



CULHAM ST GABRIEL'S

A worldviews approach and its relevance for Catholic Schools

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Dispelling some myths...

- I am not talking about a change of name for the subject.
- I am not talking about changing what (the stuff) you teach
- I am not talking about the specific inclusion of non-religious worldviews
- **I am talking about an approach**

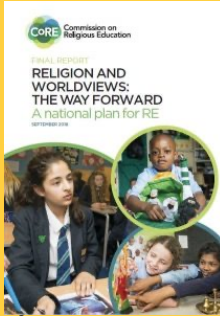


Everyone has (inhabits) a worldview

relevance to all pupils, not just to those who are Catholic. While religious education is taught in the context of a school that is committed to a Catholic worldview, **all people, whether consciously or unconsciously, hold a worldview.** **Each of us goes out into the world upon a vision, discerning meaning in it, drawing on deep moral sources, entering relationship, joining in common cause, acting from a general framework about how things are and what is worth pursuing.** Religious education allows all pupils to discern for themselves the vision of reality that motivates the shape they will give to their own lives. A religious education curriculum that includes the study of other religions and worldviews allows all pupils in the classroom to become agents of dialogue so that, wherever they stand, they have a stake in the conversation. Religious education ultimately provides all young people with 'the cultural tools necessary for giving direction to their lives,' and through 'the routine of the classroom, to experience real listening, respect, dialogue and the value of diversity.' In so doing, it will help 'young people 'to understand their own time and plan their lives around a credible premise.'⁹⁹

To know You more clearly p.28

- Aligns with the Commission on RE (2018)
- Aligns with ongoing development work on a religion and worldviews approach led by Stephen Pett and three teams of curriculum developers







When you hear the phrase 'a worldviews approach' what comes to mind?

A very quick summary of a worldviews approach

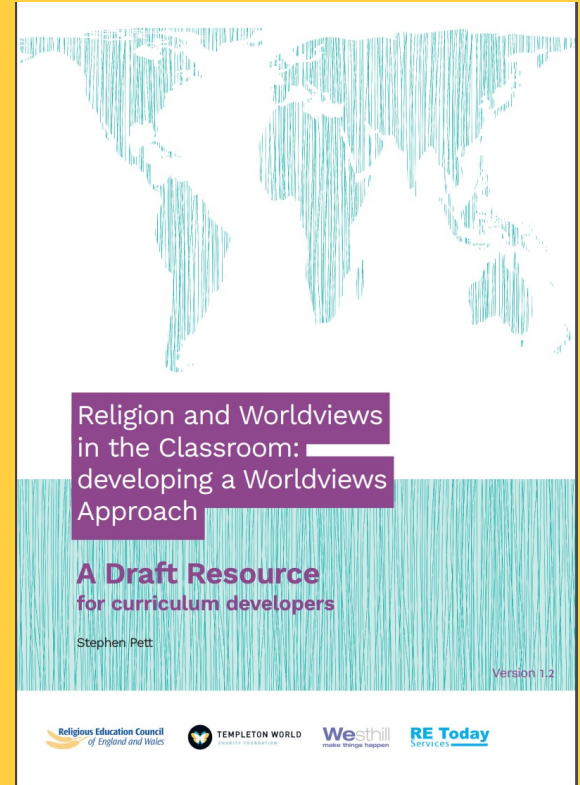
An approach which emphasizes...	An approach which takes seriously...
Hermeneutics	Lived, authentic experience
Intellectual humility and dialogue	Diversity of belief and practice
Reflexivity	Continuity and Change
Wise (critical) interpretation	Context
Personal Knowledge/Positionality	Different ways of knowing



What connections can you see with
Catholic RE as outlined in the new
directory?

A work in progress

- Tentative thinking and application
- Experimental
- Shifting paradigm – easy to fall back into a world religions approach
- Important to engage with the thinking – even if you're not sure about it!



Relevance to aims of RE in Catholic Schools

Article 2 - Aims of Religious Education

The aims of Religious Education are:

1. to engage in a systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life;
2. to enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively;
3. to present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching to provide pupils with a sure guide for living and the tools to critically engage with contemporary culture and society;
4. to give pupils an understanding of the religions and worldviews present in the world today and the skills to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from their own;
5. to develop the critical faculties of pupils so to bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture;
6. to stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith;
7. to enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through religious education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.

