

## Developing an approach to teaching and learning in Religious Education and Worldviews

*With God all things are possible*

*Religion and beliefs inform our values and are reflected in what we say and how we behave. RE is an important subject in itself, developing an individual's knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society. 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 can develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, of other principal religions, other religious traditions and worldviews that offer answers to questions such as these. RE also contributes to pupils' personal development and well-being and to community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society. RE can also make important contributions to other parts of the school curriculum such as citizenship, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE education), the humanities, education for sustainable development and others. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others - individually, communally and cross-culturally.* DCSF 2010

*Religious Education is the open exploration of what people believe, their way of life and the impact of beliefs, values and ways of living in local, national and global communities. It engages pupils in the process of understanding what others believe, what is important to them, how they live their lives and what influences them. In doing this, pupils also reflect on their own beliefs and values and their main influences.* (p.4 Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2023-2028 Engaging with diversity: an exploration of Religion and Worldviews)

This excerpt from the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus is synchronous with our vision for the school as we want our children to grow in greater awareness of themselves and others, maximize their learning potential and know that with God all things are possible.

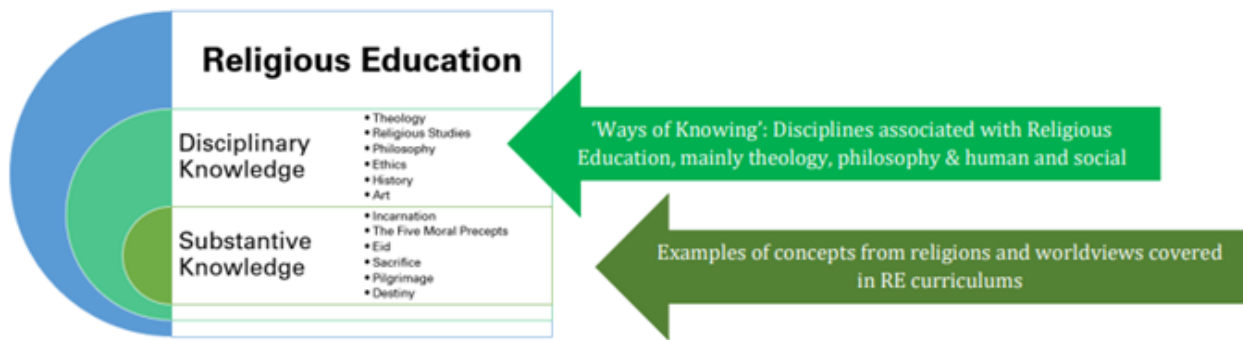
We have broadened our policy to be Religious Education and Worldviews in light of [Hertfordshire's Agreed Syllabus 2023-2025, engaging with diversity: an exploration of Religion and Worldviews](#). Worldviews is a recent development following the Religion and Worldviews report by the Commission on RE in 2018. This report advocates a 'worldviews' approach including behavioural, attitudinal, and experiential dimensions of what it means to be human. This is where 'ultimate questions' will be asked and explored too. Diversity and worldviews really embeds 'lived experience' and understanding of the way that people view the world, and that this can be really diverse.

In our teaching and learning we want to ensure that pupils develop not just a knowledge of religions and worldviews, but more importantly, begin to understand the over-arching, big concepts. Religion and belief are contended concepts, raising often heated questions, debates and even conflict. Worldview is a broad way of labelling how people make sense of their world and people's lives.

### [Nobody stands nowhere](#)

We need to be mindful of diversity in our teaching and learning experiences, ensuring we are sharing a fair representation of each world view.

We must consider both Substantive Knowledge and Disciplinary Knowledge so that our pupils learn information and facts through our RE and Worldviews curriculum but are also gaining disciplinary and personal knowledge alongside substantive knowledge (mainly theology, philosophy, human and social)



We have therefore thought through these key elements when constructing our curriculum (as detailed below).

