should be able to see how each lesson/learning activity fits together to build a bigger picture around the key enquiry question.

For example, each lesson or activity could be formed/titled as a sub question to the key enquiry question. By sharing these with pupils, it may help them to understand how each contributes to their understanding of the key enquiry question as part of a schemata.

## **c. Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Strategies used for the teaching and learning of the key knowledge in Religious Education needs to consider the varying learning styles of pupils and therefore include a wide range of quality sources, experiences and resources.

By encountering people, literature, spaces and places, creative and expressive arts and other resources from a wide range of cultures, religions, faiths and traditions pupils can understand aspects of religions and worldviews from the perspective of the believers, without relying solely on the teachers' understanding or ability to explain.

The use of different media to build understanding and express meaning through a range of senses such as touch, hearing, seeing, smell and tasting, will lead to the curriculum being more accessible and inclusive of all learners, and to pupils using a broader spectrum of skills, styles and activities to engage with a wider range of sources, experiences and resources.

Pupils can further develop their analytical and literacy skills when interpreting, comparing, reflecting and responding to sources and resources across a range of media beyond written text, including artistic interpretations, artefacts, buildings and interaction or dialogue.

The sharing of understanding through experiences and dialogue with others not only supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, it also promotes the British Values of interfaith harmony and cooperation and the combatting of prejudice and discrimination. This element is a core part of every enquiry, as per the enquiry learning model depicted above on page 11.

Therefore, the Religious Education curriculum should include:

- a range of written and spoken religious and non-religious sources (including texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy, worship and sacred texts) in a range of styles and genres different texts, including poetry, diaries, religious/sacred texts and extended writing
- visits and trips relating to places of worship or with special meaning/relevance for specific belief systems and religions and visits from representatives of these
- artefacts, items, material sources used within religions, faiths or worldviews, that have or are used to express, special or religious values or beliefs



- sources from Christianity, the other principal religions and worldviews including those required for study in this agreed syllabus and represented in Britain and in the local community

However, it is important that all sources and resources used should:

- be presented from the perspective of the believers
- not be used to promote, convert or urge a particular religion or belief
- not promote negative stereotypes
- be treated in a manner that believers/followers would not find offensive

## 5. Progression in Religious Education

As pupils' progress through their Religious Education they should be looking deeper into spiritual, ethical, moral and social issues and in increasing breadth across different religions and worldviews through time and around the world. Units/schemes of work within a Religious Education curriculum should not be standalone 'topics', disassociated from each other.

Learning should be planned and sequenced to support pupils accumulate subject knowledge, understanding and specialist vocabulary relating to RE concepts. It should also support development of the necessary skills to support the investigation, exploration and reflection of their own and others' responses to meaningful enquiry questions, which can continuously increase in depth, breadth and complexity.

For example, in order for pupils to be able to better consider the question 'what happens if we do wrong?' they will first need to have an understanding of what is believed to be 'right' and 'wrong' and how religions clarify this. In doing so, they will consider the similarities and differences between religious interpretations and perhaps also contemplate whether these have changed over time or been influenced by certain experiences/events.

Pupils will need an understanding of this and of the religious beliefs around the *Soul*, *Sin*, *Karma*, and *Judgement*, so that they are able to use the correct subject vocabulary when effectively comparing and analysing new learning about beliefs, for examples, about the *Afterlife* or *Reincarnation*, in order for them to express an informed response to the question.

Therefore, progression in Religious Education is not simply the acquiring of more knowledge, but in the skills of understanding of this knowledge, for example to explain, interpret and analyse, in order to use their learning to inform and express their responses through comparing and reflecting. This skills' progression has been outlined in the Brent Spectrum (see page 17).

The Religious Education curriculum developed by schools, based on the Agreed Syllabus, should clarify the progression in learning, specifying how the units of learning fit together to help pupils develop their skills and contribute knowledge to build understanding. Each school's planned units should, therefore, in addition to the enquiry question(s), define the relevant prior knowledge needed from previous units, as well as the intended knowledge and skills outcomes.

