

RE Policy



The Valley Community School

Reviewed: Autumn 2023

**Reviewed by: Linked Governor and
M. Jolly**

To be reviewed: Autumn 2024

The Valley Community School

OUR VISION

“A world class centre of outstanding learning”

OUR MISSION

“Together we’re better”

Founding principles that underpin our philosophy of
being truly inclusive

We aspire in all we do to ensure we create a culture of:

High Equity:

Narrowing the gaps between pupils in different socio-economic groups

High Achievement:

For all through rigorous challenge, adaptation and reflection

High Inclusion and Engagement:

Adapting and supporting narrowing and bridging gaps in achievement

High Expectations:

Of ourselves, our pupils and our families in effective partnerships

Our core values:

Acceptance

Fairness

Trust

Equality

Respect

RE Policy

Policy Statement

The Valley School promotes opportunities for all pupils to reflect on the aspects of their own lives through Religious Education. This enables them to develop a sense of self-awareness and a responsibility for their own actions and beliefs.

The school aims to provide an ethos, which values individuality and imagination, inspiration and contemplation. This will encourage the development of the pupils' own personal values and beliefs and instil a respect and understanding of the beliefs and practices of others.

Assessment:

Within key foundation subjects, assessment is based on key learning milestones, measured by end of unit and end of phase outcomes, as set out within the Bolton SACRE Religious Syllabus.

The school feels strongly that there is a need to develop both global citizenship and, where possible, teach the fundamental principles of British Citizenship.

This encompasses:

- a sense of fair play
- tolerance
- duty and remembrance
- respect
- values
- ethics
- belonging
- contributing to and supporting all our local communities
- perseverance

CURRICULUM INTENT: PURPOSE AND AIMS

“The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.”

Bolton Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025

This can be best achieved by attention given to this principle aim throughout the planning, teaching and learning of RE.

Aims

Religious Education should help our children to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Islam and other principal religions represented in and around Bolton.
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues.
- Reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences through their study.
- Develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions.

Rationale – why this curriculum design?

Primarily, we want to be sure the curriculum meets then exceeds the National Curriculum requirements by offering high quality learning experiences in RE which are designed and provided by careful planning through the Bolton Agreed Syllabus. We take into account the need to offer breadth of content, depth of learning and coherence between concepts, skills and content.

- The Bolton Agreed Syllabus provides teaching sequences, teacher knowledge guides and lesson planning which support high quality input.
- Secondly, the Bolton Agreed Syllabus provides clear end of unit and end of key stage outcomes that pupils and staff use efficiently, we build on these adding the disciplinary and substantive knowledge pupils need to progress.
- Thirdly, the curriculum is cyclical and each year group has specific objectives that encompass linked learning, British Values and SMSC
- We want our children to love RE!
- Our aim is to give our children every opportunity to meet the principal aim of RE which is to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious world views adapted to incorporate principal religions represented in and around Bolton.
- We want children to develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- We provide a curriculum that helps pupils develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues.
- Children have the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences through their study.

- Through the teaching of RE, we intend for pupils in our school to develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions.

Building on the Aims of Religious Education

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim. The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. Make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:

- identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary
- explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities
- recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation

2. Understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:

- examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways
- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world
- appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning

3. Make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:

- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses
- challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response

- discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding

Curriculum implementation: Teaching and learning approach

For each year group, the Bolton Agreed Syllabus provides a Programme of study. These give the statutory requirements of the syllabus. The syllabus is structured around the three aims and the three elements: ***Making sense of beliefs, Understanding the impact and Making connections.***

These three elements form the basis of the end of key stage outcomes, and the progressive 'learning outcomes' in each unit of study. An overview of questions (pp.16–17 Agreed Syllabus) shows how questions are based on core concepts in a spiral curriculum.

The syllabus is based around a **key question approach**, where the questions open up the content to be studied. The syllabus gives **key questions** to help teachers to deliver the statutory Programmes of Study. These are followed by detailed unit outlines for each question with core concepts that are at the heart of the religions taught. These are designed to support teachers in delivering high-quality RE that enables coherence and progression. The unit outlines give structured support in terms of learning outcomes and suggested content, to enable good planning and progression.

There is a **long-term plan** with units chosen in an order so that pupils' understanding is built up in a coherent way. Teachers adapt high quality lesson plans and resources from the Bolton Agreed Syllabus and the Understanding Christianity resource to match the needs of the learners. The syllabus is flexible enough to allow RE to be taught in a variety of ways – RE days or weeks, linking with other subjects and discretely.