Teaching and learning at Wormley Primary School aims to encourage children to question and reflect upon their beliefs and those of others, sparked through activities, experiences and authentic and replica artefacts, within an ethos of respect and wonder.

We are committed to ensuring that Religious Education at Wormley School is inclusive. This means that in all RE learning, all children, including those with SEND, are given the opportunity to learn, contribute and participate alongside their peers. In RE, all children are supported in achieving the best to their potential. RE planning is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and ensures that teaching is appropriate to meet those needs. Planning reflects adaptations that enable children with SEND to fully develop their abilities.

In RE, we:

- Effectively use assessment to inform planning
- Create opportunities for all children to express their thoughts and ideas and to listen to all children
- Use a multisensory approach
- Use resources effectively to allow children to reach learning outcomes
- Use resources that reflect the diversity of our school
- Let children choose how to show what they have learned
- Pre-teach of vocabulary and concepts to support understanding

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

All pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life' (Education Act 2002). Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

### **Personal development and well-being**

RE and worldviews plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and

responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices. Through RE, we aim to enhance the children's 'cultural capital' by broadening their knowledge of the world's faiths.

### Community cohesion

RE and worldviews makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. With God, all things are possible.

RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

- The school community within which the school is located - RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.
- The UK community - a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.
- The global community - RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

### Curriculum teaching resources:

We have adopted **Jack In The Box** for our early years. This is a two year programme designed especially for 3 - 6 year old children. Worship sessions follow the familiar, repeated pattern with fun songs set to well-known tunes and a variety of learning strategies guaranteed to engage young children in the Bible stories.

In KS1 and KS2, we have adopted **Understanding Christianity** to teach children about Christianity.

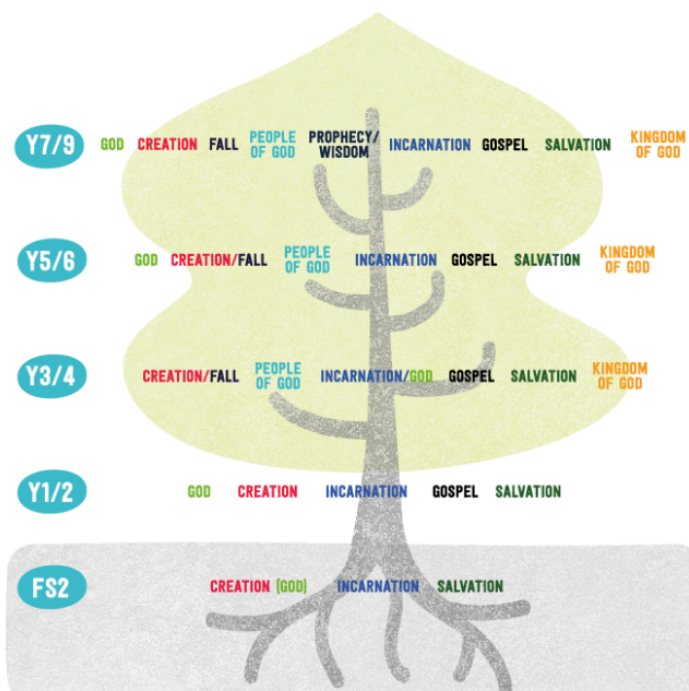
This is a spiral curriculum so children build on previous knowledge and deepen their understanding.

By addressing key questions, **Understanding Christianity** encourages pupils to explore core Bible texts, examine the impact for Christians and consider possible implications.

Each unit incorporates the three elements:

- Making sense of the text - Developing skills of reading and interpretation; understanding how Christians interpret, handle and use biblical texts; making

### THE CONCEPTS: A SPIRAL CURRICULUM



sense of the meanings of texts for Christians

- Understanding the impact - Examining ways in which Christians respond to biblical texts and teachings, and how they put their beliefs into action in diverse ways within the Christian community and in the world
- Making connections - Evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the texts and concepts studied, and discerning possible connections between these and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.

