

Thinking, Enquiry, Creativity, Response

Oldham Religious Education Syllabus

2014 – 2019



Oldham
Council

This artwork was done by Olivia Roberts of Byron Street Infant and Nursery Community School, Royton for the cover of the 2007 RE Syllabus.

In 2007 she said about the artwork;

"I know people like flowers because they are beautiful and a flower is a good symbol to remind everyone about our world. I put all the religions' symbols on the petals I wrote 'love' everywhere because I want people to be nice to each other so people will know it is an RE syllabus."

Below you will find the word along with a phonetic description for the individual translations.



אהבה Hebrew - AHAVAH

حُب Arabic - HUBB

प्रमे Sanskrit - PREMA


ਪਿਆਰ Punjabi - P'YAR

Αγάπη Greek - AGAPE

मेत्त Pali - METTA


The different languages all say 'love'.

The symbols of each religion are as follows:

 Christianity is represented by the cross.

 Islam is represented by the crescent moon and star.

 Judaism is represented by the Menorah a seven branched candelabrum.

 Hinduism is represented by Sanskrit letters, aa, au and ma which, when combined, make the sound Om.

 Buddhism is represented by The Tibetan Wheel of Life which symbolizes the Buddhist perspective on life.

 Sikhism is represented by the Khandha, the symbol of Sikhism.

Front cover artwork by Tawheed Ahmed Chowdhury aged 11, Greenhill Primary School.

Foreword

Oldham SACRE shares an ambition to support the growth and development of more cohesive, empowered and active communities. The achievement and progression of children have been paramount in the creative process.

The publication of the new Agreed Syllabus is the culmination of collaborative work involving representatives of faith communities including the Church of England, representatives of professional bodies and elected members and officers of Oldham Council.

This publication is intended to engage pupils with stimulating ideas and promote lines of enquiry in ways that offer opportunities for independent thought and serious reflection. As in other curriculum areas, we hope children feel challenged in RE.

I would like to express my thanks for the support of the SACRE committees and the endeavour of the many teachers and fellow professionals who have worked to develop an Agreed Syllabus which is forward looking, stimulating and capable of providing a platform for learning which is imaginative and promotes high standards.

Graham McGuffie

Chair of Oldham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Introduction

The new Agreed Syllabus represents the very best in collaboration of partners committed to the development of children and young people's enquiring minds.

The commitment in Oldham to providing a safe, respectful place to consider matters of faith is unstinting and none more so than in school.

The support for the development of the Syllabus represents this commitment and a sincere belief that the Syllabus and the work in schools which it will support, will provide children and young people with the tools to develop rich reflective dialogue about some of the "big" questions.

Thank you to everyone who has worked on the Syllabus so far and in anticipation to all those teachers who will take the ideas and work forward in their classrooms.

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The Council would like to acknowledge the work of those who have contributed to this syllabus.

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Oldham Agreed Syllabus, guidance and support materials on line

The Oldham Agreed Syllabus and guidance and support materials can be accessed on line through the First Class Service and through Oldham Schools' Cloud Service.

For further help email;
helpdesk@oldhamlea.org.uk
or telephone 0161 770 3678

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RE and the law:

Religious Education in Oldham schools:

Develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of, and their ability to respond to, Christianity, other principal world religions (Buddhists, Hindus, Jewish people, Muslims, Sikhs), other religious traditions (such as the Baha'i faith or Jainism) and world-views.

By exploring issues within and across faiths, pupils learn to understand and respect different religions, beliefs, values and traditions (including ethical life stances such as Humanism), and their influence on individuals, societies, communities and cultures.



Religious Education encourages pupils to...

- consider challenging questions of meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human;
- understand the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures;
- learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring questions of meaning and their own beliefs;
- learn about religious and ethical teaching, enabling them to make reasoned and informed responses to religious, moral and social issues;
- develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a plural, global society;
- develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.

Religious Education enhances pupils'...

- awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression;
- ability to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious Education develops pupils' skills of...

- enquiry and response through the use of religious vocabulary, questioning and empathy;
- reflection, expression, application, analysis and evaluation of beliefs, values and practices, and the communication of personal responses to these.



Religious Education...

- offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development.

Religious Education does not...

- seek to urge religious beliefs on pupils nor compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another.

Religious Education is not...

- the same as collective worship, which has its own separate and distinctive place within school life.

Legal requirements for Religious Education in the curriculum

Religious Education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in the sixth form, except to those withdrawn by their parents.

This requirement does not apply to nursery classes in maintained schools. *'Religious Education should be provided for all registered pupils except for those withdrawn at the request of their parents. (s 71 SSFA 1998) This will include school children in Reception classes as well as Post 16 students (but not those at Sixth Form colleges). Special schools should comply as far as is practicable.'* The Education Act (2002 Section 80 (1)(a)) and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Religious Education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools.

The curriculum for every maintained school in England shall comprise a basic curriculum which includes:

- a. **provision for Religious Education for all registered pupils** at the school (in accordance with such of the provisions of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998 (c.31) as apply in relation to the school);
- b. a curriculum for all registered pupils at the school who have attained the age of three but are not over compulsory school age (known as "the National Curriculum for England") EA 2002, s80.

Religious Education must be taught in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus in all:

- Community schools and;
- Foundation and Voluntary Controlled schools (SSFA 1998 paragraphs 2(1) and 2(2) Schedule 19).

An Agreed Syllabus should 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain (s375 (3) Education Act 1996).

Note: this is not the same requirement as that for Collective Worship where the majority of acts of worship in any one term should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. DfE Circular 1/94¹, paragraph 32 states that an agreed syllabus 'must not be designed to convert pupils, or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils' (Education Act 1996 s.376 (2).

Academies, Free Schools and other new school types.

The current Department for Education Guidance about RE provision in Academies, Free Schools and other new school types reiterates the legal requirement that all pupils on Schools' rolls must study RE unless withdrawn from the subject by their parents (2013). They are entitled to learn about the Christian traditions and practice in the UK and about the other principal religions and beliefs in the UK.

This Agreed Syllabus is offered to local Academies and Free Schools as an example of excellence in RE for Oldham. Although these new school types are free to plan their own RE curriculum, they will gain a key RE benefit from using the syllabus: SACRE has approved this multi-faith RE syllabus through its wide representation, and it has been agreed by Oldham's principal faith communities, so Academies and new school types can be confident that local faith communities support their RE². The syllabus also provides much planning help for RE. Oldham SACRE warmly invites Academies in the area to use this syllabus.



¹ Circular 1/94 does not constitute an authoritative legal interpretation of the Education Acts: that is a matter for the courts

² Planning help can be found in the Guidance and Support materials

The Aims and Purposes of RE:

Why RE matters for every learner in Oldham

The Oldham Strategic Plan for Children and Young People

Oldham Council works for community cohesion and respect for all, for high standards in learning for every child and for a better education service where thoughtfulness, understanding and community are highly valued. Religious Education in Oldham can make key contributions to these strategic intentions. The whole community of all different faith and belief groups in Oldham contributes to RE through the SACRE, and benefits where RE experiences are of good quality.

The Purposes of RE:



Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views that offer answers to questions such as these.



Religious Education offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. Religious Education enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.



Religious Education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses. Religious Education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging.



Religious Education enables pupils to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Religious Education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

The aims of RE are cyclical.

RE aims to enable pupils to:



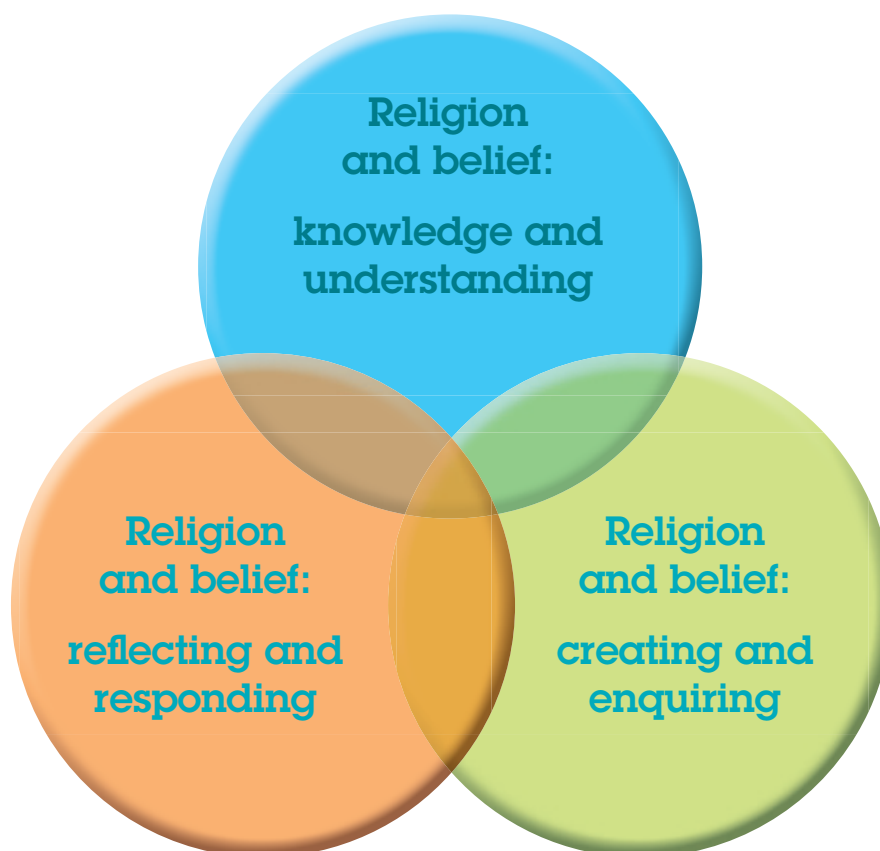
The Field of Enquiry in RE

RE is about religions and beliefs.

Pupils are never encouraged just to accept the beliefs they study, but always to learn from them. The process of RE involves three elements: as **knowledge and understanding** are developed, pupils also develop their **creative and critical thinking** abilities, and the skills that enable them to **reflect and respond** to their studies for themselves with increasing depth and sensitivity.

These three elements imply an investigative and enquiring approach: in RE, pupils ask life's big questions and pursue and explore a widening range of answers. Enquiries are always best when pupils investigate aspects of religions and beliefs at the same time as they explore questions about their own ideas, values, culture, beliefs and spirituality. RE enables all learners to add breadth and depth to their use of higher order thinking skills.

The three circles express the field of enquiry as a single process, in which these three elements are related.



