

Self-Evaluation/Audit Questions (Primary)

This audit tool is intended for RE teachers and subject leaders as a means of evaluating to what extent an RE curriculum is well-balanced. It will help you get a sense of both the big picture and the detail contained within an RE curriculum. It also offers guidance on ways in which individual enquiries can be shaped to provide overarching balance in an RE curriculum.

You may like to use the overview questions below as a starting point for your audit exercise in order to have a clear understanding of the context in which your RE curriculum has been developed. This may be a form of self-evaluation, a conversation between an RE Adviser and an RE subject leader, or a discussion between staff.

Overview questions:

1. What is the context in which you are working? (*E.g. curriculum requirements, school community, pupil context.*)
2. Are you required to follow a specific syllabus? Do you know which?
3. Do you know where to find out which syllabus you (should) follow?
4. Is there a shared understanding of the purpose of RE in your whole school community?
5. How do you go about planning your RE curriculum?
6. What factors influence the planning of your RE curriculum?
7. What are the reasons for selecting and sequencing topics in your RE curriculum? Are the reasons clear? Are the topics disconnected bits or a joined up story?
8. Is there a pattern of progression in your RE curriculum?

Theology – this is about believing

1. Does your RE curriculum look at: **Where beliefs come from?**

For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to examine:

a) Sacred texts and sources of authority

E.g. Stories contained in sacred texts /narratives from a range of religious traditions such as those contained in the Bible, Qur’an, Torah, Bhagavad Gita; consideration of genre, author, context, target audience; other sources of authority, e.g. creeds, statements of belief, tradition, reason, experience, laws/moral guidance. For instance, examples may include the Haggadah used during the Seder meal, the Ardas and the Shahadah

b) Teachings about and interpretations of beliefs

E.g. Engagement with the thinking of a diversity of believers from a range of religious traditions e.g. blog post, sermon, newspaper article, artwork, such as the members of faith blogs available on RE:ONLINE or a parish/circuit magazine article

c) Texts produced by people who have reasoned and written about beliefs

E.g. Writings (teachings and interpretations) of key theologians from a range of religious traditions. In the primary phase context this might include quotes from religious teachers such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

d) How experiences have impacted on beliefs

E.g. Examples of ways in which experiences/events have impacted on the way believers have understood and acted on their beliefs. These might include Saul’s conversion on the road to Damascus, the story of Bilal, the Hanukkah narrative concerning the oil lasting eight days, impact of scientific discoveries on belief and vice versa, an account of a miracle at Lourdes

e) The reliability of sources

E.g. Issues of authenticity, historical accuracy and authorship. Links might be made with literacy and different types of genre

| Theology – this is about <u>believing</u> | |
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| 2. Does your RE curriculum look at: How beliefs have changed over time? | |
| <p>For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to examine:</p> <p>a) How events in history and society have influenced beliefs E.g. how prejudice or persecution has had an impact on beliefs, e.g. the way in which the persecution of the earliest Christians shaped the way they articulated their beliefs (e.g. use of the ichthus symbol); the story of Abraham’s journey of faith from polytheism to monotheism and the reflection of this in ancient societies; how the theory of evolution has impacted on what people believe about the beginning of the world; the impact of the events of the Protestant Reformation</p> | |
| 3. Does your RE curriculum look at: How beliefs relate to each other? | |
| <p>For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to examine:</p> <p>a) The connection between different beliefs within a belief system? E.g. the connection between Trinity and Incarnation; karma and dharma; covenant and the chosen people of Israel; Tawhid and ibadah; dukkha and samsara; sewa and the Khalsa; interpretations of covenant in Christianity – old and new</p> <p>b) The similarities and differences between beliefs from within, between and beyond belief systems? E.g. different ways in which people understand life after death; the similar and different ways in which belief systems understand the phrase, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ or the Golden Rule; how the idea of God is understood in different belief systems and by those who do not believe in the idea of God</p> | |
| 4. Does your RE curriculum look at: How beliefs shape the way believers see the world and each other? | |
| <p>For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to examine:</p> <p>a) The ways in which believers see the world through the lens of their beliefs? E.g. the way in which beliefs about life after death might shape how someone lives in the present; the way in which a belief in a day of rest could shape how someone spends their time; the way in which beliefs about the origins of the universe might shape the way a believer understands their place in the world</p> | |

Philosophy – this is about thinking

1. Does your RE curriculum look at: **The nature of knowledge, meaning and existence?**

For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to investigate:

a) How we know what we know?

E.g. asking questions about the world around them; using their senses to help them think about the world around them and to ask questions; using empathy to put themselves in someone else's shoes; pupils could learn about Socrates, Confucius, Buddha

b) How people have tried to define and demonstrate what is real?

E.g. asking questions and exploring people's ideas about whether something is real or not; asking questions and examining ideas about whether something exists or not; examining how people make sense of the world they live in; examining and analyzing definitions of things, e.g. what we might mean by happiness, hope, truth or knowledge; resources might include CBeebies *What's the Big Idea?*, the *Children's Book of Philosophy* (Dorling Kindersley, 2015), Plato, etc.