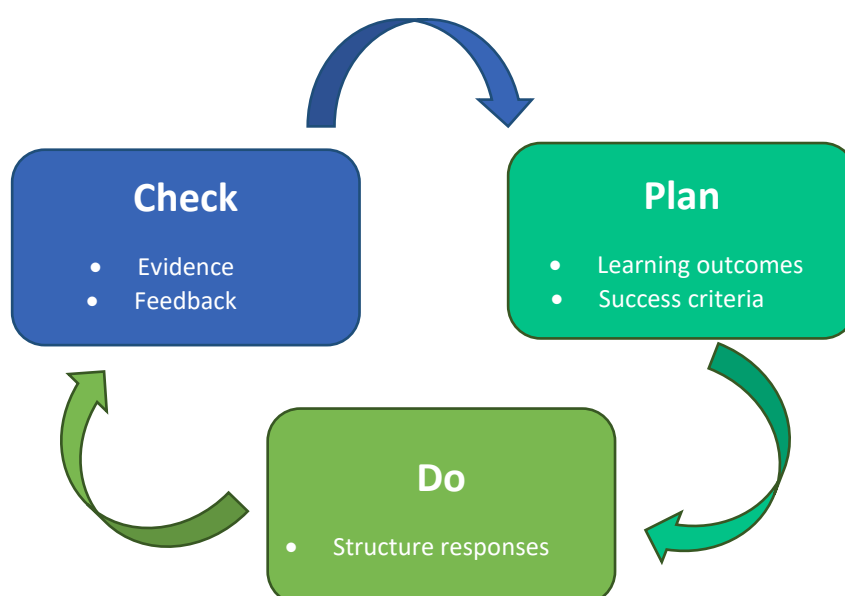
This is based on the suggested Programme of Study (see Appendix 8).

## Assessment in Religious Education

It is important for pupils to also be able to identify how they are learning and progressing in Religious Education and to know how to improve their work. The Brent 'Spectrum' has been created to define the skills specified on page 10 as learning outcomes that specify the intended skills development. The columns on this Spectrum reflect the enquiry model on page 11 and should be used together to form a judgement about pupils' development in the subject.

The language has been structured so that pupils and teachers can use the Spectrum as a reference as they plan, create, check and feedback on their own and others' work. It can therefore also be used to provide guidance for pupils on how to structure and improve their responses in their Religious Education work.

It is a legal requirement that schools report to parents on pupils' progress in Religious Education annually and in accordance with the Religious Education Skills Spectrum in this syllabus. Therefore, learning in Religious Education will need to be continuously monitored by teachers. The Spectrum can be used as an audit tool, to evidence progression in pupils' work and to support summative assessments and reporting. The Religious Education Skills Spectrum can be used in all aspects of Assessment for Learning as part of any strong cycle of learning.



## Religious Education Skills Spectrum

	What do people believe and do?	How do beliefs and values make a difference to lives?	How do people respond to ultimate questions and big issues?
Mastering	Explain how similarities and/or differences in beliefs and practices occur through different interpretation, or through the influence of sources and/or historical events and cultural traditions.	Evaluate the impact of holding certain beliefs and values and of belonging to their community of shared beliefs/values.	Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of examples of beliefs, sources, historical events and cultural traditions that are used to explain the similarities and differences in shared values and/or responses to ultimate questions and issues.
Extending	Explain reasons behind similarities and differences and connections between beliefs, practices, sources, historical events and cultural traditions.	Show how actions, symbols and features show certain beliefs and values. Describe how lives may be affected, improved or challenged by belonging to a community, or by having certain beliefs and values.	Explain reasons for the differences in shared values and/or responses to ultimate questions and issues, using detailed examples of beliefs, sources, historical events and cultural traditions to support their reasons.
Secure	Suggest reasons for connections, similarities and differences between sources, beliefs and practices, in detail, and using examples to support these. Identify links with historical events and cultural traditions.	Explain how actions, symbols and features demonstrate certain beliefs and values. Suggest how these may affect, improve or provide challenge in the lives of believers.	Suggest reasons for differences and similarities in shared values and responses to ultimate questions and issues. Suggest sources that support/link to their reasons.
Developing	Describe the beliefs, practices and sources in detail and with correct vocabulary. Identify similarities, differences and connections between beliefs, practices and sources.	Describe the actions, features and symbols of a believer in detail and with correct vocabulary. Identify the similarities and differences, and describe how they show certain beliefs and values.	Identify and describe similarities and differences in responses to ultimate questions. Suggest lines of enquiry or sources to investigate these responses.
Firming	Describe beliefs, practices and sources. Make links between these.	Describe features, actions and symbols that impact on the life of a believer, making links with/suggesting the beliefs and values behind these.	Describe responses or experiences to ultimate questions and issues, linking with values, beliefs and sources. Identify the shared values linked to these responses. Formulate own ultimate questions.
Approaching	Recount beliefs, practices and sources with correct vocabulary.	Recount with correct vocabulary the actions, symbols and features of identity and belonging.	Identify ultimate questions and issues. Express own and others' responses or experiences.
Beginning	Recall some information.	Recall features, symbols, and actions related to identity and belonging.	Express own views and feelings or experiences in response/linked to ultimate questions and issues.
Engaging	Recognise examples of beliefs, practices and sources, or key words.	Recognise examples of features, symbols and actions, or key words.	Express a response to simple questions or sources relating to ultimate questions or issues.