New Developments in RE for this syllabus:

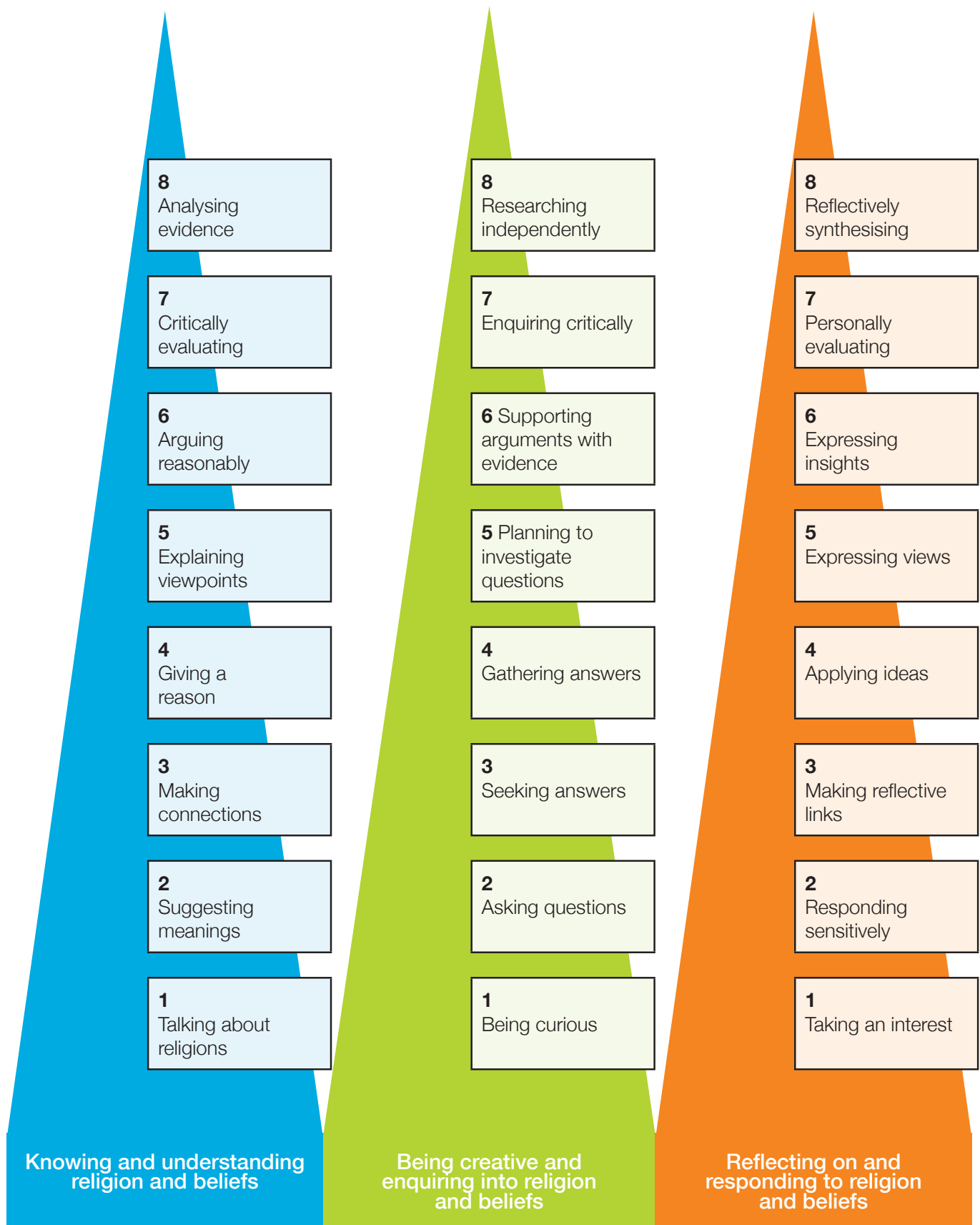
The previous Oldham Syllabus (2008) used the two attainment targets of 'Learning About Religion and Learning From Religion'. SACRE intends to make the field of enquiry for RE clearer in the current model of learning in the 2014 syllabus.

Here, the substance of learning about religion and belief builds the skills of developing knowledge and understanding. The substance of learning from religion and belief is to do with pupils' reflection and response.

The new focus on enquiry, thinking and creative and critical questioning is to be combined with these skills: learning in RE involves creativity and enquiry.

Making progress through the field of enquiry in RE:

The core skills that RE develops. This description of progression relates precisely to the skills of the RE eight level scale. See pages 25 to 39 for further details and examples. Also see the guidance paper on 'I can...' statements¹



¹ Planning help can be found in the Guidance and Support materials

RE benefits each learner and develops a wide range of skills

The Agreed Syllabus for RE is asking the fundamental question ‘What is it to be human?’ The Agreed Syllabus makes a significant contribution to the implementation of the view that ‘every child matters’ through its explorations of religious and ethical teachings. These benefits come to every learner from good quality RE provision.

As all schools try to develop and improve pupils’ literacy, numeracy and thinking skills in order to help them make better progress across all subjects, RE provides an excellent platform for promoting better progress. RE, in these ways, makes many valuable contributions to every child’s learning.

<p>RE enables children to develop key skills in literacy, numeracy and thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking and listening to others about religious, spiritual and ethical questions with increasing depth. • Reading and understanding sources in religion and belief. • Writing with increasing skill and clarity about religion and belief, including self-expression. • Applying their understanding of number to problem-solving in RE. • Using a wide range of thinking skills to approach questions and problems in religion and belief with increasing skill and subtlety.
<p>RE encourages children to be healthy through:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring what it means to respect the body, while reflecting on religious beliefs, investigating healthy living through religious teachings about food and drink, caring for the environment. • Exploring attitudes to sexual relationships that promote the well being of all. • Encouraging a healthy mind and spirit through activities such as circle time, understand prayer, stilling, and meditation, and reasoned debate. • Encouraging a positive self-image by enabling personal reflection and exploring ideas about the self from different religious traditions. • Enabling the consideration of teachings and examples from the faiths about self-respect, drug taking and intoxicants.
<p>RE helps children to stay safe by:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving opportunities to explore prejudice and discrimination including teachings from the faiths. • Offering opportunities to consider rules and principles that guide individuals within communities and support the vulnerable. • Encouraging pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong. • Helping them to consider who should be their role models. • Reflecting on the value of security gained from family life, from religious community and ritual, from faith in the transcendent and from other sources. • Encouraging them to be increasingly able to take responsibility for who and what they are.
<p>RE helps children to enjoy and achieve by:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a rigorous, challenging, good quality RE curriculum that enables pupils to learn about themselves and others through exploring religion and the big questions of life. • Encountering living faith (e.g. through visits and visitors) and being given opportunities to ask and develop answers to their own questions of meaning and purpose. • Setting clear and challenging standards, assessment criteria, enabling all pupils to take pride in their achievements in RE. • Raising standards by promoting national accreditation of RE achievements for 14-19s. • Creating an inclusive RE curriculum that inspires all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

<p>RE helps children to make a positive contribution by:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to develop, for every learner, the ability to disagree respectfully in a plural world. • Enabling pupils to explore concepts of identity, community and belonging in religions, and develop positive views of their own and respect for others. • Encouraging pupils to evaluate the impact of religious rules and codes for living, and the meaning of being 'law abiding'. • Giving opportunities to consider the nature of 'being human' and the positive common bonds found in shared human experiences. • Enabling pupils to express their own views and ideas on all the questions RE addresses. • Encouraging open mindedness in handling questions to which people have different answers.
<p>RE helps children to achieve economic wellbeing by:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing a curriculum that will allow them to grow and develop into individuals prepared for working life, able to flourish in the workplace. • Giving opportunities to consider, and sometimes challenge the meaning of 'economic well being' through studying the responses of faith to money, wealth, poverty, generosity and responsibility. • Exploring religious critiques of materialism and consumerism in a balanced way. • Providing all learners (at KS4 or 14 - 19) with the opportunity to achieve a nationally accredited RE / RS qualification. • Encouraging an interest in religious and spiritual issues that enables life long learning.

Organising RE: Curriculum Time for RE in Oldham

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus, the Agreed Syllabus Conference strongly recommends a minimum allocation of curriculum time for RE based upon the law and DfE guidance: a minimum 5% of curriculum time is required for teaching RE. Schools should plan to give this curriculum time to the subject as the syllabus is implemented.

This means in practice that schools are expected to allocate:

4-7: 36 hours of tuition per year

(e.g. 50 minutes a week, or an RE week each term where 12+ hours of RE are taught)

7-11: 45 hours of tuition per year

(e.g. an hour a week, a series of RE days where 45+ hours of RE are taught)

11-14: 45 hours of tuition per year

(e.g. an hour a week, RE-centred Humanities lessons taught for 4 hours a week for one term of the year)

14-16: 5% of curriculum time, or 70 hours of tuition across the Key Stage

(e.g. an hour a week for five terms or 50 minutes per week over three years where a school runs a three year GCSE course)

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

This means that RE can be delivered in, for example, approximately an hour a week.

Six important notes

- RE is legally required for all pupils. RE is a core subject of the curriculum for all pupils. The requirements of this Agreed Syllabus are not subject to the flexibility of the Foundation Subjects.
- RE is different from assembly. Curriculum time for Religious Education is distinct from the time schools may spend on collective worship or school assembly. The times given above are for Religious Education.
- Additional delivery of RE is often good practice: an RE themed day, or week of study can complement the regular programme of timetabled lessons (see additional ideas in the Agreed Syllabus guidance materials).
- RE should be taught in clearly identifiable time. There is a common frontier between RE and such subjects as literacy, citizenship or PSHE. But the times given above are explicitly for the clearly identifiable teaching of Religious Education. Where creative curriculum planning is used, schools must ensure that RE objectives are clear.
- Coherence and progression. Whilst schools are expected to make their own decisions about how to divide up curriculum time, schools must ensure that sufficient time is given to RE so that pupils can meet the expectations set out in this Agreed Syllabus to provide coherence and progression in RE learning.
- Too little time leads to low standards: Any school in which head teachers and governors do not plan to allocate sufficient curriculum time for RE is unlikely to be able to enable pupils to achieve the standards set out in this syllabus.

Additional time for RE

Models of delivery for high standards in RE

Religious Education must be planned to enable all pupils to achieve high standards. There are different ways that schools can do this. All pupils, 4-19, in Oldham are entitled to good learning in RE, so **schools must plan sufficient curriculum time for the subject to be well taught**. Subject leaders for RE, senior staff, head teachers and governors will all take an interest in ensuring provision enables the best possible standards.

- Schools should normally use one or two weekly lessons of RE as the standard way of running the curriculum plan. The advantages of this are that pupils get used to the RE lesson, the progress they make can be steady and continuous and teachers 'know where they are'. The main disadvantage is that pupils' weekly experience of RE can be too spread out for the deeper learning that the subject requires to flourish. **RE lessons must enable progression and continuity in learning.**

Additional time for RE can be organised to enhance provision:

- Some schools use a **themed curriculum approach to RE**. A series of lessons in the humanities are themed for RE, e.g. for half a term, and pupils spend five hours a week or more doing RE and relating study to history or geography. In the next half term, the focus may be more on one of the other subjects. The main advantages of this are that pupils get a deeper and more continuous experience of RE. A disadvantage is that some schools use arbitrary themes or fail to plan RE into the programme at sufficient depth. Specialist teachers' involvement or a sharp focus on planned RE outcomes in planning is crucial. Guidance is available on the local authority website. **RE taught in a themed curriculum must be clearly based on achieving RE learning objectives.**
- Some schools use an '**RE Week**' or an '**RE Day**' to focus learning, then follow up the 'big experience' with linked lessons over several weeks. Such 'big events' planning is demanding of teachers, but can for example help the whole school to focus and develop the subject. A day is about 5 hours, so is not, of course, a substitute for a term's work. The key to success is clarity about the RE learning that is planned. A guide to this kind of opportunity, with some practical ideas and outlines, is included on the Agreed Syllabus section of the local authority website. **RE taught through blocks of time like this must ensure pupils have breadth and depth in their RE curriculum.**
- **Creative curriculum planning** can present both opportunities and challenges for RE: Why do inspectors sometimes find RE is least well covered in an integrated programme of learning? Do some themes enable RE effectively, but do some themes exclude RE? Schools must consider the learning objectives of the syllabus in deciding whether RE learning is well served by 'creative curriculum planning'. **The clear identification of the teaching of RE is essential, so that high standards of RE learning can be set.**



In deciding the range of ways in which the Agreed Syllabus will be implemented, schools should ensure that the **full range of RE opportunities is offered to all pupils.**

Additional guidance and some examples are available from the SACRE consultant at REtoday.

Which religions and beliefs are to be studied?

In line with the law, Oldham SACRE requires that pupils learn from the diversity of religions and beliefs found locally, nationally and globally.

The minimum requirements for breadth of study are:

4-7 year olds Reception and Key Stage 1	7-11 year olds Key Stage 2	11-14 year olds Key Stage 3
Christianity 	Christianity 	Christianity
And at least one from: Hinduism Islam	And at least two from: Hinduism Judaism Islam	And: Hinduism Islam Judaism Buddhism Sikhism

- Non-religious perspectives on belief and spirituality should be studied as appropriate in each Key Stage.
- It is always appropriate to focus some study in RE on the beliefs and religions of children represented in the class, school or local community.