Curriculum implementation: Religions and beliefs

Pupils are to study in depth the religious traditions of the following groups:

- Reception: Children will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.
- Key Stage 1: Christians, Jews and Muslims
- Key Stage 2: Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jews.

Teaching of Christianity is supported through the Understanding Christianity resource (RE Today Services). Consideration of other religions and non-religious worldviews can occur at any key stage, as appropriate to the school context.

A spiral curriculum where content is revisited ensures knowledge is substantive and progression is clear.

Curriculum impact:

The end of unit outcomes, found in the Bolton Agreed Syllabus (2020), guide assessment. They link to end of phase outcomes which are used, along with teacher judgments, to assess pupils' attainment in RE.

Assessment in RE

- We feel teachers should use a full repertoire of assessment strategies
- Formative assessments to address gaps in their knowledge, and what those specific misconceptions or gaps are.
- Summative assessments and low stakes quizzes
- Assessment is progressive and will naturally require greater depth and connections between learnt elements as pupils get older
- Leaders and teachers can design RE assessment tasks where appropriate that are fit for purpose, in that they are precisely attuned to the knowledge in the RE curriculum
- We ensure that any assessments, or recording of assessments, are not excessively onerous for teachers.
- Professional development opportunities for leaders and teachers to reflect on how different assessment questions and tasks in RE can frame teachers' and pupils' expectations about engaging with religious and non-religious traditions

Ambitious curriculum

We believe the SACRE syllabus is a high-quality, ambitious curriculum designed to give all learners the knowledge they need to succeed in life.

This is particularly important for our children who live in one the most disadvantaged areas, have high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities and are in what could be described as an insular mainly Muslim community.

We believe all pupils are entitled to be taught RE.

We follow the SACRE agreed local syllabus, which has been derived depending on the specific needs of individual pupils and our community.

Our curriculum contains 3 types of knowledge alongside the pupil's own deeply held views and links to religious practice.

- 'substantive' knowledge: knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions
- Metacognitive 'ways of knowing': pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion
- Personal knowledge': pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study

Substantive knowledge development

- different ways that people express religion and non-religion in their lives, including diverse lived experiences and the complexity of the fluid boundaries between different traditions
- knowledge about artefacts and texts associated with different religious and non-religious traditions
- concepts that relate to religious and non-religious traditions, such as 'dharma', 'incarnation', 'ritual', 'authority', 'prayer', 'sacred', 'anatta' and 'moksha'
- the very concepts of 'religion' and 'non-religion' and debates around these ideas

Whilst following the agreed syllabus we ensure pupils have access to:

- narratives, stories and texts
- aspects of living religion (such as rituals and cultural artefacts)
- arguments
- case studies and personal reflections
- A range of first hand experiences of scholars, visits and use of artefacts

Substantive knowledge within the SACRE syllabus

- Substantive content and concepts in the RE curriculum to enable pupils to grasp the complexity of a multi-religious, multi-secular world.
- Substantive knowledge is a representation and reconstruction of religious and non-religious traditions and concepts.
- Representations of religious and non-religious traditions
- Depth of study in certain areas of the RE curriculum to provide pupils with detailed content that is connected with the concepts and ideas that they learn.
- Detailed knowledge of specific religious and non-religious traditions (such as their stories, narratives, texts and testimonies) in the RE curriculum to enable pupils to make useful connections between content.
- A well-sequenced RE curriculum that prepares pupils with the prior knowledge (including content, concepts and vocabulary) they need for subsequent topics.

Scholarly/Disciplinary practice development and approaches

Our curriculum is designed so that it includes 'ways of knowing' as a form of knowledge that pupils build through the RE curriculum. This helps pupils learn about the construction of substantive knowledge, its accuracy, its reliability and how provisional that knowledge is. Pupils are therefore prepared to think in critical and scholarly ways.

The whole school RE curriculum map clearly identifies how and when subject knowledge is studied. Each unit of work begins by clearly stating previous learning as well as new knowledge building blocks and outcomes.

- A sequenced RE curriculum that includes scholarly/disciplinary methods and tools that pupils learn.

Our RE is based on spiral curriculum where content is revisited which ensures knowledge is substantive and progression is clear.

- Subject leaders and teachers who make good decisions about which 'ways of knowing' pupils need to learn matched to substantive content.

- A very strong focus on vocabulary and discussion that reduces cognitive load by focussing on key terms and language.