Each unit begins with a 'way in' and then offers teaching and learning ideas for each element. The teacher chooses how to weave together the elements, from making sense of the text, through looking at the impact on the world of a Christian, and helping to make connections with the world of the pupil, in order to achieve the outcomes. This offers a strong resource for teachers to support subject - specifically Christian - knowledge and understanding. The resource ensures learners gain a sense of chronology and progression. Teachers are well supported to teach effectively.

There are 10 core theological concepts and key questions:

GOD - What do Christians believe God is like? (Y1/2) What does it mean if God is holy and loving? (Y5/6)
CREATION - Why is the word God so important to Christians? (EY) Who made the world? (Y1/2) What do Christians learn from the creation story? (Y3/4) Creation and Science: conflicting or complementary? (Y5/6)
THE FALL - How can following God bring freedom and justice?
PEOPLE OF GOD - What is it like to follow God? (Y3/4)
PROPHECY
WISDOM - Was Jesus the Messiah? (Y5/6)
INCARNATION - Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas? (EY) Why does Christmas matter to Christians? (Y1/2) What is the Trinity? (Y3/4) What would Jesus do? (Y5/6)
GOSPEL - What is the good news Jesus brings? (Y1/2) What kind of world did Jesus want? (Y3/4) What did Jesus do to save Human Beings? (Y5/6)
SALVATION - Why do Christians put a cross in an Easter garden? (EY) Why does Easter matter to Christians? (Y1/2) Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'? (Y3/4) What difference does the resurrection make for Christians? (Y5)
KINGDOM OF GOD - When Jesus left what was the impact of Pentecost? (Y3/4) What kind of king is Jesus? (Y5/6)

Questions are explored in relation to the Bible, the Christian community and wider Christian living. Units of work comprise a 'core learning' section, 6-8 hours of teaching and learning, and an optional 'digging deeper' section with ideas and resources for another 4-6 hours (see SoL).

In addition, we have adopted the Suffolk multi-faith scheme called '**The Emmanuel Project**' (Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich) to support our delivery of the learning of themes and key concepts for all major world faiths. The Emmanuel Project (RE scheme of work) uses an 'Enquiry Based' Model of learning into religions and world views and therefore children tend to move through a cycle of learning for each unit taught.

The scheme combines a blend of theology, human and social sciences and philosophy to enable children to develop a better and more balanced understanding of religion and world views. The three disciplines are present in each key stage but with the emphasis shifting slightly, so that human and social science may be more obvious in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 and theology has more focus at Key Stage 2.

Each 'Enquiry' must:

- include examples of the lived reality of the religion or worldview, which reflect a selected belief or concept. Examples must include a balance of texts and stories, community practices e.g. celebrations, and individual lifestyles e.g. food rules. This ensures the enquiry is rooted in human and social science.
- unpack and illustrate an important belief or concept in the religion or worldview. The beliefs or concepts required are specified. This ensures the heart of the enquiry is theological.
- inform and support pupils as they talk about 'big' questions. Six 'big' questions are specified for KS1 and eight for KS2. This ensures the enquiry is connected to philosophical thinking.

In each ENQUIRY, the scheme provides opportunities for pupils to:

- ENGAGE - draw on experiences which create a link / bridge to a religious belief or concept e.g. personal experiences, or experiences in a story, film or picture
- ENQUIRE - puzzle over an artefact or story which will lead into the Enquiry question - consider the Enquiry question and ask what they need to find out and how they could go about it.
- EXPLORE - interact with, and ask questions about the meaning, origin, context or use of stories, sayings, art or songs which express the belief or concept - visit, sometimes virtually, places of worship focussing on artefacts, symbols or celebrations, that express the belief or concept, and talk about these.
- EVALUATE - recall important facts from their learning, using subject vocabulary correctly e.g. believe, God, pray, celebrate - ask whether they can answer the Enquiry question, sharing ideas as a class
- EXPRESS - share both their learning, and their own ideas, with others, through various means e.g. writing, art, craft, dance, drama
- EXTEND - puzzle over the related 'Big' question together, collecting different ideas, and learning to listen carefully to others - make simple links between the 'Big' question and the beliefs and traditions of people they have met /learned about

The scheme uses precise questions. In order to completely fulfil the requirements of the 2023 Agreed Syllabus teachers must also frame a 'rich and precise' question for each ENQUIRY; this must clarify what learning about religions and worldviews is to take place. Whenever possible the questions should include the name of the religion or worldview and the belief or concept.