Notes

- The table above shows minimum requirements in terms of which religions are to be studied. Schools may plan to use material from more than the minimum if they wish to. Depth of learning is more important than mere 'coverage'.
- Demographics, history and the contemporary faith communities of Christians nationally and globally provide good reasons for the study of Christianity at each Key Stage in RE.
- Religions are all very diverse. Christian communities in Oldham, for example, are very varied. Groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses or Latter Day Saints, whether they are held to be within or beyond mainstream Christianity, are represented in our classrooms, and may therefore be an appropriate focus for study.
- Oldham has a large and growing Islamic population of around 40 000 as well, and so the study of Islam, which is also the second largest religion in the UK and globally, is suitable for each Key Stage.
- The six principal religions in the UK are all to be studied according to this plan. It is often effective to plan to study two religions in 'compare and contrast' investigations, but good planning does not tackle too many different religions simultaneously. Depth of learning clarifies confusion, and this Syllabus recommends just two religions be studied by 5-7s, and three by 7-11s.
- Secular alternatives to religion are found in every school, and over 35,000 Oldham citizens are non-religious (Census 2011), so it is always good for pupils to have opportunities to find out more about secular alternatives to religion. These include Humanism, and many people who describe themselves as 'spiritual, but not religious' alongside various forms of atheism and agnosticism.

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

Religious Education plays a crucial role in the development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and should be seen as the lead subject in promoting these. However, Religious Education does not have the sole responsibility for promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. All subjects and indeed the school ethos contribute to developing these as well. HMCI / OFSTED school inspection focuses very clearly on SMSC development at present. RE makes a key contribution to meeting OFSTED criteria.

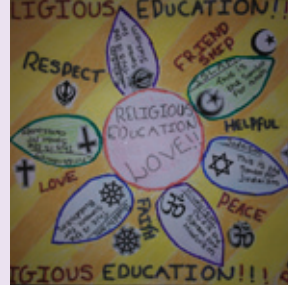
Learning opportunities include:



RE enables spiritual development by giving pupils opportunities to explore how beliefs have an impact on life, encouraging pupils to explore what it means to be human for themselves and in their relationships with others. RE asks big questions about the meaning and purpose of life, giving pupils space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.



RE enables moral development by exploring and responding to issues of right and wrong, good and evil. Learners are increasingly able to make good judgements and decisions. They recognise that all humans have rights and responsibilities and explore how religious belief can have an impact on moral behaviour.



RE enables social development through exploring the nature of religious communities, and by promoting the skills that help pupils relate to others for the wellbeing of all. Learners explore values and virtues such as respect for all people, living things, the environment and property. RE explores fundamental questions about the nature of people and society.



RE enables cultural development through raising awareness and developing understanding and appreciation of different cultures, religions and beliefs in our society today. Pupils can develop well informed and open minded attitudes to cultural diversity and an appreciation of the cultures of others, for example through the arts, literature, music, sport, food, travel or fashion.

All subjects provide opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Explicit opportunities to promote pupils' development in these areas are provided in RE and through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), sex and relationships education and citizenship education. A significant contribution is also made by school ethos, effective relationships throughout the school, collective worship, and other curriculum activities.

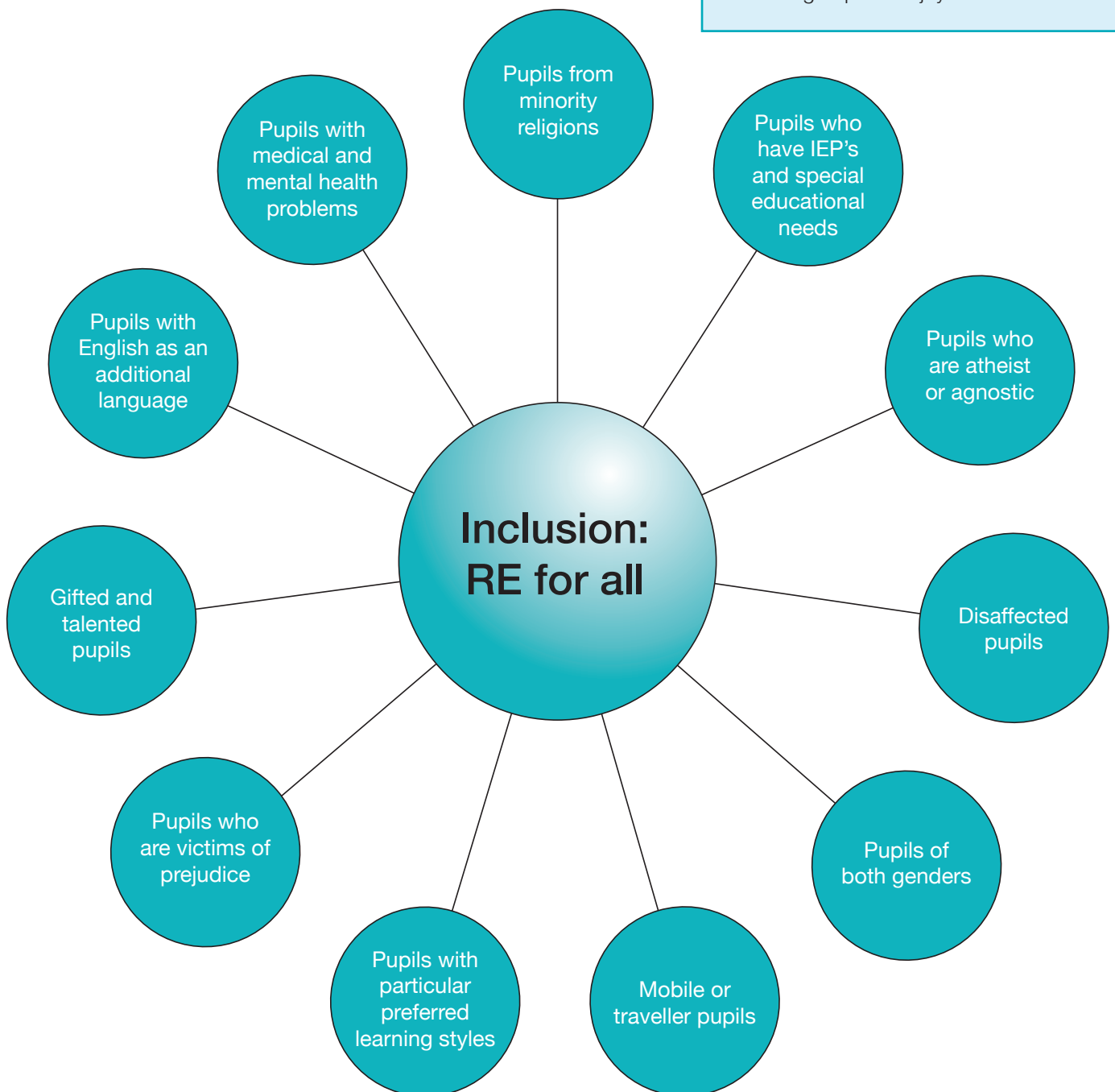
Religious Education and Inclusion

Religious Education can make a significant contribution to inclusion, particularly in its focus on promoting respect for all. This Syllabus contains many references to the role of Religious Education in challenging stereotypical views and appreciating, positively, differences in others. The Syllabus enables all pupils to consider the impact of people's beliefs on their own actions and lifestyle. The Syllabus also highlights the importance of religions and beliefs and how Religious Education can develop pupils' self-esteem.

Effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating Religious Education curriculum that:

- Builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences pupils bring to Religious Education.
- Meets the learning needs of all pupils including those with learning difficulties, those who are gifted and talented, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils from all religious communities and pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

RE according to the Oldham RE Syllabus must enable all pupils including those in all these groups to enjoy and achieve



RE, Respect for All and Community Cohesion

Our vision is of a community where people of faith and no faith live side by side. There will be mutual understanding respect and friendship in full measure.

It is essential that young people learn to understand and respect a range of religions and beliefs and whilst growing in confidence achieve a level of critical awareness that helps them to become builders and shapers of a better Oldham and a better world.

It is the duty of all schools to address issues of ‘how we live together and deal with difference’, however difficult and controversial they may seem. There are already groups in Oldham working together and no greater opportunity exists for co-operation within and between pupils than in and between our schools. Global issues animate and challenge our young people, through their religious studies they can learn to be positive and develop skills which build understanding about differences and tensions.

RE’s unique contribution

What is distinctive about Religious Education is its challenge to each to think as well as to acquire knowledge and understanding and to broaden the landscape of thought. It brings each individual into contact with the distinctiveness of being different and the extent to which values are shared. As individuals we are able to explore who we are and what we think about things. Together the aims of Oldham’s Partnership will be furthered if this Agreed Syllabus is used effectively.

RE makes a key contribution to enabling pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of, and develop positive attitudes towards living in a diverse community. Attitudes of tolerance, sensitivity and respect for all can develop where teaching and learning enable pupils to be sure of their own beliefs and identity, and appreciative of the beliefs and identities of others.

It is essential that young people learn to understand and respect a range of beliefs and whilst growing in confidence achieve a level of critical awareness. This can help all young people to make a positive contribution to a tolerant and respectful community, in school, locally and in the wider world.

Through RE, pupils can explore and learn about:

- The diversity of religions found in their local, regional and national communities;
- The best ways to express their own ideas, opinions and beliefs about religious, spiritual and moral questions;
- The significance of religious beliefs and membership for some people;
- The ways in which religious communities are distinctive (RE should never imply that religions are ‘all the same’);
- The common ground and shared action that religious communities sometimes achieve in making a contribution to society for the well being of all;
- The impact of beliefs upon action and upon daily life;
- The tensions and disagreements between different communities, and the ways of resolving these tensions that promote fairness and equality of opportunity;
- The teachings of each religion about respect for all and common humanity.

Through these curricular opportunities, it is intended that RE will be a focal point in every child’s learning about diversity, equality, respect and community cohesion. In this way, RE can make its particular contribution to community cohesion in Oldham and its schools.

Religious Education is not a mere tool, an instrument to make young people less disrespectful. At best it can “serve the needs of a fractured humanity, provide a spiritual basis for diverse and shared citizenship locally and globally and a dialogue between people of all faiths and no formal religion” (John Keast OBE).

A word to all teachers of RE in Oldham

We hope that in your hands this Agreed Syllabus will make a significant contribution to the vision of a better Oldham.

The backgrounds of our pupils in religions and beliefs

The different experiences, interests and strengths that pupils bring are particularly relevant in Religious Education. Some are active and committed within faith communities, some have occasional contact and others have no links at all. Teachers will need to take account of these differing religious backgrounds, plan to meet the needs of individuals and acknowledge and respect the beliefs and practices in the home and family. For both religious and non-religious pupils, RE carries powerful messages about respect for all, and the development of values which include tolerance and the appreciation of human diversity. For example, non-religious ways of life include the pursuit of values and virtues in distinctive ways, as religious communities do in diverse ways as well.

Census figures for Oldham and the region:

The census of 2011 gives teachers of RE important information about the local population's diversity. All teachers of RE, and all pupils, should use this information in suitable ways to build a realistic picture of our local area.

Religions and beliefs in our area.

Area	Religion	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion	not stated
North West	7,052,177	4,742,860	20,695	38,259	30,417	356,458	8,857	19,166	1,397,916	437,549
Greater Manchester	2,682,528	1,657,594	9,555	23,478	25,013	232,787	5,322	7,429	557,129	164,221
Bolton	276,786	173,608	574	5,988	174	32,385	118	721	47,567	15,651
Bury	185,060	116,036	453	817	10,302	11,279	301	422	34,381	11,069
Manchester	503,127	245,247	3,879	5,452	2,613	79,496	2,292	1,889	127,485	34,774
Oldham	224,897	134,167	371	1,233	108	39,879	70	406	36,169	12,494
Rochdale	211,699	128,186	403	642	216	29,426	71	430	40,014	12,311
Salford	233,933	150,111	1,040	1,504	7,687	6,030	324	691	52,105	14,441
Stockport	283,275	179,055	853	1,666	1,340	9,431	330	964	71,126	18,510
Tameside	219,324	140,322	511	3,223	89	9,705	102	651	51,674	13,047
Trafford	226,578	143,639	768	2,271	2,413	12,994	1,652	566	47,968	14,307
Wigan	317,849	247,223	703	682	71	2,162	62	689	48,640	17,617

RE: Connections to Citizenship, PSHE and SEAL

RE must be seen as a curricular discipline in its own right. It is not a subsection of some other subject. Nonetheless, there are common frontiers between RE, PSHE, Citizenship and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL).