Teachers begin each unit of study by clearly identifying key vocabulary, which is shared with children and used throughout the unit.

For example, in Year 3 pupils build on learning from the Year 2 Unit 1.10 What does it mean to belong to a faith community? to look at the promises people make to each other, and how a wedding is the beginning of a pact between the couple and – for Christians – with God too.

In Year 4, pupils recall learning from Unit L2.5, about belief in Jesus' death and resurrection to progress on to key concepts in L2.6: KINGDOM OF GOD: For Christians what was the impact of **Pentecost**?

Pupils in Year 5 Find out how Hindus celebrate Diwali in Britain today by recalling the story of Rama and Sita from Unit L2.7 What do Hindus believe God is like? which is covered in Year 4. This allows them to build on existing knowledge to identify the characters, connect with ideas of Rama as the god Vishnu in human form (avatar) and examine the role of Sita. They examine the use of light in Hindu celebrations to represent good overcoming bad, and Hindus overcoming temptation in their own lives; and the festival as an invitation to Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity and good fortune.

Linking personal knowledge and background experience:

- We are clear that RE does not induct pupils into any religious tradition
- Our curriculum builds pupils' awareness of their own assumptions and values about the content that they study
- Precise, detailed content (substantive content and concepts)
- In using a prepared scheme Subject leaders and teachers adeptly identify specific content for the development of 'personal knowledge' that may build on previous work and ensure teachers are aware of the principles of sequencing learning to maximise results.
- For example, each understanding Christianity unit begins with explaining where pupils have encountered the concepts before. It outlines knowledge building blocks stating clearly what pupils will know by the end of the unit. The learning outcomes

structure learning and ensure there is progression as children complete the teaching sequence of making sense of the text, understanding the impact and making connections.

Our curriculum is designed to ensure outcomes:

- Focuses on pupils' learning with ambitious subject-specific end goals, rather than covers excessive amounts of content superficially. The end of unit outcomes and end of phase outcomes guide this process.
- Flexible assessment opportunities are given, based on end-of-phase outcomes, linked to the teaching and learning approach. Each unit has specific outcomes that help pupils to achieve the end-of-phase outcomes.
- Impacts on pupils by building up accurate knowledge about the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion.
- Has clear curriculum content that subject leaders have planned to illustrate 'ways of knowing' and to develop pupils' 'personal knowledge'.
- Makes clear connection between the 'ways of knowing' that pupils learn, the 'personal knowledge' that pupils develop through the curriculum and the substantive content and concepts on which both depend.
- Clarity about identifiable core concepts of religions and beliefs helps teachers and pupils to understand how beliefs and practices connect. Pupils are able to build effectively on prior learning as they progress through the school.

Pedagogical approaches to teaching RE

- Model teaching sequences are prepared within the subject overviews
- We select classroom activities to enable pupils to remember the RE curriculum in the long term.
- Teachers consider cognitive load and sequencing of information carefully.
- Activities are well conceived and appropriate to the sequence of the activity
- Teachers incorporate successful classroom strategies using methods and procedures that are appropriate to our pupils' language needs

- Learning narratives draw and build upon prior learning and contain activities that reactivate prior learning
- Contains periods of knowledge consolidation and renewal

Assessment, recording and reporting procedures

The EYFS:

All our subjects begin life the EYFS, where pupils work towards understanding the foundational aspects of the national curriculum subjects. Whilst subjects may not be studied as discreet subjects, key elements and the foundations for subject learning are taught to secure effective transition to Year 1

Reporting to Parents

Completed via Parents' Evenings, termly reporting procedures and ongoing discussions where necessary to support home learning and maximise impact,

Adaptations and reasonable adjustments:

How we make suitable adaptations to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs

- Pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs generally study the same curriculum "scope" as their peers unless there is specific cognitive reason that makes this impossible, or pupils are working at a level significantly below their peers with large gaps in learning.
- Our teachers have the same level of ambition for all pupils. They use specialist advice to adapt their teaching approaches where necessary.
- Our staff are well briefed in the subject knowledge aspects to be studied and learnt and the approaches taken.
- Teachers and specialists, including the SENCO, support pupils in their role.
- Classroom resources and learning outside the classroom are adjusted, and where necessary risk assessed, as required, to ensure that all pupils are active learners.
- Adaptive practices within the lesson itself are used ensure exceptional progress

Our Inclusion practices may also include:

