

Downsell PRIMARY SCHOOL



Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

Religious Education (R.E) Policy

Date Adopted by GB:	01 December 2025
Review Date of Policy:	Autumn Term 2029



Downsell Primary School values the diversity of backgrounds and beliefs, both religious and non-religious. The school understands that it is important to provide opportunities for our children to reflect on what they and others believe. Our RE curriculum offers our children the chance to explore different viewpoints, discover the similarities we share and discuss the differences in our worldviews. In this way, our children will be able to describe their beliefs and values and learn that other views are acceptable.

- Religious Education contributes dynamically to children's education by asking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- In RE, pupils learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- Pupils learn to evaluate wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.
- Teaching RE equips pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- RE develops in pupils an aptitude for discussion, so that they can participate positively in society, with its diverse religions and worldviews.
- In RE, pupils gain and use the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

The Principal aim

The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

Pupil –friendly Principal aims

Religious Education (RE) at Downsell Primary School follows our school values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience.

We explore big questions about life.

When we ask and answer questions, we discover what we believe and what other people believe.

We find similarities and differences about how we and other people live.

We can make sense of religions and worldviews.

We can think about our own ideas and the way we live.

The threefold aim of RE - Teaching and Learning

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
 - identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered, by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
 - appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- Explain, using reasoned arguments, their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.

3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
- articulate clearly beliefs, values and commitments in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

The time for RE, based on national guidance, is that there is a minimum allocation of 5% of curriculum time for RE.

4 – 7 year olds	36 hours of RE per year
7 – 11 year olds	45 hours of RE per year

This is achieved by weekly timetabled lessons for RE, RE days and visits to Places of Worship.

RE is different from Assembly. Curriculum time for RE is distinct from the time spent on Collective Worship or School Assembly.

The Curriculum

Downsell Primary School follows the new London Borough of Waltham Forest agreed syllabus (launched in November 2020), which became statutory from September, 2021.

The LBWF agreed syllabus requires that all pupils learn from Christianity in each key stage. In addition, pupils will learn from the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study.

All lessons make clear links to the children's own experience of the world.

Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	Welcome Friendship Belonging	Myself My life Stories	People special to me My special things	Special Places Special Times Special Books	My senses The Natural World	Our community People who help us
Reception	Believing: F1 Which stories are special and why?	Expressing: F4 Which times are special and why?	Believing: F2 Which people are special and why?	Expressing: F3 Which places are special and why?	Living: F5 Where do we belong?	Living: F6 What is special about our world and why?
Year 1	Believing: 1.1 Who is a Christian and what do they believe?	Believing: 1.2 Who is a Muslim and what do they believe? (part 1)	Believing: 1.4 What can we learn from sacred books?	Expressing: 1.5 Which places are special and why? (part 1)	Believing: Who is a Hindu and what do they believe? (Additional Unit)	Living: 1.7 What does it mean to belong to a faith community?
Year 2	Believing: 1.3 Who is a Jew and what do they believe?	Believing: 1.4 What can we learn from sacred books? (part 2) Additional/Extension Unit	Believing: 1.2 Who is a Muslim and what do they believe? (part 2)	Expressing: 1.6 How and why do we celebrate special and sacred times?	Believing: Who is a Buddhist and who is a Sikh and what do they believe? (Additional Unit)	Living: 1.8 How should we care for others and the world, and why does this matter?
Year 3	Believing: L2.1 What do different people believe about God?	Believing: L2.1 What do different people believe about God? Expressing: L2.4 Why do people pray?	Expressing: L2.4 Why do people pray?	Expressing: L2.5 Why are festivals important to religious communities?	Expressing: L2.5 Why are festivals important to religious communities?	Living: L2.7 What does it mean to be a Christian in Britain today?
Year 4	Believing: L2.3 Why is Jesus inspiring to some people?	Living: L2.8 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today? (Additional Unit)	Expressing: L2.6 Why do some people think that life is like a journey and what significant experiences mark this?	Believing: L2.2 Why is the Bible so important for Christians today?	Living: L2.8 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today? (Additional Unit)	Living: L2.9 What can we learn from religions about deciding what is right and wrong?
Year 5	Believing: U2.1 Why do some people think God exists?	Living: U2.6 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today? (Part 1)	Expressing: U2.4 If God is everywhere, why go to a place of worship? (Part1)	Believing U2.2 What would Jesus do? (Can we live by the values of Jesus in the twenty-first century?)	Expressing: U2.5 Is it better to express your beliefs in arts and architecture or in charity and generosity?	Expressing: U2.5 Is it better to express your beliefs in arts and architecture or in charity and generosity?
Year 6	Living: U2.6 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?	Expressing: U2.4 If God is everywhere, why go to a place of worship? (Part 2)	Believing: U2.3 What do religions say when life gets hard?	Expressing: U2.5 Is it better to express your beliefs in arts and architecture or in charity and generosity?	Living: U2.7 What matters most to Christians and Humanists?	Living: U2.8 What difference does it make to believe in ahimsa (harmlessness), grace and/or Ummah (community)?

There are three phases of curriculum planning (long-term for the annual overview, medium term for the question focus each half term – for which there is an RE Journey and short term which is the lesson flip and accompanying resources).

* These units are developed from the LBWF Syllabus to cater for the vision of a broad and diverse curriculum in RE at Downsell Primary School which reflects our local community.

Assessment

Currently teachers make informal observations during lessons in discussion with the children. Teachers give feedback on written work in accordance with the Downsell Primary School Marking Policy, giving developmental comments. The RE Lead monitors the books to ensure quality of presentation, quantity of work, coverage and consistency across each cohort and the school. An assessment is made by the teacher of RE at the end of each unit and is collected by the subject leader. The subject leader interviews each class the following half term to check on understanding.

Legal requirements

The legislation in England states:

RE is for all pupils:

- RE must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England and it is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.

RE is determined locally, not nationally:

- A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by a local authority. Local authority maintained schools without a religious character must follow the locally agreed syllabus.

RE is plural:

- The RE curriculum drawn up by the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education), "shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain".

The agreed syllabus has a duty "to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner" and "must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious belief".

While education policy changes, the legal requirement for RE for all registered pupils remains unchanged. RE is an entitlement for all pupils. The agreed syllabus builds on good practice from the 2004 Non-statutory Framework for RE, produced by the then Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and also the core ideas in the RE Council's non-statutory Framework from 2013. The Waltham Forest Agreed Syllabus for RE, 2021–2026 © RE Today Services 2020 explores a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.

Right of withdrawal:

In the UK, parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE/RME on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education. (School Standards and Framework Act 1998). This will be the parents' responsibility.