Promoting citizenship through RE

RE plays a significant part in promoting citizenship through:

- Developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the Oldham area and region and the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding.
- Enabling pupils to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly.
- Exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally.
- Enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.

Promoting personal, social and health education through RE

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

- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by learning about what is fair and unfair, right and wrong and being encouraged to share their opinions.
- Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality.
- Learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views.
- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying.
- Being able to talk about relationships and feelings.
- Considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

Promoting social and emotional aspects of learning through RE

Because it is concerned with religion, ethics and spirituality, RE has always contributed substantially to the social learning of pupils, and focused on their emotional development and wellbeing.

Therefore a large area of common ground exists between RE and the programmes for 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' programmes used in schools since 2005. In particular, RE contributes to:

- Self awareness by enabling learners to consider their own sense of self through the study of questions of

identity, belonging and diversity.

- Empathy by encouraging learners to identify similarities and differences between people who are different and to understand what makes for the wellbeing of all in society.
- Motivation by setting high standards of thinking and learning, and by exploring what makes a human being feel challenged and energized as different religions and beliefs understand it.
- Social Skills by using team work and by the curricular exploration of societies, co-operation and teamwork in different moral and religious visions of what it means to be human.
- Managing feelings through work that examines our values and commitments and the different spiritual practices and ways of expressing meaning which religions and beliefs offer.

Teachers who make strong connections between SEAL and RE will find benefits to both learning areas. Note that SEAL is a non-statutory set of resources, but RE is a statutory curriculum entitlement for every pupil.

Attitudes and skills in RE

While the knowledge, skills and understanding are central to the national framework for Religious Education, it is also vital that Religious Education encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. The following four attitudes are essential for good learning in Religious Education and should be developed at each stage or phase of Religious Education:

- self-awareness
- respect for all
- open-mindedness
- appreciation and wonder.

Self-awareness in Religious Education includes pupils:

- Feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule.
- Developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas.
- Recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth.
- Becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people.

Respect for all in Religious Education includes pupils:

- Developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others' views are different from their own.
- Being ready to value difference and diversity to promote tolerance for the common good, appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society.
- Being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias.
- Being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others.

Open-mindedness in Religious Education includes pupils:

- Being willing to learn and gain new understanding.
- Engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions.
- Being willing to go beyond surface impressions.
- Distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith.
- Being willing to appreciate the identity of others whilst developing confidence in one's own identity.

Appreciation and wonder in Religious Education includes pupils:

- Developing their imagination and curiosity.
- Recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery.
- Appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live.
- Developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose.

At each Key Stage, the Syllabus provides examples of specific opportunities for developing these attitudes.

Skills in RE

Skills for learning in RE	What learning processes develop these skills? What abilities should teaching enable? Teaching should enable pupils to:
<p>Investigate – in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking relevant questions; • knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information; • knowing what may constitute evidence for understanding religions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask increasingly deep and complex questions about religion. • Use a widening range of sources to pursue answers. • Focus on selecting and understanding relevant sources to deal with religious and spiritual questions with increasing insight and sensitivity. • Evaluate a range of responses to the questions and issues they study.
<p>Express - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to explain concepts, rituals and practices; • the ability to identify and articulate matters of deep conviction and concern, and to respond to religious issues through a variety of media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what words and actions might mean to believers. • Articulate their own reactions and ideas about religious questions and practices. • Clarify and analyse with growing confidence aspects of religion which they find valuable or interesting or negative. • Explain in words and other ways their own responses to matters of deep conviction.
<p>Interpret - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to draw meaning from artefacts, works of art, poetry and symbolism; • the ability to suggest meanings of religious texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say what an object means, or explain a symbol. • Use figures of speech or metaphors to speak creatively about religious ideas. • Understand increasingly the diverse ways in which religious and spiritual experience can be interpreted. • Clarify and express the role of interpretation in religion and life • Recognise religious materials and take note of their details and style.
<p>Reflect - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to reflect on feelings, relationships, experience, ultimate questions, beliefs and practices; • the ability to use stillness, mental and physical, to think with clarity and care about significant events, emotions and atmospheres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how action and atmosphere makes them feel. • Experience the use of silence and thoughtfulness in religion and in life. • Take increasing account of the meanings of experience and discern the depth of questions religion addresses. • Respond sensitively and with insight to religious and spiritual phenomena and their meanings.
<p>Empathise - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to consider the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others; • developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow; • the ability to see the world through the eyes of others, and to see issues from their point of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See with sensitivity how others respond to their actions, words or behaviour. • Connect their feelings, both positive and negative, with those of others, including those in religious stories and contexts. • Imagine with growing awareness how they would feel in a different situation from their own. • Identify thoughtfully with other people from a range of communities and stances for life.

Skills for learning in RE (continued)	What learning processes develop these skills? What abilities should teaching enable? Teaching should enable pupils to:
<p>Apply - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making the association between religions and individual community, national and international life; • identifying key religious values and their interplay with secular ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See links and simple connections between aspects of religions. • Make increasingly subtle and complex links between religious material and their own ideas. • Apply learning from one religious context to new contexts with growing awareness and clarity. • Apply their learning from different religious sources to the development of own ideas.
<p>Discern – in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining the significance of aspects of religious belief and practice; • Developing insight into people, motives, actions and consequences; • Seeing clearly how individuals might learn from the religions they study for themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience the awe and wonder of the natural world and of human relations. • Be willing to look beyond the surface at underlying ideas and questions. • Weigh up the value religious believers find in their faith with insight, relating it to their own experience. • Discern with clarity, respect and thoughtfulness the impact (positive and negative) of religious and secular ways of living.
<p>Analyse - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact; • distinguishing between the features of different religions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See what kinds of reasons are given to explain religious aspects of life. • Join in discussion about issues arising from the study of religion. • Use reasons, facts, opinions, examples, arguments and experience to justify or question a view of a religious issue. • Analyse the religious views encountered with fairness, balance, empathy and critical rigour.
<p>Synthesise - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • linking significant features of religion together in a coherent pattern; • connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice similarities between stories and practices from religions. • Use general words to describe a range of religious practice and teaching. • Make links between different aspects of one religion, or similar and contrasting aspects of two or more religions. • Explain clearly the relationships, similarities and differences between a range of religious arguments, ideas, views and teachings.
<p>Evaluate - in RE this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to debate issues of religious significance with reference to evidence and argument; • weighing the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about what makes people choose religious ways of life and the reasons they give for these choices. • Describe how and why religious people show the importance of symbols, key figures, texts or stories. • Weigh up with fairness and balance the value they see in a range of religious practices. • Evaluate skilfully some religious responses to moral issues, and their own responses.

Of course, the development of many of these skills occurs across the curriculum in many different subject areas.

RE Programmes of Study

RE in the Early Years/ Foundation Stage

Religious Education is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll. RE is a requirement for pupils in the Reception Year, who are on the school roll. The statutory requirement for Religious Education does not extend to nursery classes in maintained schools and is not, therefore, a legal requirement for much of the Foundation Stage. It may, however, form a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the Key Stage. Pupils will learn through play and through continuous provision of opportunities.

The contributions of Religious Education to the early learning goals

The early learning goals set out what most children should achieve by the time they begin Year 1.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Religious Education can make an active contribution to all these areas but has a particularly important contribution to make to:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Understanding of the World
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Expressive Arts and Design

In Early Years RE sessions children may begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship.

They listen to and talk about stories and songs. They may be introduced to religious words and use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live. They learn through play.

SACRE have provided numerous examples of good contributions from RE to EYFS goals.

These can be found in the Oldham SACRE guidance document on EYFS (2014).

Communication and Language

Examples of Religious Education related experiences and opportunities in continuous provision

- Children ask and answer questions about religion and culture, as they occur naturally within their everyday experiences.
- Children visit places of worship.
- They listen to and respond to a wide range of religious and ethnic groups.

- They handle artefacts with curiosity and respect.
- Having visited a local place of worship, children learn new words associated with the place, showing respect.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Examples of Religious Education related experiences and opportunities in continuous provision

- Children use some stories from religious traditions as a stimulus to reflect on their own feelings and experiences and explore them in various ways.
- Using a story as a stimulus, children reflect on the words and actions of characters and decide what they would have done in a similar situation. They learn about the story and its meanings through activity and play.
- Using role-play as a stimulus, children talk about some of the ways that people show love and concern for others and why this is important.
- Children think about issues of right and wrong and how humans help one another.

Understanding of the World

Examples of Religious Education related experiences and opportunities in continuous provision

- Children ask and answer questions about religion and culture, as they occur naturally within their everyday experiences.
- Children visit places of worship.
- They listen to and respond to a wide range of religious and ethnic groups.
- They handle artefacts with curiosity and respect.
- Having visited a local place of worship, children learn new words associated with the place, showing respect.

Literacy

Examples of Religious Education related experiences and opportunities in continuous provision

- Children read and understand some simple sentences about the religions they encounter. They show understanding of simple words from religions through talk.
- Children choose and write some words from religions that are phonetically plausible, or correct.
- Children can use some simple labels and captions in relation to religious material.
- Children can contribute to simple lists of words, examples or ideas in relation to religion.

Expressive Arts and Design

Examples of Religious Education related experiences and opportunities in continuous provision

- Using religious artefacts as a stimulus, children think about and express meanings associated with the artefact.
- Children use shape and pattern to make sense of stories e.g. with diva lamps, or seven Jewish candles, or five loaves and two fish in a story of Jesus.
- Children share their own experiences and feelings and those of others, and are supported in reflecting on them.

It is important to make as many cross curricular links as possible when developing RE across the Foundation Stage. Ideas of such links have been stated above and more can easily be formed.

5-7s Key Stage 1

Throughout **Key Stage 1**, pupils explore Christianity and at least one other principal religion, the recommended example is Islam.

They learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials.

They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families.

Pupils ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using their imaginations. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

Breadth of study

During the Key Stage, pupils should be taught the **knowledge, skills and understanding** through the following areas of study:

Religions and beliefs

- Christianity.
- At least one other principal religion which is recommended to be Islam or Hinduism (local demographics are the basis for this recommendation).
- A secular perspective.

Experiences and opportunities to be included in teaching RE

- Visiting places of worship and focusing on symbols and feelings.
- Listening and responding to visitors from local faith communities.
- Using their senses and having times of quiet reflection.
- Using art and design, music, dance and drama to develop their creative talents and imagination.
- Sharing their own beliefs, ideas and values and talking about their feelings and experiences
- Beginning to use ICT to explore religions and beliefs as practiced in the local and wider community.

Elements of the programme of study:

- **Believing:** what people believe about God, humanity and the natural world.
- **Story:** how and why some stories are sacred and important in religion.
- **Celebrations:** how and why celebrations are important in religion.
- **Symbols:** how and why symbols express religious meaning.
- **Leaders and teachers:** figures who have an influence on others locally, nationally and globally in religion.
- **Belonging:** where and how people belong and why belonging is important.
- **Myself:** who I am and my uniqueness as a person in a family and community.

The field of enquiry for 5-7s

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

Pupils should be taught to:

- Explore a range of religious stories and sacred writings.
- Talk about the meanings of stories and their importance in religion or belief.
- Know key facts about religions studied including beliefs, key leaders, significant places and objects;
- Identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives.
- Identify and suggest meanings for religious symbols and begin to use a range of religious words.

Being creative and enquiring into religions and beliefs

Pupils should be taught to:

- Name and explore a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion, noting similarities where appropriate.
- Be aware of the evidence of religion in their immediate environment.
- Explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the arts and communicate their responses.
- Ask and respond imaginatively to puzzling questions, communicating their ideas.
- Use different creative media to respond simply to questions about religion and belief.

Reflecting and responding to religion and belief

Pupils should be taught to:

- Reflect on and consider religious and spiritual feelings, thoughts about God, experiences and concepts such as worship, wonder, praise, thanks, concern, joy and sadness.
- Identify what matters to them and others, including religious viewpoints, reflect on their own experiences, communicate their responses and value the opinions of others.
- Develop and show respect for others views, religious and cultural backgrounds.
- Reflect on how spiritual and moral values relate to their own behaviour.
- Recognise that religious teachings and ideas make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

7-9s and 9-11s Key Stage 2

Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils learn about Christianity and at least two of the other principal religions, recognising the impact of religion and belief locally, nationally and globally.

