

Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education Wrexham LA (2019)

Ian Roberts
Head of Education
Wrexham County Borough Council

Foreword:

Religious Education is part of the basic curriculum and therefore sits outside the current National Curriculum. The RE curriculum in Wrexham schools remains locally determined by the LA and Wrexham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). This means that all schools must provide Religious Education according to the Wrexham agreed syllabus, and the LA must monitor that statutory requirements are being adhered to by schools.

The National Exemplar Framework for RE, for 3 to 19 year olds was adopted as the locally agreed syllabus for Wrexham in 2008. It was re-adopted in 2013 and at its meeting on 17 October 2018 Wrexham SACRE formed an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review this again. The decision of the ASC was that the National Exemplar Framework for RE for 3 to 19 year olds should stay in place for the time being as the agreed syllabus for Wrexham and must be followed by all maintained schools in Wrexham.

At its meeting on 14 February 2019 an Agreed Syllabus Conference was re-convened to confirm this decision and to clarify some of the details in the additional document previously drawn up in 2008 to support the National Exemplar Framework for RE as the Wrexham agreed syllabus. This document outlines the changes recommended to the local authority and replaces the original additional document.

Wrexham SACRE plans to reconvene an Agreed Syllabus Conference in the near future once the new curriculum has been published and is available to schools in order to recommend a brand new agreed syllabus to the Local Authority.

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The Wrexham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Introduction:

Wrexham SACRE has re-adopted **the National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education, for 3 – 19-year-olds in Wales** as its Agreed Syllabus. In addition, the Local Authority, as recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 14th February 2019, has decided to retain the specificity outlined in this document, including some important amendments to the section on time for RE. There is therefore a responsibility for schools to adhere to this specificity as an extension of the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education in Wrexham.

The National Exemplar Framework for RE supports schools in ensuring that RE has a continued focus on the learner that:

- Ensures that appropriate skills development is woven throughout the curriculum
- Has assessment for learning principles and vocabulary embedded within
- Focuses on continuity and progression 3 –19
- Offers reduced subject content with an increased focus on skills
- Is flexible
- Is Relevant to the 21st century
- Support national policies including bilingualism, Curriculum Cymreig, Europe and the World, equal opportunities, food and fitness, education for sustainable development and global citizenship, and the world of work and entrepreneurship

The National Exemplar Framework for RE has been written to comply with the legal obligations for a locally agreed syllabus which require:

- The promotion of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, including those in nursery settings.
- Appropriate provision for all registered pupils in every maintained school in Wales, including those in reception settings and those up to the age of 19.
- That Christianity should be studied at each key stage and that the other principal religions should be represented in Great Britain.
- That religious education be non-denominational, but teaching about a particular catechism or formulary is not prohibited (i.e. similarities and differences in beliefs, teachings and practices of the religious traditions can be studied.)

The National Exemplar Framework for RE is not intended to be a scheme of work. It provides a framework within which each school can best devise a programme of RE to fulfil the stated aims of the agreed syllabus.

Schools should take note of the following points:

- The syllabus makes clear, in accordance with statutory requirements, that Christianity is the predominant core and should be taught in all phases.
- It is important, however, that all pupils are aware that both in Wales and in

world society there are living faiths besides Christianity. The Syllabus therefore refers to the major faiths of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

- All religions studied should be accorded equal respect.

Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the LA, School Governors and Headteachers to ensure that Religious Education is taught in accordance with the agreed syllabus to every pupil registered at the school.

Under the Education Acts, the LA must provide local arrangements for dealing with complaints. The SACRE will therefore consider complaints about the provision of or lack of provision of Religious Education. This arrangement will give parents and others the opportunity to ensure the proper provision of Religious Education in the schools. It is also the duty of the SACRE to advise the LEA on matters that include “methods of teaching, the choice of teaching materials and the provision of teacher training.”

Religious Education in voluntary controlled schools is given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. However, if parents so request, arrangements should be made for Religious Education to be provided for their children in accordance with any trust deed, or the practice followed before the school became controlled.

Religious Education in voluntary aided schools is given in accordance with the trust deed of the school and the appropriate guidance as given by the religious authority pertaining to the school. However, if parents so request, arrangements should be made for Religious Education to be provided for their children in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Rights of Withdrawal

Under the Education Acts, parents have rights of withdrawal. Parents of a pupil at any maintained school may personally request that their child be wholly or partly excused from receiving Religious Education given in the school in accordance with the basic curriculum. It is important that schools ensure parents are aware of the aims and nature of Religious Education and that an opportunity is given to discuss fully with parents the implications of withdrawal, including the problems arising with integrated and thematic approaches. The rights of teachers and headteachers are also safeguarded.