*Example: Why is learning to do mitzvot so important to Jewish families? Not: What do Jewish families do?*

In addition, we have created our own schemes of learning for [Incarnation](#) and [Salvation](#) to complement our teaching and learning experiences. We also have themed enrichment days/weeks to explore religions and world views and spirituality

Using both resources ensures a deep understanding of the Christian faith and the 'Big Story of the Bible' as well as fully exploring other world faiths and drawing comparisons. (See the [RE and Worldviews curriculum map 2024 - 2025](#) for further details.

We encourage children to notice carefully and deeply, ask questions, wonder and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways: reports, models, drawings, presentations, displays etc.

Learning can be recorded in the children's Creative Logs, Reflective Logs and RE books.

## Godly Play

We use 'Godly Play' predominantly in Key Stage 1 as an alternative, imaginative approach to RE. It has its roots in Montessori education and uses religious artefacts and models so that children can enter religious stories and imagery using their innate spirituality. A teacher must be open to the unexpected and prepared to learn with the children as well as teach them. The Godly Play approach allows for reflection and slows down the pace of delivery but it doesn't mean the rate of learning is slow. Time is set aside in a Godly Play session for reflection and response. It creates a safe space where children can explore their ideas more deeply and make meanings for themselves. It allows them to 'think big'. Godly Play enables teachers to build a community where children are free to wonder, explore possibilities and learn more about themselves in relation to others. It evokes qualities of reflection, calm and order, approachability and focus. 'Reading' the story through the material presented, promotes sensitivity and respect for the stories and objects of religion.

## Format of the lesson

The lesson follows a regular format, familiar to those who may be involved in worship.

**A GATHERING** - The children gather in a circle round the material that will tell the story. Entering into the story. The story teller unfolds the story using the objects in the circle. He/she takes plenty of time and focuses on the material.

**A TIME OF REFLECTION** - The story teller asks wondering questions about the story. For example I wonder which is your favourite part of the story? I wonder which is the most important part of the story? I wonder if we could leave anything out and still have the story we need? I wonder where you are in the story? Which part of the story is about you?

**CREATIVE WORK BASED ON THE STORY** - Children then have a time to explore their ideas through creative work.

**THINKING TIME** - Pupils may leave the circle and create a personal response. Pupils choose using for example, paint, clay, papier mache, construction materials, (Lego), collage, junk modelling, poetry, music etc.

**PLENARY** - A sharing of children's ideas Sending out The children are sent out (to play/lunch/home)





Teachers may teach RE weekly or in blocks. In addition there are whole school RE weeks. They should aim to make learning 'real' through visits, visitors, authentic resources and activities. We use elements of Philosophy for Children (P4C) as a strategy to prompt thinking, questioning and discussion.

## Assessment:

Teachers assess knowledge and understanding of Incarnation and Salvation by referring to the outcomes detailed in Understanding Christianity as well as knowledge 'building blocks'.

### OUTCOMES

**BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, PUPILS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO:**

-  Give a clear, simple account of the story of Jesus' birth and why Jesus is important for Christians.
-  Recognise that stories of Jesus' life come from the Gospels.
-  Give examples of ways in which Christians use the story of the nativity to guide their beliefs and actions at Christmas.
-  Decide what they personally have to be thankful for at Christmas time.

### KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

**PUPILS WILL KNOW THAT:**

- Christians believe that Jesus is God and that he was born as a baby in Bethlehem.
- The Bible points out that his birth showed that he was extraordinary (for example, he is worshipped as a king, in Matthew) and that he came to bring good news (for example, to the poor, in Luke).
- Christians celebrate Jesus' birth; Advent for Christians is a time of getting ready for Jesus' coming.