They make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider the different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and beliefs and the importance of dialogue between them. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true. They communicate their ideas, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others in the light of their learning in Religious Education.

Breadth of study

During the Key Stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through the following areas of study:

Religions and beliefs

- Christianity.
- At least two other principal religions, normally selected from: Islam, Hinduism, Judaism (local demographics are the basis for this recommendation).
- A religious community with a significant local presence, where appropriate.
- A secular perspective.

Experiences and opportunities

- Encountering religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, and focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community.
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others.
- Considering a range of human experiences and feelings
- Reflecting on their own and others' insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning.
- Expressing and communicating their own and others' insights through art and design, music, dance, drama and ICT.
- Developing the use of ICT, particularly in enhancing pupils' awareness of religions and beliefs globally.

Elements of the programme of study

- Beliefs and questions:** how people's beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives.
- Teachings and authority:** what sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life.
- Worship, pilgrimage and sacred places:** where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites
- The journey of life and death:** why some occasions are sacred to believers, and what people think about life after death.
- Symbols and religious expression:** how religious and spiritual ideas are expressed.
- Inspirational people:** figures from whom believers find inspiration.

- religion and the individual:** what is expected of a person in following a religion or belief.
- religion, family and community:** how religious families and communities practise their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life.
- beliefs in action in the world:** how religions and beliefs respond to global issues of human rights, fairness, social justice and the importance of the environment.

The field of enquiry for 7-11s

Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief

Pupils should be taught to:

- Describe the key aspects of religion, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others.
- Describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions, and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected with, beliefs and teachings.
- Identify and begin to describe the similarities and differences within and between religion.
- Describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions.
- Use the right vocabulary and concepts in communicating their knowledge and understanding.

Being creative and enquiring into religions and beliefs

Pupils should be taught to:

- Investigate the evidence of religion in Oldham, Britain and the wider world.
- Explore creatively the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, understand why they are important in religion and note links between them.
- Use and interpret information about religions and beliefs from a range of sources.
- Seek answers to questions about how significant figures in religions and beliefs (e.g. founders, inspiring leaders) have demonstrated their beliefs and values.
- Find out about and debate the purposes and functions of key artefacts, places, symbols and symbolic language associated with the religions and beliefs studied.

Reflecting and responding to religion and belief

Pupils should be taught to:

- Reflect on what it means to belong to a member of a faith community, communicating their own and others responses.
- Respond to the challenges of commitment both in their own lives and within religious traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways; in Oldham, Britain and the wider world.
- Discuss their own and others views of religious truth and belief, expressing their own ideas.
- Reflect on ideas of right and wrong and their own and others responses to them.
- Reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others lives.

11-14s Key Stage 3

Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils extend their understanding of Christianity and at least two of the other principal religions in a local, national and global context.

They deepen their understanding of important beliefs, concepts and issues of truth and authority in religion. They apply their understanding of religious and philosophical beliefs, teachings and practices to a range of ultimate questions and ethical issues, with a focus on self awareness, relationships, rights and responsibilities. They enquire into and explain some personal, philosophical, theological and cultural reasons for similarities and differences in religious beliefs and values, both within and between religions. They interpret religious texts and other sources, recognising both the power and limitations of language and other forms of communication in expressing ideas and beliefs. They reflect on the impact of religion and belief in the world, considering both the importance of interfaith dialogue and the tensions that exist within and between religions and beliefs. They develop their evaluative skills, showing reasoned and balanced viewpoints when considering their own and others' responses to religious, philosophical and spiritual issues.

Breadth of study

During the Key Stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through the following areas of study:

Religions and beliefs

- The six principal religions represented in the UK these are: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.
- A religious community with a significant local presence, where appropriate.
- A secular perspective .

Experiences and opportunities

- Encountering people from different religious, cultural and philosophical groups, who can express a range of convictions on religious and ethical issues.
- Visiting, where possible, places of major religious significance and using opportunities in ICT to enhance pupils' understanding of religion.
- Discussing, questioning and evaluating important issues in religion and philosophy, including ultimate questions and ethical issues.
- Reflecting on and carefully evaluating their own beliefs and values and those of others in response to their learning in Religious Education, using reasoned, balanced arguments.
- Using a range of forms of expression (such as art and design, music, dance, drama, writing, ICT) to communicate their ideas and responses creatively and thoughtfully.
- Exploring the connections between Religious Education and other subject areas such as the arts, humanities, literature and science.

Elements of the programme of study:

- **Beliefs and concepts:** the key ideas and questions of meaning in religions, beliefs and philosophies, including issues related to God, truth, the world, human life, and life after death, explaining religious and non-religious views.
- **Authority:** exploring and explaining the impact of different sources of authority and how they inform believers' lives.
- **Expressions of spirituality:** how and why human self-understanding and experiences are expressed in a variety of forms.
- **Ethics and relationships:** questions and influences that inform ethical and moral choices, including forgiveness and issues of good and evil.
- **Religion and science:** exploring questions of origins and destiny and the relationship between religious and scientific understanding: issues of truth, explanation, meaning and purpose.
- **Rights and responsibilities:** what religions and beliefs say about human rights and responsibilities, social justice and citizenship, referring to different perspectives and actions from religious and non-religious communities.
- **Global issues:** what religions and beliefs say about the morality of health, wealth, war, animal rights and the environment.
- **Interfaith dialogue:** a study of relationships, conflicts and collaboration within and between religions and beliefs.

The field of enquiry for 11-14s

Knowing about and understanding religion and belief

- a) Understand and explain the differing impacts of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies.
- b) Analyse and explain how religious beliefs and ideas are transmitted by people, texts and traditions.
- c) Analyse arguments used when considering issues of truth in religion and philosophy.
- d) Discuss and evaluate how religious beliefs and teachings inform answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues.

Being creative and enquiring into religions and beliefs

- a) Gather answers to questions about who believes what and why?
- b) Use evidence to investigate the diversity of impacts of religion and belief in communities and societies.
- c) Investigate why people belong to faith communities, or choose not to, explaining creatively the reasons for diversity in religion and belief.
- d) Planning enquiries into historical and contemporary communities of religion and belief in Oldham and its neighbours.
- e) Supporting viewpoints about religious, spiritual and ethical questions with reasons, arguments and evidence.

Reflecting on and responding to religions and beliefs

- a) Reflect on the relationship between beliefs, teachings and ultimate questions, communicating their own ideas and using reasoned arguments.
- b) Develop a capacity for stillness and reflection in order to deepen understanding of what has been studied.
- c) Apply ideas for myself about how beliefs and values contribute to personal identity and the importance of the right to have different beliefs, values and lifestyle.
- d) Express insights into the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own ideas.
- e) Critically and personally evaluate responses to religious, spiritual and ethical issues in relation to religions and beliefs.
- f) Reflectively analyse and synthesise a range of ideas about the significance and value of religions and beliefs and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.

Throughout this phase, students analyse and interpret a wide range of religious, philosophical and ethical concepts in increasing depth.

They investigate issues of diversity within and between religions and the ways in which religion and spirituality are expressed in philosophy, ethics, science and the arts. They expand and balance their evaluations of the impact of religions on individuals, communities and societies, locally, nationally and globally. They understand the importance of dialogue between and among different religions and beliefs. They gain a greater understanding of how religion and belief contribute to community cohesion, recognising the various perceptions people have regarding the roles of religion in the world.

The field of enquiry for 14 -19s

Knowing and understanding religion and beliefs

Being creative and enquiring into religions and beliefs

Reflecting on and responding to religion and beliefs



Students should be taught to:

- investigate, study and interpret significant religious, philosophical and ethical issues, including the study of religious and spiritual experience, in light of their own sense of identity, experience and commitments.
- think rigorously and present coherent, widely informed and detailed arguments about beliefs, ethics, values and issues, drawing well-substantiated conclusions.
- develop their understanding of the principal methods by which religions and spirituality are studied.
- draw upon, interpret and evaluate the rich and varied forms of creative expression in religious life.
- use specialist vocabulary to evaluate critically both the power and limitations of religious language.
- reflect on, express and justify their own opinions in light of their learning about religion and their study of religious, philosophical, moral and spiritual questions.
- develop their own values and attitudes in order to recognise their rights and responsibilities in light of their learning about religion.
- relate their learning in Religious Education to the wider world, gaining a sense of personal autonomy in preparation for adult life.
- develop skills that are useful in a wide range of careers and in adult life generally, especially skills of critical enquiry, creative problem-solving, and communication in a variety of media.

What should schools do?

All schools must provide Religious Education to every student in accordance with legal requirements.

Religious Education is a statutory subject for all registered students, including students in the school sixth form, except those withdrawn by their parents. It must be made available in sixth-form colleges to students who wish to take it. Although it is not a requirement in colleges of further education, similar arrangements should apply.

Religious Education ages 14 – 19

While there is no legal requirement that students must sit public examinations, students deserve the opportunity to have their learning in the statutory curriculum subject of Religious Education accredited. Accreditation also raises standards of achievement because it motivates students.

Accreditation can be through courses leading to qualifications with the title 'Religious Studies' and/or other approved courses that require the study of philosophy, spirituality, religion and ethics. Schools are recommended to provide for Religious Education to be taught at the following ages through accredited qualifications so that, from the earliest opportunity, schools provide:

- for all students aged 14 – 16, at least one course in Religious Education or Religious Studies leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 of the Education Act 2012.
- for all students aged 16 – 19, at least one course in Religious Education or Religious Studies leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 that represents progression from 14 – 16.

How can schools fulfil their requirement to provide Religious Education to all registered students?

Schools should plan for continuity of provision of Religious Education that is progressive and rigorous from Key Stage 3 for all students. Schools can make this possible by providing access to discrete courses or units leading to qualifications that meet legal requirements regarding the study of Christianity, and/or other principal religions, and/or other beliefs, world views or philosophies, within the context of a pluralistic society.

All courses should provide opportunities within and beyond school for learning that involves first-hand experiences and activities involving people, places and events (for example the local area, places of worship and community activities, public meetings, and places of employment, education, training or recreation). Students will have different experiences of Religious Education according to the courses chosen.

Breadth of Study

During the Key Stage, students should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through the following studies of Christianity and any other one of the principal religions studied in earlier Key Stages. Courses from the awarding bodies approach RE and RS through a wide variety of papers, studying religions, ethics, philosophies and spirituality.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference strongly recommends that the content be delivered through a nationally accredited course, normally full or short course GCSE in Religious Studies or an entry level certificate.

16 – 19 RE for all

In the schools and colleges to which the Syllabus applies, there must be provision for Religious Education 16 – 19 in line with the law.

Provision for those who take AS and A2 qualifications, vocational qualifications and other qualifications must enable students to progress their understanding of spiritual, ethical, religious and philosophical questions in line with the 14 – 16 requirements of the Syllabus.

Provision through general studies, critical thinking, enrichment course and day conferences can all be effective in line with the legal requirements.





How do we know what pupils are achieving in RE?

Expectations, Assessment and Reporting

Oldham Council Agreed Syllabus Skills Pyramids for pupils aged 5-14

Learning skills: progression in reasoning, enquiry and reflection.

Three areas where teachers have asked for more and better guidance in RE are in relation to pupils' reasoning skills and in relation to pupils' enquiry skills and in relation to skills of reflection and deep thinking. The subject does indeed envisage a progression in these skills from the four year old to the 16 year old. These new descriptions of the reasoning, enquiry and reflection skills have been developed by advisers at REtoday, and they connect closely to the government's 2004 / 2008 eight level scales for RE. The 2010 project of QCDA to provide 'Assessing Pupil Progress' materials for RE and Foundation Subjects, which is available at the NATRE website is also useful because it exemplifies the standards with pupils' work.