- Schemes of work in the short, mid and long-term, with clearly defined milestones and practical objectives exemplified clearly
- Larger elements broken down into smaller components
- Cross curricular consolidation
- Pre-teaching key concepts and language
- Post-teaching to consolidate
- Supporting accessibility by understanding by focussing on key vocabulary
- Using hands on activities, rather than defaulting to reading/written content only
- Using Visual prompts and stimuli, ICT technology, apps, video and computer based technologies where appropriate
- Waves of intervention that focus on Basic Skills and language proficiency that supports wider curriculum accessibility
- Overlearning key concepts that build towards longer term aims and ambition

Examples:

In Year 1, children were pre-taught key vocabulary for their unit on sacred spaces. They were introduced to images and vocabulary around objects of prayer and special places in the mosque. They generated questions around this vocabulary before they then went on a visit to a local mosque in search of these objects and special places. They were able to use the pre-taught vocabulary in context when they presented their question to the imam and recorded their understanding back in the classroom. SEND children received additional support through watching video clips of other children visiting the mosque, looking at books and photographs about mosques and through conversations with caregivers about the children's own experiences SNAs were able to link the learning to their own experience leading to deeper understanding.

In Year 2, children needing additional support to meet learning outcomes in the unit based on the Nativity story and Christmas took main parts as characters in the KS1 Nativity show for parents. Alongside learning activities in the classroom, taking part in music and drama, which was reinforced through rehearsal and performance, ensured children were able to develop a full understanding of events and the themes behind the Nativity story.

Assessment adaptations-examples

- These may include a focus on discussion and observation
- Small incremental assessments
- Increased time for pupils to process information, respond and recall information
- The need for some pupils to reactivate knowledge with visual prompts

Assessment in general

Staff will need to ensure that during lessons they observe children as they are working with them. This is in order to make assessments that support the next steps in learning and so that progress is monitored. Components of objectives achieved build towards specific elements/blocks recorded on Educater, the schools' tracking system.

This is completed at least once per term but ongoing formative assessment takes place all the time.

Progress is judged "within the curriculum" as pupils build their cumulative knowledge towards longer term larger curriculum aims:

-In the lesson

-Across a range of lessons

-Across the Year (SCIENCE/ENGLISH/MATHEMATICS)

-Across the phase KS1 LKS2 UKS2 (IPC)

-Preparation for next phase of learning REC/KS1/KS2/Y7

Metacognition and harnessing the learning narrative:

To support learning, vocabulary will always be examined and discussed by pupils in each new lesson.

This approach reduces cognitive load (CLT) and allows pupils to easily reactivate prior learning. Strong links will be made with previous and future learning and pupils will explicitly see themselves on a "Learning Pathway" or journey.

Previous learning will be reactivated via discussion and books and sketch books will support a sense of a visible learning pathway.

This will be achieved using photographs and strong visual and language reminders for pupils of previous learning. This approach is most important for our lowest achieving 20%

of pupils who often have communication, language delay, this can be most complicated by pupils presenting as being on the Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

Whilst the curriculum remains constant the pedagogy used to access the curriculum will differ, some pupils will need additional processing time to “over learn” concepts and consolidate learning. Other pupils may need a variety of taught and sequenced strategies to support longer term progress in the curriculum.

Long and short term planning and sequencing

Long, medium and short term planning is the responsibility of individual teachers who take account of the needs of the children in a particular class; the topic area they are covering and the progression guidance then plan accordingly, building components towards long, medium and short term aims of the curriculum.

Related policies

- Assessment Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy

Systemic documents

Key documents held in house and maintained by subject leaders that promote, monitor and support this subject development.

- Position statement
- Action and/or development plan
- External and/or Internal Data Profiles
- Impact statement
- Monitoring plan
- Documents that support exemplification of standards

Equal Duties/ Opportunities and Inclusion statement

The school is committed to ensuring every child irrespective of race, gender, ability and disability, culture and religion achieves their absolute maximum potential.(please refer to the 9 protected characteristics)

Community Cohesion

The school sees community cohesion as being implicit in everything that the school does in developing well rounded and knowledgeable individuals who not only tolerate the views of others but value the importance of diversity.

Role of Subject leader

- To lead development of subject in school ,
- provide guidance to individual staff members and professional development
- regularly update staff
- review and monitor the success of the planned units of work, components and learning sequencing
- be responsible for the organisation and maintenance of resourcing
- Support staff in appropriate and manageable assessment
- Support staff, alongside the SENCO in making reasonable adjustments and adaptations
- Monitor impact, plan and review
- Keep up to date knowledge of all association and “body” recommendations including research information provided by Ofsted and by other research institutions and associations.