Knowledge and understanding of the units learned in the Emanuel Project are also assessed against end of year expectations. These end of year expectations are derived from the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE which uses two attainment targets and six strands to promote a broad and balanced RE.

- Attainment target 1: Learning about religion and belief( a) beliefs, teachings and resources; b) practices and ways of life; c) forms of expression)
- Attainment target 2: Learning from religion and belief (d) identity and belonging; e) meaning purpose and truth; f) values and commitments)

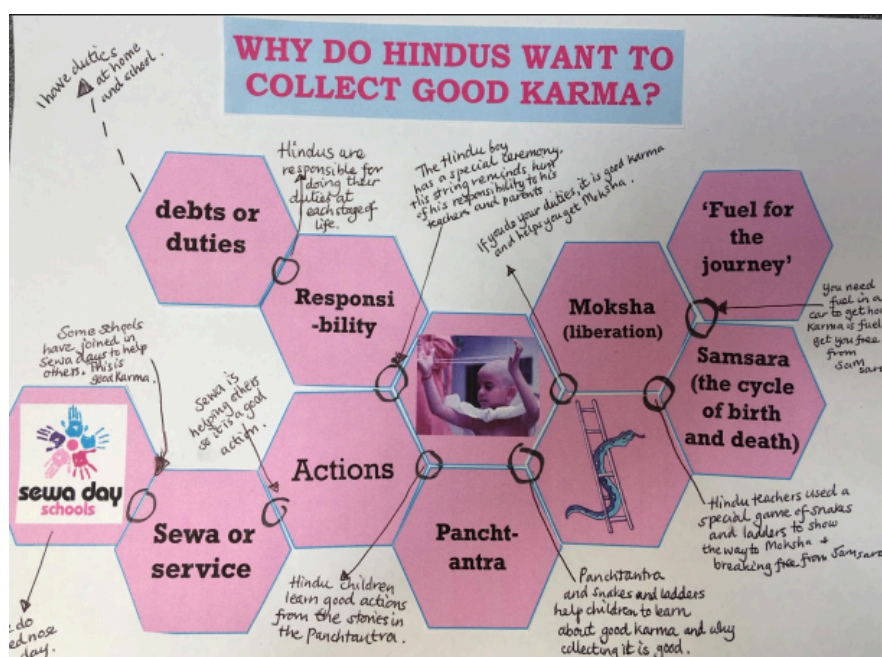
Each RE unit in the Emmanuel Project contains a grid with the generic expectations adapted for that particular unit or religion so that teachers can gather evidence throughout the year.

Attainment Target 1 - Learning about religion and belief			Attainment Target 2 - Learning from religion and belief		
Strand a) beliefs, teachings and sources	Strand b) practices and ways of life	Strand c) forms of expression	Strand d) identity and belonging	Strand e) meaning, purpose and truth	Strand f) values and commitments

Teachers assess pupil progress against the school's assessment criteria at the end of a unit or the end of an RE week. Assessment can be a whole class or small group activity. It can be gathered from a range of activities: quizzes, writing, art, models, conversations, reflective experiences, role play, mind maps, circle times etc. We also use solo taxonomy as an assessment tool to allow the children to represent the connections they have made in their learning and share their understanding.

Throughout the unit of learning, teachers refer to the hexagons in each step (this could be an A3 laminated version), providing opportunities to model theological thinking and making connections between the hexagons based on what was learnt in the step prior. This allows pupils to make links throughout the unit and further consolidate their understanding of the 'Big Question'.

At the end of the unit, children work collaboratively in pairs or groups to make links with the hexagons and discuss what they have learnt.



Finally children have an exit question which they attempt independently. This allows teachers to evaluate what children have learnt and understood.

Progress is tracked over the year and teachers can clearly see what needs further teaching.