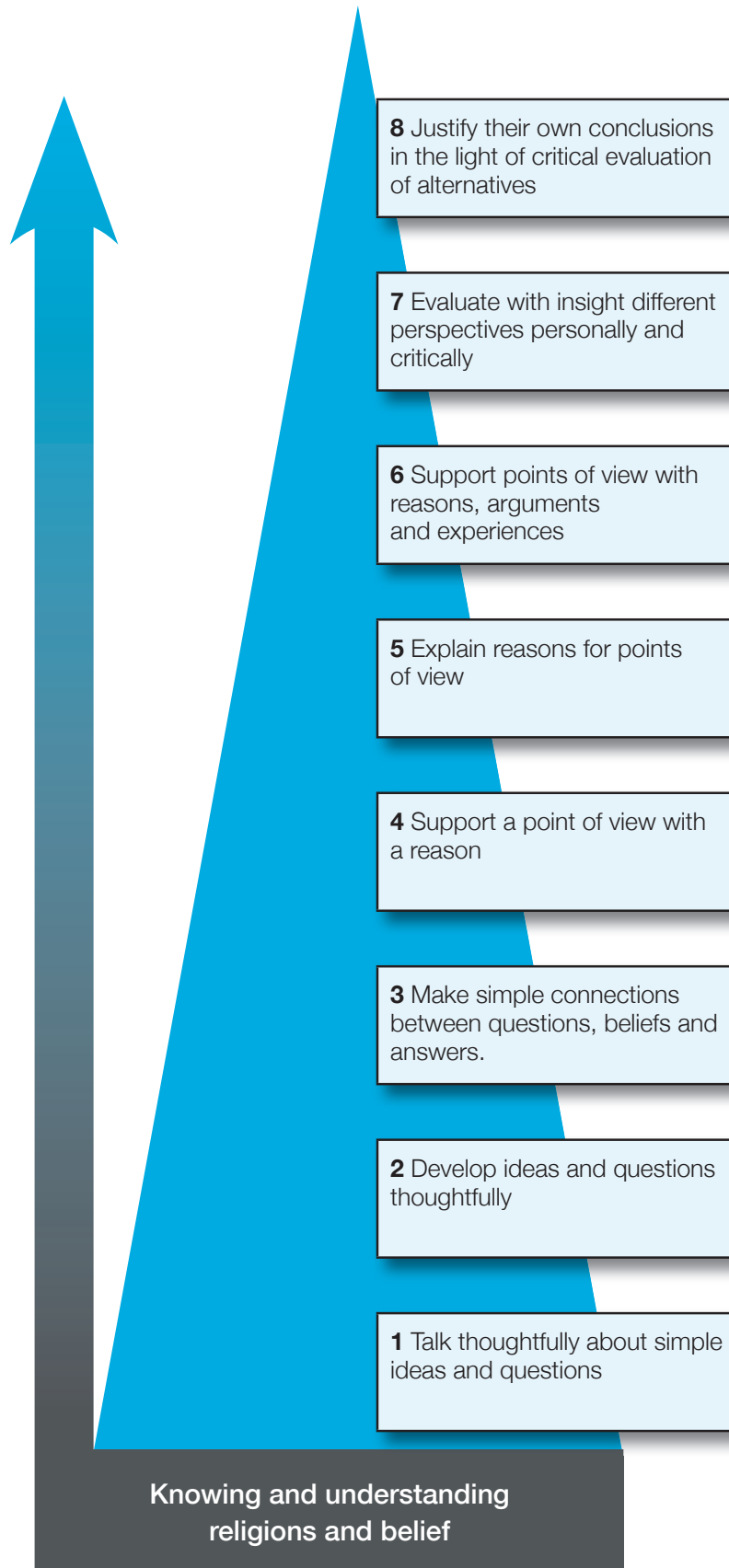
Do schools have to use levels in RE?

Changes to the National Curriculum in 2013 have made the use of eight level scales optional. In RE the continuing use of levels is strongly recommended by SACRE, in planning for high standards, setting challenging learning objectives and evaluating the outcomes of pupils work. RE's eight levels picture progression in learning, describe achievement and enable teachers to assess and report pupil's learning. They are provided in this Syllabus for these reasons.

Teachers are not asked to or expected to give pupils levels in these skills: they are a guide to progression and aim to help teachers to plan suitable learning challenges for different age groups. All the skills are to be applied in RE with reference to what pupils are learning. The progression envisaged here connects to Bloom's taxonomy.

In the examples of outcomes that follow, there is an overall balance between the different religions, but any one level may be exemplified with a **reference to one or two particular religions or beliefs. There is no intention to be prescriptive in these illustrative examples.**

Knowing about and understanding religions and belief: in RE pupils are increasingly enabled to...



<p>Knowledge and understanding: - reasoning skills: in RE pupils are increasingly enabled to be reasonable about religion:</p>	<p>Examples from the classroom of how this skill is developed:</p>
<p>1 Talk thoughtfully about simple ideas and questions</p>	<p>Pupils can respond with increasing confidence to questions about religious and spiritual topics, e.g. how do you know? Can you say what ‘God’ means? Does it help to say a prayer? Why do Muslim people like to do this? Does everyone have love and hate inside them?</p>
<p>2 Develop ideas and questions thoughtfully</p>	<p>Pupils can take a question given by the teacher and ask another one like it; they think for themselves about simple religious and spiritual ideas e.g. what matters to Hindu people at a Mandir? How do the Muslim people feel at Eid Al Fitr? Why was Jesus killed? What happens at Easter? Why do we have eggs? How do they use music, food or drama to remember?</p>
<p>3 Make simple connections between questions, beliefs and answers.</p>	<p>Pupils can make simple links between different religions or between aspects of a religion e.g connect the story of Jesus’ death with Easter, or the stories of Moses with Pesach, link up the practice of a funeral with belief about life after death, describe two varied answers to a religious question, link the word ‘atheist’ to belief that there is no god.</p>
<p>4 Support a point of view with a reason</p>	<p>Pupils can give a point of view e.g. Muslims should be allowed a day off for Eid; giving to charity is better than praying; people can achieve calmness through worship. They support their opinion with a reason that shows understanding.</p>
<p>5 Explain reasons for points of view</p>	<p>Pupils can work with diverse points of view, including their own, explaining reasons why people hold different viewpoints e.g: ‘the reason atheists say...’ ‘Christians believe... because...’ ‘I think that... for three reasons...’ ‘Conflict between religions is damaging because...’ ‘Religion can cause conflict because...’</p>
<p>6 Support points of view with reasons, arguments and experiences</p>	<p>Pupils can use personal experiences, structured arguments and reasoning to try to establish their ideas and others’ ideas with increasing conviction e.g. ‘There are three reasons why I believe respect is important...’ ‘My arguments in favour of life after death...’ ‘I think we would be better off without religion because... however, someone else might say...’</p>
<p>7 Evaluate with insight different perspectives personally and critically</p>	<p>Pupils can weigh up different points of view about religious issues from their own perspective, in the light of scholarly discussion e.g. ‘allowing religion to influence the law in a pluralistic country is desirable because... (developed argument)... is undesirable because... (developed argument)...’</p>
<p>8 Justify their own conclusions in the light of critical evaluation of alternatives</p>	<p>Pupils can create a compelling case for their own viewpoint while showing profound understanding of different viewpoints, using evidence creatively and accurately to analyse religious and spiritual disagreement e.g. ‘Some people argue that the idea of ‘inspired sacred text’ is incoherent because... Others analyse the issue from the point of view of psychology, noting the impact such texts can have, so...”</p>

These core skills are developed across the curriculum. In RE they will be applied to the religions and beliefs studied, in ways that give pupils increasing opportunities to respond for themselves and be reasonable about religion.

Creativity, Investigative and Enquiry Skills

RE values the development of the skills associated with curiosity, asking a range of questions, investigating things for myself and becoming a simple researcher. The subject is at its best when learners are creatively pursuing enquiries of their own, stimulated by compelling teaching.

These core skills are developed across the curriculum. In RE they will be applied to the religions and beliefs studied, in ways that give pupils increasing opportunities to respond for themselves and be reasonable about religion. Where pupils give evidence of these skills in their handling of questions about religions and beliefs, they are making progress. Teachers should set up ways of working in RE that enable these skills to flourish.

In RE pupils are increasingly enabled to:



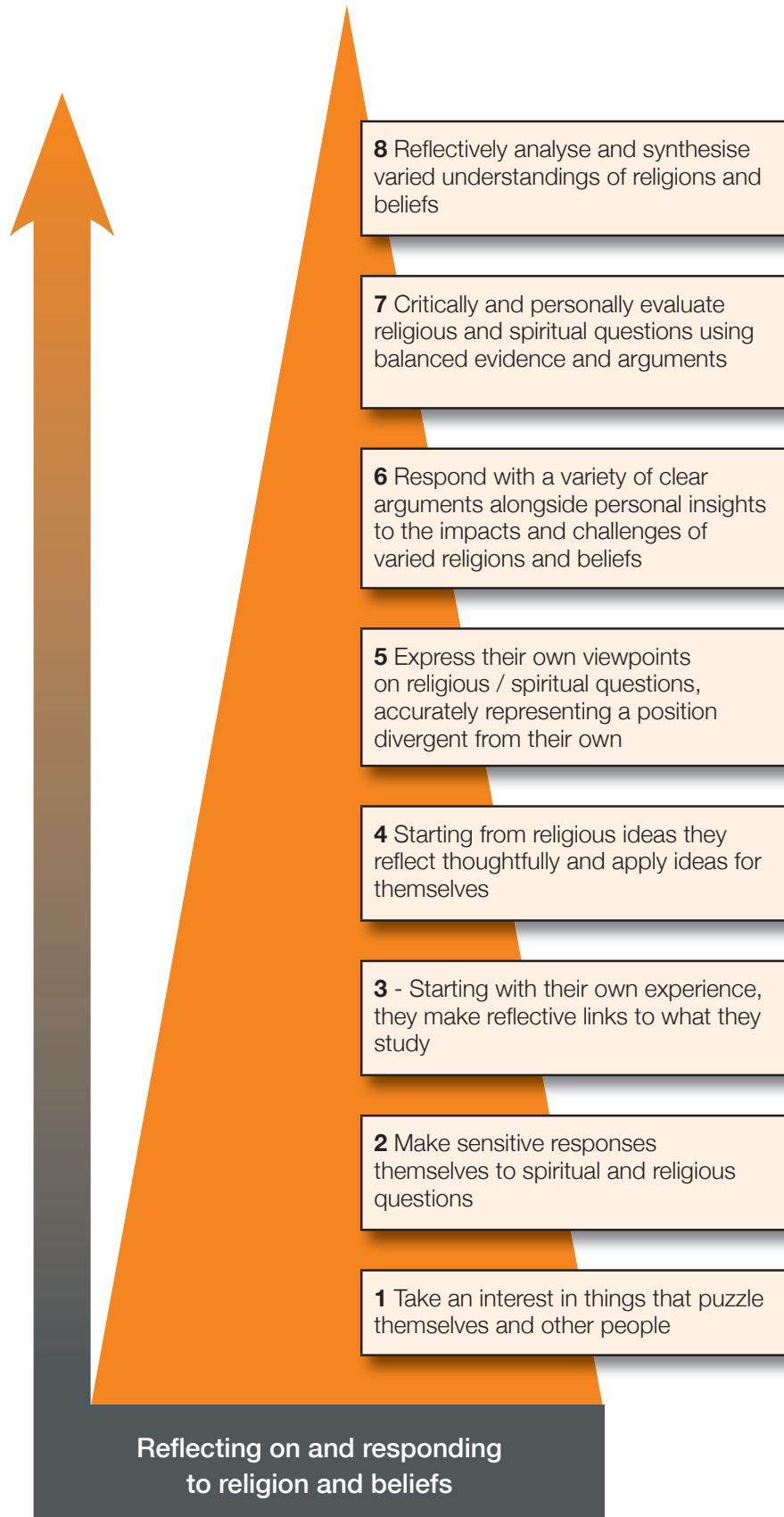
<p>Being creative and enquiring into religion and belief: in RE, in relation to religion, pupils are increasingly enabled to pursue questions, investigations and enquiries of their own, thinking and working creatively, developing ways to find answers, understand perspectives and evaluate arguments:</p>	<p>Examples from the classroom of how this skill is developed:</p>
<p>1 Be curious / ask about / take an interest in religion and belief</p>	<p>Pupils can ask a question, show an interest or think and talk about what puzzles them to do with religion eg. Where do we come from? What do people celebrate? Why do some people do 'that'? (Any religious practice might be relevant)</p>
<p>2 Ask questions of their own about religion</p>	<p>Pupils can take a stimulus from religion and belief (a story, a practice, a place of worship) and make up some questions of their own connected to it e.g. What happens in this church? What shows this is a mosque?</p>
<p>3 Ask good questions of their own about religion and find and seek and consider answers</p>	<p>Pupils can engage with a religious topic by asking questions about it, and select or discover some answers to their questions e.g. What happens at Divali / Easter / Eid al Fitr? How can we find out what people feel? Why do people read the same book every day (e.g. Bible, Qur'an, Bhagavad Gita)?</p>
<p>4 Investigate by gathering, selecting, organising or refining questions and ideas about religion</p>	<p>Pupils can collect a range of possible answers to a religious, spiritual or ethical question. They can decide thoughtfully how to pursue an answer to an investigative question. They can identify varied answers e.g. Why are some people so poor? What do religions do about poverty?</p>
<p>5 Suggest lines of enquiry and plan investigations into religion and belief</p>	<p>Pupils can take a religious or spiritual issue and begin to shape an investigation that will teach them more about the topic for themselves. They make plans to find thoughtful and reasonable answers to religious and spiritual questions e.g. How could we find out what happens when people die?</p>
<p>6 Plan and pursue diverse lines of enquiry, supporting arguments with relevant evidence</p>	<p>Pupils can simply research a religious or spiritual question, gathering supporting arguments and relevant evidence; they can follow through an enquiry for themselves e.g. How can I investigate different views on the sanctity of life? What arguments support these different views, so strongly held?</p>
<p>7 Initiate and carry through independent enquiries, critically evaluating evidence and ideas</p>	<p>Pupils can research complex religious issues and questions for themselves, using some of the different methods by which religion is studied (e.g. historical, textual, philosophical). They weigh up evidence reasonably and evaluate enquiries and issues effectively e.g. enquire independently into whether a war can ever be just, and why pacifism matters to some religious people, but not others.</p>
<p>8 Plan and carry out independent critical research, drawing balanced conclusions from wide ranging evidence.</p>	<p>Pupils can research independently and analyse questions and issues in the light of research. They draw balanced conclusions to their investigations by synthesising their understanding of diversity and method e.g. research and draw balanced conclusions about issues of racial and religious intolerance in Britain today.</p>