2. Does your RE curriculum look at: **How and whether things make sense?**

For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to:

a) Learn how to construct a response/argument that makes sense

E.g. Use of examples to support an argument, use of the word 'because', appropriate literary structure particularly in written responses, use of technical vocabulary, evidence of a process of reasoning

b) Critique philosophical arguments/big questions?

E.g. asking if this is a good question to ask; asking if an argument is a good one; using evaluation skills to decide if an argument is a good one or not; weighing up evidence; the debates about the historicity of the resurrection or the historical Jesus; resources might include CBeebies *What's the Big Idea?*,

c) Assess whether a given position is coherent

E.g. asking questions such as: What is it reasonable to believe? Does this make sense? Can I understand this argument? Is that a valid conclusion?; exploring the interaction between religious and scientific accounts of the origin of the universe and assessing the coherence of each; assessing the extent to which cultural assumptions impact on our understanding of the validity of an argument (e.g. the assumption that more recent arguments are *de facto* better arguments)

| Philosophy – this is about <u>thinking</u> | |
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| 3. Does your RE curriculum look at: issues of right and wrong, good and bad? | |
| <p>For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) what influences people when they make moral decisions? E.g laws/moral guidance, making connections with theological understandings of right and wrong, impact of family, history, culture, community, identity on decision making b) ethical and moral issues including religious/worldview responses to a range of these issues E.g. issues relating to peace and conflict; issues relating to justice/injustice; moral issues relating discrimination or prejudice; moral issues relating to poverty; e.g. Mary Midgley, Peter Singer | |

| Human/Social Sciences – this is about <u>living</u> | |
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| 1. Does your RE curriculum look at: The diverse nature of religion? | |
| E.g. exploring the idea that ‘religion’ itself is a category or ‘term’ that people use to define a formal set of beliefs and practices, exploring whether the term ‘religion’ is appropriate to describe some beliefs systems | ex- |
| 2. Does your RE curriculum look at: Diverse ways in which people practise and express beliefs? | |
| E.g. a variety of Christian denominations particularly in the local area, use of different symbols and artefacts in different religions and beliefs, different ways in which people celebrate festivals, different expressions of faith and belief e.g. through music or art, diversity in terms of rural and urban faith/beliefs communities; exploring a range of different groups within particular faith and belief traditions e.g. diversity within and between Sunni and Shia, diversity within and between Protestants and Catholics, awareness of diversity within religious groups in the local area including individual examples through meeting with members of faith and belief communities | di- |
| 3. Does your RE curriculum look at: The ways in which beliefs shape individual identity and vice versa? | |
| <p>For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to enquire into:</p> <p>a) The individual and self-identity? E.g. values on which people base their lives, exploring the lives of famous religious people such as sports people whose beliefs impact on their careers, choices people make in terms of what they wear or eat e.g. kosher, halal, vegetarianism;</p> <p>b) Self-identity? E.g. exploring what it means to be a believer in a particular faith/belief tradition e.g. the idea of being a ‘child of God’ in Christianity, the importance of personal responsibility at particular ages in some religions e.g. at amrit or first Holy Communion, the idea of commitment/conversion to a particular belief system</p> | |

| Human/Social Sciences – this is about <u>living</u> | |
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| 4. Does your RE curriculum look at: The ways in which beliefs contribute to and impact on communities and vice versa? | |
| <p>For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to enquire into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Family life? E.g. the role of Shabbat within Jewish family life and the way this shapes beliefs about work and rest, how family life shapes believers understanding of festivals such as Eid-ul-Fitr b) Faith communities? E.g. the particular expression of worship within a faith community and the way this shapes beliefs about belonging, the importance of passing on stories to the next generation in many religions e.g. how Hindu dance is used to pass on the story of The Ramayana c) Wider local communities (e.g. school community)? E.g. social expressions of equality and the ways in which the langar in the Sikh tradition contributes to this, how varying agricultural practices have an impact on how ‘Harvest’ is understood in different belief traditions | |
| 5. Does your RE curriculum look at: The ways in which beliefs contribute to and impact on society and vice versa? | |
| <p>For example, does your RE curriculum enable pupils to enquire into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The influence of culture on beliefs and vice versa? E.g. the impact of music and art on religious expression and vice versa, how beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways across the globe e.g. considering why Muhammad is usually not portrayed though art, the variety of images of Jesus used around the world b) The influence of politics on beliefs and vice versa? E.g. Exploring the lives and teachings of human rights activists who hold particular beliefs e.g William Wilberforce, Aung San Su Kyi, the impact of migration on local faith and belief communities e.g. increasing Roman Catholic populations, increasing numbers of some Muslims groups within the UK c) The influence of social norms (e.g. laws, traditions) on beliefs and vice versa? E.g. how some laws in the UK are based on the country’s Christian heritage, the role of food banks organised by religious groups; the role of charities run by religious groups in a local, national and global context | |