## 6. Acknowledgements

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Roger Butler (Former advisor)	

## 7. Resources

Brent SACRE is committed to working in partnership with schools, supporting the implementation of this syllabus in the pursuit of excellence in Religious Education, of which there are already many examples.

Further resources that support the teaching of this syllabus, which have been devised with our schools can be found on the BestBrent website at:

<http://www.bestbrent.co.uk/Page/12543>

There are also opportunities for schools to work collaboratively with Brent SACRE, sharing and building on good practice, with support for Religious Education Subject Leaders and Coordinators, through CPD Sessions and termly Network Meetings. Details of these can also be found on the BestBrent website.

## Further Reading

This syllabus has been devised following extensive consultation with primary and secondary teachers, representatives from local faith communities and local Councillors alongside the Local Authority. The educational principles it contains has been based on evidence from a wide breadth of academic research. For those who wish to expand their understanding of these principles, the following may be of interest:

- Philosophy with Teenagers, Patricia Hannam, Eugenio Echeverria, 2010
- Embedded Formative Assessment: (Strategies for Classroom Assessment That Drives Student Engagement and Learning), Dylan William, 2017
- The Curriculum: Gallimaufry to coherence, Mary Myatt, 2018
- How to Teach Even Better: An Evidence-Based Approach, Geoff Petty, 2018
- Academic disciplines and RE: Designing an effective RE curriculum, Gillian Georgiou, Olivia Seymour, Kathryn Wright, 2019
- Religious Education and the Public Sphere (Theorizing Education), Patricia Hannam, 2020

## 8. Appendix

### Programmes of Study

#### EYFS

Children should be provided with opportunities to explore and learn to:

Communication and language	Personal, social and emotional development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listen to stories, songs and poems relating to different traditions and respond with comments, questions or actions;</li> <li>• use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, express ideas and feelings;</li> <li>• answer 'who', 'how' and 'why' questions in response to stories, experiences or events;</li> <li>• talk about how they and others express and show feelings;</li> <li>• develop narratives in relation to stories relating to a range of traditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect</li> <li>• work as part of a group, behaving fairly, understanding the need for agreed values and codes of behaviour</li> <li>• talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences</li> <li>• appreciate and articulate issues of right and wrong</li> <li>• develop an awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and are sensitive to those of others</li> <li>• have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs, and those of others, showing sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.</li> </ul>
Understanding the world	Expressive arts and design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members</li> <li>• talk about themselves and the similarities and differences with others</li> <li>• begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people</li> <li>• explore, observe and find out about places and objects that matter in different cultures and beliefs.</li> <li>• Understand that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through play, art, music, dance and stories</li> <li>• respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste.</li> </ul>

#### Key Stage 1

Pupils should be taught to:

Understanding questions of purpose and meaning	Knowledge and understanding of beliefs, practices and their effect on the life of the believer	Interpretation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify things which are important to people and what influences human actions including their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about aspects of spiritual, ethical and religious traditions and to identify some features of religious practices contributing and responding in the light of their own views and experiences</li> <li>• to recognise some ways of belonging to a religion or community of beliefs and to recognise choices they can make, reflecting on their own personal experiences</li> <li>• to recognise similarities and differences between aspects of religions and belief systems, contributing and responding in the light of their own experience</li> <li>• to be aware of human interdependence.</li> </ul>	<p>about the significance of stories, symbols and artefacts which express beliefs and values and respond to these in the light of their experience.</p>

Enquiry and investigation	Empathy	Expression and communication	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to ask and explore questions, including those of purpose, which stimulate their imagination and broaden their vision and awareness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consider the needs, views, cultures and beliefs of others, showing respect and sensitivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to be aware of the variety of forms which can express ideas and feelings</li> <li>to communicate their own knowledge, ideas, feelings and personal responses using a range of techniques and a variety of media</li> <li>to take part in group and class exploratory discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to express personal values and commitments</li> </ul>

## Key Stage 2

Pupils should be taught:

Understanding questions of purpose and meaning	Knowledge and understanding of beliefs, practices and their effect on the life of the believer		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recognise different types of purpose which motivate humans and inform human actions including their own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand key beliefs, teachings and practices of spiritual, ethical and religious traditions and to contribute and respond to these in the light of their own views and experiences</li> <li>to be aware of the spectrum of ways of belonging to a religion or community of beliefs, and describe ways in which individuals make choices in belief and behaviour including and reflecting on their own personal experiences</li> <li>to make connections between aspects of religions and belief systems considering both similarities and differences, contributing and responding in the light of their own experience</li> <li>about historical links between religious traditions and about cultural differences within traditions at local, national and global levels, and to contribute and respond to this in the light of their own views and experiences</li> <li>to recognise human interdependence</li> </ul>		
Interpretation	Enquiry and investigation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to explore meanings of stories, symbols and artefacts and to relate these to their own experiences, contributing their own interpretations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to ask and explore questions, including those of purpose, which stimulate their imagination and broaden their vision and awareness</li> <li>to find out about aspects of ethical and religious traditions using a range of sources of information including oral accounts, artefacts, pictures, photographs, music, places of worship and ICT-based sources</li> </ul>		
Empathy	Expression and communication	Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consider issues from other points of view and take different views, beliefs and values into account</li> <li>to consider the integrity, feelings, ideas, beliefs and experiences of others showing respect and sensitivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to explain how beliefs, ideas and feelings are conveyed through spiritual and religious texts, ritual, symbolism and the arts</li> <li>to communicate their knowledge, understanding and personal responses using a range of techniques and a variety of media</li> <li>to contribute to exploratory group and class discussions</li> <li>to construct simple reasoned arguments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consider what they can learn from the wisdom of spiritual and religious traditions</li> <li>to respond to the views of others while justifying their own with reasoned comments</li> <li>to develop and express personal values and commitments</li> </ul>	



## Key Stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

Understanding questions of purpose and meaning	Knowledge and understanding of beliefs, practices and their effect on the life of the believer	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand different types of purpose which motivate people, inform human actions and give meaning to human life including their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to discuss and reflect on issues of central concern, principal beliefs, values, practices and actions of spiritual and religious communities at local, national and global levels, and to contribute and respond to these in the light of their own views and experiences</li> <li>to explore and discuss the spectrum of ways of belonging to a religion or community of beliefs, the range of views held and discuss ways in which individuals make choices in belief and behaviour including and reflecting on their own personal experiences</li> <li>to compare aspects of religions and belief systems considering both similarities and differences, and to consider unity, diversity and pluralism, contributing and responding in the light of their own experience</li> <li>about the impact of historical and cultural contexts on beliefs, practices and religious institutions at local, national and global levels, and to contribute and respond to this in the light of their own views and experiences</li> <li>to describe and evaluate historical links and dialogue between religious communities and between religious and secular communities in relation to evidence and their own experiences</li> <li>to recognise human interdependence and explore the idea of global citizenship.</li> </ul>	
Interpretation	Enquiry and investigation	Empathy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>why some spiritual and religious texts, practices and symbols are interpreted and presented in different ways and to analyse and discuss alternative interpretations</li> <li>to extract meaning beyond the literal, looking for the wisdom contained in spiritual and religious stories, sayings, symbols and customs, and to respond to these suggesting their own interpretations</li> <li>to be aware of the way religion is portrayed in the media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to ask questions, including those of purpose, which stimulate their imagination and broaden their vision and awareness to identify, select and use a range of appropriate sources of information including oral accounts, documents, printed sources, the media, artefacts, pictures, photographs, music, places of worship and ICT-based sources as a basis for independent enquiries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consider issues from other points of view and take different views, beliefs and values into account</li> <li>to consider the integrity, feelings, ideas, beliefs and experiences of others showing respect and sensitivity.</li> </ul>
Expression and communication		Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how meaning is conveyed through spiritual and religious texts, ritual, symbolism and the arts</li> <li>to begin to recognise limitations of verbal language to express profound feelings, ideas and religious beliefs and experiences</li> <li>to recognise when a speaker is being ambiguous, uses and abuses evidence and makes unsubstantiated statements to communicate their knowledge, understanding and personal responses using a range of techniques and a variety of media to contribute to exploratory group and class discussions to construct a reasoned argument citing evidence.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consider what they can learn from the wisdom of spiritual and religious traditions</li> <li>to respond to the views of others with well-argued reasons and cited evidence for taking one view rather than another</li> <li>to develop and express personal values and commitments.</li> </ul>