Where pupils give evidence of these skills in their handling of questions about religions and beliefs, they are making progress. Teachers should set up ways of working in RE that enable these skills to flourish.

Engaging, reflecting and responding

RE values the provision of opportunities for learners to engage with spiritual and religious questions about God and humanity for themselves. Through processes of critical reflection learners develop their ability to connect their own experiences and responses to the religious material they study with increasing rigour. The subject is at its best when these processes of learning from religion are closely linked to the gathering of information, understanding and critical reasoning.

In RE pupils are increasingly enabled to:



<p>Engaging, reflecting and responding in RE: in relation to religion and belief pupils are increasingly enabled to build interesting links and connections between their own experience, ideas and views of the world and the religions and beliefs they are learning about. They develop their abilities to respond sensitively and express insights and perspectives of their own.</p>	<p>Examples: there are, of course, thousands of different examples, but we suggest just a couple here.</p>
<p>1 Take an interest in things that puzzle themselves and other people</p>	<p>Children ask lots of questions about a dead frog that they find in the school grounds; do frogs go to heaven? Can we have a funeral? Why do frogs die? Children ask ‘Why does Ahmed go to the mosque school as well as to ordinary school?’ Why can’t you see God? What does God look like?</p>
<p>2 Make sensitive responses themselves to spiritual and religious questions</p>	<p>Teacher asks ‘Can you think of different ways we show we are thankful? Who do you know who is a grateful person? Is praying a thankful thing to do? Is being generous sometimes a thankful thing to do? Children talk sensitively about a range of examples of thankfulness.</p>
<p>3 Starting with their own experience, they make reflective links to what they study</p>	<p>Learning about some of the pillars of Islam, pupils connect their own beliefs, daily intentions and willingness to be generous to the practice of shahadah, salah and zakah. Pupils simply relate their own experience of celebration to the practice of Eid Al Fitr.</p>
<p>4 Starting from religious ideas they reflect thoughtfully and apply ideas for themselves</p>	<p>Pupils explore their own commitments in discussion in relation to the commitments taken on by Sikhs (Amrit), Buddhists (monastic practice) and Christians (Believers’ Baptism). Pupils contrast a civil wedding with a religious wedding, noting who prefers which and why.</p>
<p>5 Express their own viewpoints on religious / spiritual questions, accurately representing a position divergent from their own</p>	<p>Pupils consider a spiritual / ethical question such as ‘Why does it matter what happens to a dead body?’ or ‘Why is lying bad for the liar?’ or ‘Is abortion always wrong?’ They explain the reasons why different religions and beliefs take different views on these issues, expressing their own views clearly.</p>
<p>6 Respond with a variety of clear arguments alongside personal insights to the impacts and challenges of varied religions and beliefs</p>	<p>Pupils thoughtfully argue the case for their own view of a religious question e.g. What evidence for life after death, reincarnation or rebirth impresses me? Developing insights of their own into different religious perspectives from for example Buddhism, Islam and Hindu tradition. Pupils respond to the impact of the challenges of views they do not agree with honestly.</p>
<p>7 Critically and personally evaluate religious and spiritual questions using balanced evidence and arguments</p>	<p>Pupils critically evaluate the idea that religion makes a positive contribution to cohesion in local society. Pupils use balanced argument to explain their ideas about the place of religion in national life. Pupils argue effectively for and against their interpretation of how individuals come to be religious teachers or leaders of their faith communities: should it be heredity or holiness? Learning or election?</p>
<p>8 Reflectively analyse and synthesise varied understandings of religions and beliefs</p>	<p>Pupils analyse reasons why prayer remains common in secular Britain, bringing together ideas from philosophy and psychology to consider: What do different faiths mean by prayer? They account for their own ideas about what different faiths mean by ‘prayer’ and how people think that praying changes their lives. Do people who don’t follow a religious tradition do anything similar or equivalent to prayer?</p>

Where pupils give evidence of these skills in their handling of questions about religions and beliefs, they are making progress. Teachers should set up ways of working in RE that enable these skills to flourish.

Assessment and Achievement

Assessment for Learning Described for Teachers of RE

This description of assessment for learning may be helpful for teachers who are seeking to develop better practice in continuous assessment

Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. RE in the Oldham Council Agreed Syllabus specially needs assessment for learning to clarify standards, plan progression and enable learners to see the progress they are making.

Assessment for learning in RE:

- **Is part of effective planning:** teachers plan lessons with assessment criteria from the RE eight level scale in mind. These criteria should be shared with learners in classroom friendly language and in feedback on work related to the criteria.
- **Focuses on how students learn:** lesson planning should take into account the study and thinking skills students need to acquire and practice in order to complete tasks as much as even more than subject content. The skills of RE thus inform assessment.
- **Is central to classroom practice:** in lessons where teachers talk with students about their learning and make decisions together about the next steps forward, good assessment practice is already taking place. Learning how to learn in RE (metacognition) becomes more significant than merely learning new words about religions.
- **Is a key professional skill:** teachers need to be given opportunities to develop their understanding of RE assessment in initial and continuing professional development. The Syllabus guidance on assessment provides some first steps for this. An extensive set of exemplary 'I can...' statements are provided in the Agreed Syllabus support materials.
- **Is sensitive and constructive:** diagnostic marking should reflect on the work, not the person. Confidence and enthusiasm for learning in RE should be built up, not dented by teacher comment. Assessment should emphasise progress and achievement in relation to specific RE objectives. Praise that is real is a motivator, and an incentive.
- **Motivates:** evidence suggests that assessment can motivate learning when it protects learner autonomy, provides some choice and constructive feedback, creates opportunity for self-direction. Avoiding a repeated 'failure and blame' cycle is a key sensitivity in RE's uses of assessment for learning.
- **Promotes understanding of goals and criteria:** learners will increasingly understand what they are trying to achieve when they are involved in setting goals and identifying criteria. The criteria need to be expressed in the grassroots, classroom friendly language of 'I can...', so that pupils know increasingly clearly what progress in RE means for them.
- **Helps learners know how to improve:** learners need clear and specific feedback in order to improve their work. Setting targets for improvement to pupils, using comment-only marking is most effective, especially when related to the specific RE objectives of a task or unit of work.

- **Develops the capacity for self-assessment:** by involving learners in weighing up their own skills through peer and self assessment in RE.
- **Recognises all educational achievement:** the positive emphasis in assessment for learning can enable any pupil – all pupils – of all abilities to see progress in their work in RE.

Using an Eight Level Scale in RE: Guidance and Requirements

In this Syllabus, the purposes of assessing RE are to be those concerned to inform teaching and learning. There is no intention to use RE assessment information for purposes associated with comparability or accountability. Assessment in RE is for learning.

The eight level scale given below is based upon and developed from the 2008 syllabus.

QCDA (2010) identified the field of enquiry for RE as:

- learning about religion (knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, practices and lifestyles and of ways of expressing meaning);
- learning from religion (the skills of asking and responding to questions of identity, belonging, diversity, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments).

This is compatible with the description of the field of enquiry identified by the Oldham Council Agreed Syllabus Conference, represented in this Syllabus.

This Syllabus requires schools to assess and report to parents upon pupils' attainment and progress in Religious Education annually and at the end of each of Key Stages 1 - 4, in line with national reporting requirements. Schools are not however required to use the scale given below. If a school decides not to use the scale, other appropriate ways of reporting each pupil's attainment and progress, consistent with the Syllabus overall, must be put in place.

The use of the levels to inform expectations about what children will achieve at particular Key Stages should be approached with caution: the Syllabus assumes a minimum of 5% of curriculum time for RE, and where this is not allowed, achievement will surely be affected. Nonetheless, where provision is in line with the requirements of the Syllabus, a very large proportion of children's achievements may be expected to be as follows:

Key Stage 1: Pupils will be working from levels one to three. The expectation is that most pupils will be achieving at Level Two at the end of Key Stage 1.

Key Stage 2: Pupils will be working from levels two to five. The expectation is that most pupils will be achieving at Level Four at the end of Key Stage 2.

Key Stage 3: Pupils will be working from Levels three to seven. The expectation is that most pupils will be achieving at Level Six at the end of Key Stage 3.

By the end of Year 9, some high achieving pupils will be achieving at level eight, and a small number will register exceptional performance.

For pupils and students in the 14 – 19 age range, teachers' expectations, assessment and reporting to parents may be informed by the eight level scale, and by GCSE and A level RS grade descriptors from the appropriate awarding bodies.

Using an Eight Level Scale in RE: 12 key points.

1. The **professional judgement of the teacher** of RE about the pupils' achievements is the most important factor in the assessment process.
2. The Agreed Syllabus eight level scale for RE is to be used to set high standards of learning. It is intended to provide teachers with a **supportive professional tool**, and to enable teachers to be confident in their RE work.
3. Pupils **may achieve different levels** with regard to the three elements of RE's work. Reporting should reflect the level which best fits their overall achievement.
4. In **planning**, teachers will find that using the levels provides helpful focus for a differentiated curriculum that enables continuity and progression towards the highest possible standards for each pupil.
5. **Learning activities** planned for particular classes will often focus upon a small or particular aspect of pupils' attainment, or a single phrase within the level descriptor. Again, the teacher's professional judgement is central to monitoring pupils' progress.
6. It is good practice, when assigning a level to a piece of evidence of a pupil's achievement to base the decision upon the teacher's judgement of the **'best fit' description**. A single piece of work will only rarely show achievement with reference to the whole of the level descriptor.
7. Pupils will usually demonstrate some parts or aspects of a level before they can consistently and securely achieve all that the level descriptor includes. They are **working towards** the levels described.
8. **Teachers working together**, for example in the same school, or in a 'pyramid' family or cluster of schools, will often find it helpful to discuss the application of the levels to pupils' work.
9. There are some significant difficulties attached to using the levels for regular feedback to children about their week-to-week work. For example, there is little incentive in getting Level Three' week after week, and pupils will not learn much from such general feedback. Teachers are encouraged to give pupils **informative, clear and diagnostic feedback**, specific to RE objectives, through the ongoing marking of work. Setting targets for improvement is effective.
10. **Schools may judge** that it is appropriate to report levels to parents at the end of each year or Key Stage.
11. This Syllabus requires schools to give parents an **annual report** on each child's attainment and progress in Religious Education, but use of the levels is not statutory.
12. RE has important **aspects which are not open to individual levelled assessment**. These include RE's contributions to providing opportunities for spiritual development, or to developing positive attitudes to those who hold different beliefs to oneself. The Agreed Syllabus recognises this. Schools may want to find ways to credit and celebrate such achievements.