Curriculum Time

Schools must ensure that religious education is a clearly identifiable aspect of the curriculum and that continuity and progression are built into learning plans. In planning and organising the whole curriculum, **equal weighting** must be given to religious education and other non-core subjects, in order to fulfil statutory requirements at each key stage. This time does not include time given to Collective Worship.

At KS4 schools must ensure that sufficient time is allocated to fulfil the programmes of study within the Wrexham Agreed Syllabus (National Exemplar Framework for RE) in a meaningful, challenging and engaging way. Where specific curriculum time is not provided for RE, the school must be able to provide evidence of where the programme of study for KS4 within the agreed syllabus is covered elsewhere in the curriculum.

At KS4 where GCSE Religious Studies (Full Course or Short Course) is offered as an examination as an option, and follows an accredited GCSE, the time allocation for the examination work should be appropriate and in line with the recommended GLH for the qualification by the awarding body. Similarly, if a school offers a Short Course or Full Course in Religious Studies as the statutory Religious Education programme, they will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, if the time allocation for the examination work is appropriate and in line with the recommended GLH for the qualification by the awarding body, and the course they follow considers more than one religious tradition.

At KS5, schools should ensure that they meet the requirements of the Post 16 National Exemplar Framework of Study, which can be covered in a variety of ways. For example, through Religious Education Conference Days.

Resources

A wide range of resources should be available including textbooks and reference books, audio-visual equipment and resources, religious artefacts, access to IT equipment, adequate library provision and grants for out of school visits. Schools should also make use of the Wrexham RE Resources Library based at the St Giles' Centre for RE in Wrexham. In secondary schools specialist rooms should be allocated.

Staffing and In- Service Training

A Coordinator for RE or a Head of Department should be designated in all schools. Fully accessible resources and regular programmes of in-service training should be provided.

Teacher role

The teacher's principal responsibility is to help pupils to fulfil the main aims of the syllabus. These aims are educational, leading the pupil both to an understanding of religion and its variety of beliefs, practices and underlying values and to an appreciation of the part that faith plays in life. The teacher must take a non-confessional approach to the study of any faith or denomination.

Sensitivity to the beliefs, values and practices of others should always be a consideration. The question of whether or not a teacher makes known his or her personal beliefs is a matter for the individual teacher. A teacher's convictions or lack

of conviction, expressed to the class or not, should not prejudice the educational approach taken to the subject.

Religious Education is not indoctrination. "Education" seeks, amongst other things, to impart knowledge, deepen understanding, encourage informed judgements and develop positive attitudes and values. There is no place in Religious Education for the coercion of a child into any particular faith or denomination, or conversely into non at all.

Religious Education is a unique subject that provides a particular perspective on a multitude of issues, and this stems from the concepts of faith and commitment, which are at the heart of religion. The religious dimension gives greater breadth and depth to that which is personal, spiritual, social and moral and this should be recognised in any form of combined or integrated course. Religious Education is not the same as Personal and Social Education (PSE). In following a course of Religious Education each child and young person will be considering and developing personal beliefs, acquiring social skills and making moral judgements but this is no more than what should happen in all areas of the curriculum.

Religious Education in the twenty first century encourages pupils to explore a range of philosophical, theological, ethical and spiritual questions in a reflective, analytical, balanced way that stimulates questioning and debate. It also focuses on understanding humanity's quest for meaning, the positive aspects of multi-faith / multicultural understanding and pupils' own understanding and responses to life and religion.

Religions to be studied

Phase/ Key Stage	Compulsory	Choice	Comments
Foundation	Christianity (as the predominant core) And one other religion	Either: Judaism or Hinduism	Additional elements of other religions may also be included from time to time, if appropriate to the topics being followed.
2	Christianity (as the predominant core) and two other religions Key Stage 2 planning should take account of religions studied at Foundation Phase	Judaism Hinduism Islam	Additional elements of other religions may also be included from time to time, if appropriate to the topics being followed.
3	Christianity (as the predominant core) and three other religions Key Stage 3 planning should take account of religions studied in feeder primary schools.	Judaism Hinduism Islam Buddhism Sikhism	Additional elements of other religions may also be included from time to time, if appropriate to the topics being followed.
4	Christianity (as the predominant core) and at least three other religions	Judaism Hinduism Islam Buddhism Sikhism	Where a school follows an accredited GCSE Short Course in Religious Studies as the statutory Religious Education programme, they will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, if the course they follow considers more than one religious tradition.
5	Christianity (as the predominant core) and other religions as appropriate	Appropriate aspects of the other religions	Where a school follows the signposting for Religious Education in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification as the statutory religious education programme, they will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, if the planning includes Christianity and other religions as appropriate.