The Oldham SACRE eight level scale for RE

<p>Description: Key skills for each level</p>	<p>Pupils develop in RE their abilities to know and understand about religions and beliefs, to find out about religions and beliefs creatively and critically and to reflect and respond for themselves to questions about religions and beliefs. These achievements can be planned, taught and demonstrated in relation to these eight level statements.</p>
<p>1 Recognising and talking about religion</p>	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use some religious words and phrases to recognise and name features of religious life and practice. • Can recall religious stories, actions, celebrations and recognise religious symbols, words, gestures and artefacts. • Talk about their own experiences, feelings and celebrations. • Talk about what they find interesting or puzzling. • Talk about what is of value and concern to themselves and to others.
<p>2 Retelling stories, identifying religious materials and asking questions</p>	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use religious words and phrases to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people. • Begin to show awareness of similarities in religions. • Retell and suggest meanings for religious stories, actions and symbols. • Identify how religion is expressed in different ways. • Ask, and respond sensitively to questions about their own and others' experiences and feelings. • Recognise that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer. • In relation to matters of right and wrong, recognise their own values and those of others.
<p>3 Describing religion and making links to their own experience</p>	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a developing religious vocabulary to describe some key features of religions, recognising similarities and differences. • Make links between beliefs and sources, including religious stories and sacred texts. • Begin to identify the impact religion has on believers' lifestyles. • Describe some forms of religious expression. • Identify what influences them, making links between aspects of their own and others' experiences. • Ask important questions about religious beliefs and lifestyles, linking their own and others' responses. • Make links between values and commitments, and their own attitudes and behaviour.
<p>4 Showing understanding of religion and applying ideas themselves</p>	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, authorities, practices, beliefs, lifestyles, ideas, feelings and experiences. • Make links between them, and describe some similarities and differences both within and between religions. • Describe the impact of religion on people's lifestyles. • Suggest meanings for a range of forms of religious expression. • Raise and suggest answers to questions of sacredness, identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. • Apply their ideas to their own and other people's lives simply. • Describe what inspires and influences themselves and others.

5	Explaining the impact of religion and expressing their own views of religious questions	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an increasingly wide religious vocabulary to explain the impact of beliefs upon individuals and communities. • Describe why people belong to religions. • Know that similarities and differences illustrate distinctive beliefs within and between religions and suggest possible reasons for this. • Explain how religious sources are used to provide authoritative answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues, recognising diversity in forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression, within and between religions. • Pose and suggest answers to, questions of sacredness, identity, belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments, relating them to their own and others' lives. • Explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own and others' views on the challenges of belonging to a religion.
6	Explaining and interpreting religion and expressing their own insights	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use religious and philosophical vocabulary to explain religions and beliefs, explaining reasons for diversity within and between them. • Explain why the impact of religions and beliefs upon individuals, communities and societies varies. • Interpret sources and arguments, explaining different answers, from different traditions to ultimate questions and ethical issues. • Interpret the significance of different forms of religious spiritual and moral expression. • Use reasoning and example to express insights into the relationships between beliefs, authorities teachings and world issues. • Express insight into their own and others' views on questions of sacredness, identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth. • Consider the challenges of belonging to a religion in the contemporary world, focusing on values and commitments.
7	Beginning to critically evaluate religious questions and evaluating responses to religious questions insightfully	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a religious and philosophical vocabulary to show a coherent understanding of a range of religions and beliefs. • Show a coherent understanding of issues, values and questions of authority, meaning and truth. • Account for the influence of history and culture on aspects of religious life and practice. • Account for differences between people within the same religion or tradition. • Show a coherent understanding of how religion, spirituality and ethics are studied. • Evaluate with insight questions of meaning, purpose and truth and ethical issues. • Evaluate the significance of religious and other views for understanding questions of human relationships, sacredness, belonging, identity, society, values and commitments, using appropriate evidence and examples.
8	Analysing and contextualising their understanding of religion and justifying their views	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a religious and philosophical vocabulary to analyse a range of religions and beliefs. • Analyse religious material with reference to historical, cultural and social contexts. • Critically evaluate the impact of religions and beliefs on differing communities and societies. • Analyse differing interpretations of religious spiritual and moral sources and authorities, using some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied. • Analyse varied forms of religious spiritual and moral expression. • Justify their views on a wide range of viewpoints on questions of sacredness, identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. • Justify their views about religious spiritual and ethical questions from evidence, arguments, reflections and examples, providing a detailed evaluation into the perspectives of others.

Exceptional Performance:
Synthesise effectively and draw balanced conclusions

Pupils:

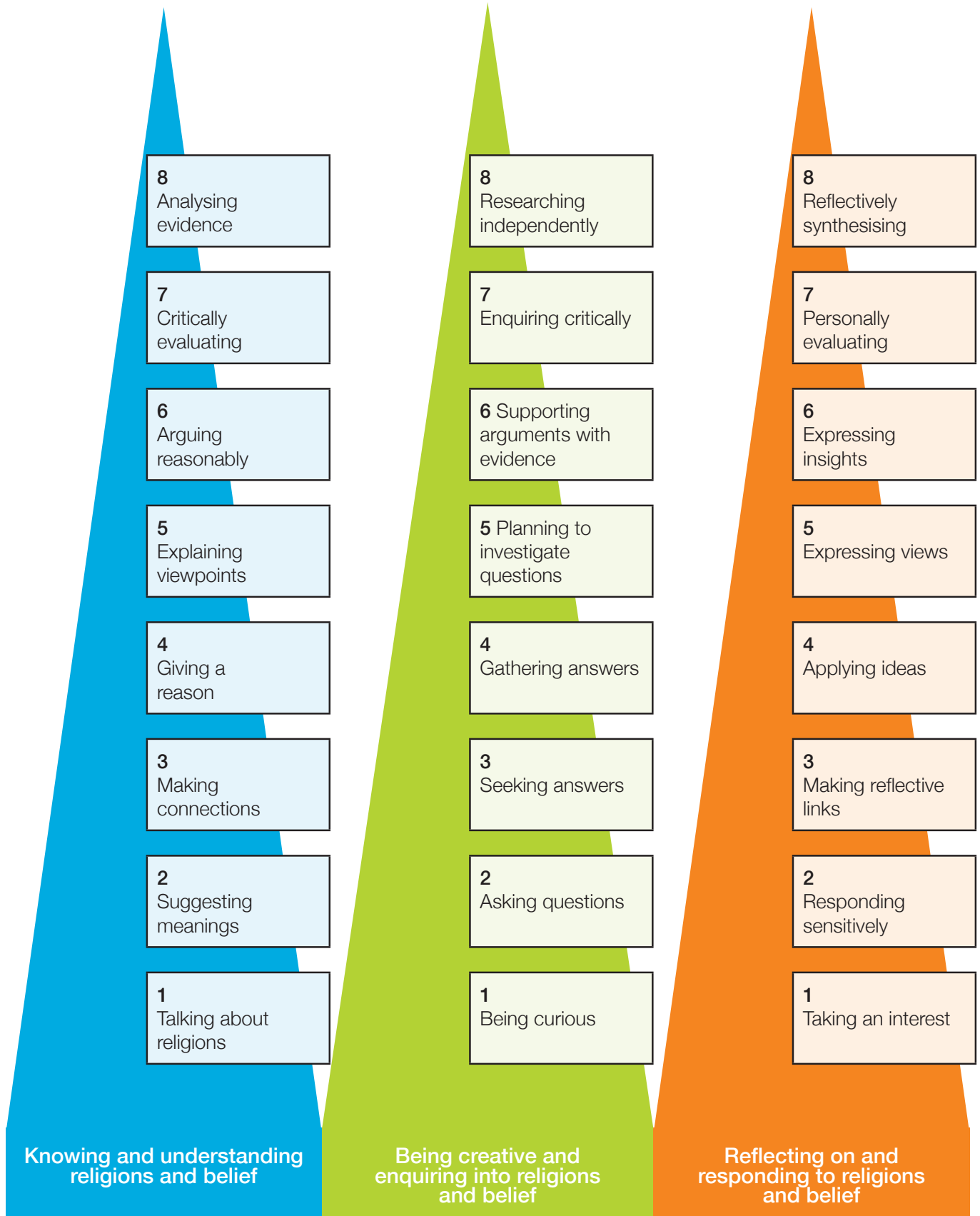
- Use a complex religious, moral and philosophical vocabulary to provide a consistent and detailed analysis of religions and beliefs.
- Evaluate in depth the importance of religious diversity in a plural society.
- Clearly recognise the extent to which the impact of religion and beliefs on different communities and societies has changed over time.
- Provide a detailed analysis of how religious, spiritual and moral sources are interpreted in different ways, evaluating the principal methods by which religion and spirituality are studied.
- Synthesise effectively their accounts of the varied forms of religious spiritual and moral expression.
- Analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose, truth and values and commitments.
- Give independent, well informed and highly reasoned insights into their own and others perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, providing well-substantiated and balanced conclusions.





Additional guidance and support materials on the use of the eight level scale, including a set of exemplary 'I can...' statements, can be found in the guidance section of the **Oldham Agreed Syllabus Support Materials**.



Pyramids of Key Skills for assessing RE

This simple diagram expresses the progression pupils make in RE learning. It is intended to clarify and make explicit the progression of skills which the Agreed Syllabus uses to enable all pupils to achieve in RE. Good teaching will share the appropriate skills with pupils and make explicit opportunities, through well designed learning opportunities for pupils to acquire, practice and develop these central skills in RE.



P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use single elements of communication e.G. Words, gestures, signs or symbols, to express their feelings. • Show they understand 'yes' and 'no'. • Begin to respond to the feelings of others e.G. Matching their emotions and laughing when another pupil is laughing. • Join in with activities by initiating ritual actions and sounds. • Demonstrate an appreciation of stillness and quiet. 	<p>Involvement (active/ intentional)</p> 
P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences and communicate simple meanings. • Respond to a variety of new religious experiences e.G. Involving music, drama, colour, lights, food or tactile objects. • Take part in activities involving two or three other learners. • May also engage in moments of individual reflection. 	
P6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express and communicate their feelings in different ways. • Respond to others in group situations and co-operate when working in small groups. • Listen to, and begin to respond to, familiar religious stories, poems and music, and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals. • Carry out ritualised actions in familiar circumstances. • Show concern and sympathy for others in distress e.G. Through gestures, facial expressions or by offering comfort. • Start to be aware of their own influence on events and other people. 	<p>Gaining skills and under- standing</p> 
P7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to and follow religious stories. • Can communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases. • Can evaluate their own work and behaviour in simple ways, beginning to identify some actions as right and wrong on the basis of consequences. • Can find out about aspects of religion through stories, music or drama, answer questions and communicate their responses. • May communicate their feelings about what is special to them e.G. Through role play. • Can begin to understand that other people have needs and to respect these. • Can make purposeful relationships with others in group activity. 	
P8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can listen attentively to religious stories or to people talking about religion. • Can begin to understand that religious and other stories carry moral and religious meaning. • Are increasingly able to communicate ideas, feelings or responses to experiences or retell religious stories. • Can communicate simple facts about religion and important people in religions. • Can begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts, symbols and places. • Can reflect on what makes them happy, sad, excited or lonely. • Are able to demonstrate a basic understanding of what is right and wrong in familiar situations. • Are often sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and show respect for themselves and others. • Treat living things and their environment with care and concern. 	