- Systematic study
- Religious and theological understanding
- Authentic
- Respectful and fruitful dialogue
- Critical
- Personal meaning

Relevance to outcome of RE in Catholic Schools

Article 3 - Outcome of Religious Education

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

- Religiously literate
- Consciously engaged
- Reflect spiritually
- Think ethically and theologically

How is a worldviews approach relevant to Catholic RE? Some specific examples

- **Article 4 - RE at the heart of the curriculum** and focus on academic/scholarly nature of study embracing multiple disciplines
- **2.1.2.2 - RE is genuinely educational** includes references to embracing disciplinarity, growing in wisdom and critical and respectful dialogue
- **2.1.4 - A pluralistic curriculum** includes importance of authenticity in dialogue, encountering others and reference to all having a worldview

Scholarly Study

- Embracing multiple disciplines
- Importance of hermeneutics
- Becoming wise interpreters
- Actively discerning



Some examples of scholarly focus

- Theological focus, visual commentary on scripture
<https://www.reonline.org.uk/leadership/resource-of-the-month/resource-of-the-month-archive/the-visual-commentary-on-scripture/>
- Practical introduction to hermeneutics by Jen Jenkins, Diocese (CofE) of Coventry <https://www.reonline.org.uk/leadership/practical-introduction-to-hermeneutics/>
- Historical approach to religious studies
<https://www.reonline.org.uk/leadership/resource-of-the-month/resource-of-the-month-archive/faith-in-the-town-project/>

Critical, respectful dialogue

- Respecting one's own identity and that of others
- Courage to recognize difference and embrace those who are different as 'fellow-travelers'
- Journey with fellow travelers

*To know You more clearly
p.27*

It includes all pupils in the enterprise of interrogating the sources of their own developing worldviews and how they may benefit from exploring and engaging critically with the rich and complex heritage of humanity.

This approach explores the real religious landscape. It is an educational project – an attempt not to stand outside the worldviews of others but to understand what being inside is all about, recognising that we do this from a particular perspective or worldview ourselves.

As pupils grow in self-awareness of their assumptions, they are better able to identify, interpret and understand the worldviews of others.

Draft Resource p.12

An example: Telling my story

- <https://www.reonline.org.uk/resources/telling-my-worldview-story/>



Worldview Stories

We have six worldview stories written by Jackie, Shammi, Esther, Bob, Zameer and Debbie. They are all available to download below.

Teachers may want to show the animation and use the examples as a way of introducing the idea of worldview.

We would like to expand this series to include as many diverse voices as possible, if you are interested in writing your own personal worldview story so far, please email us at contact@reonline.org.uk for details. We are happy for contributors to use a pseudonym.

Telling My Story Jackie	.PDF	145.8 KB	Download resource
Telling my story Shammi	.PDF	108.9 KB	Download resource
Telling my story Esther	.PDF	164.1 KB	Download resource
Telling my story Debbie	.PDF	155.7 KB	Download resource
Telling my story Zameer	.PDF	89.0 KB	Download resource
Telling my story Bob	.PDF	62.0 KB	Download resource

Encounters in the world – knowledge lenses

Dialogue and encounter: In this branch, pupils will learn how Christians work together with people of different religious convictions and all people of goodwill towards the common good, respecting the dignity of all humanity. They will also encounter other pathways of belief drawing on the teaching of the Church about intercultural dialogue

To know You more clearly p.81

It allows for sensitivity around diversity, identity, and legacies of power, for example, while equipping pupils to be able to take part in dialogue with better understanding of the worldviews of others.

It self-consciously explores the relationship between the teachings and doctrines of organised worldviews and the beliefs, practice and experience of adherents – what is sometimes called 'lived religion'.

Draft Resource p. 12

An example: Voices from religion and worldviews

- <https://www.reonline.org.uk/resources/voices-from-religion-and-worldviews/>
- Examples of diversity within different worldview traditions

RESOURCES

Voices from Jewish Worldview Traditions

Over the last few years we have collated responses to questions about Religion and Worldviews from different perspectives. This resource provides personal answers to questions from lived experience and were written directly by believers.

1. What do you believe about God and the purpose of life? +
2. What is it like being a Jew in Britain today? Are there any difficulties of being a Jew in Britain? +
3. What would you like children in schools to be taught about your tradition? +
4. What is the most important festival and how do you celebrate it? +
5. What are the current issues for a Jewish person today? +
6. How might I understand the differences between orthodox and reform Judaism? +
7. What is a typical day like for a person of the Jewish faith? +
8. How does Judaism understand the promise of the Messiah? +
9. Why is Moses an inspiration to the Jewish people? +
10. Can you give me a brief overview of what happens at a Jewish burial/funeral, wedding and birth or birthday please? +

Transformational in nature

A worldviews approach places importance on:

- Reflexivity
- Bringing oneself to the learning
- Developing wisdom
- Not assuming assent of faith or belief

Inspired by....the value and importance of reflexivity

22 September, 2020, [Jennifer Ossei-Brainoo](#)



Reflexivity as a learning process is a focus needed in all RE classrooms to develop learners who can become critical interpreters of the world. Reflexivity is defined as the "reinterpretation of oneself, having considered the 'other', with awareness of one's own distinctiveness heightened by the encounter of the other" (Freatly and John, 2019). In the conscious active development of self, reflexivity encourages pupils to become active participants of this pluralist modernity which has been called 'post secular' by scholars such as Radford (2019) and Boeve (2019).

Having reflexivity as a focus during lesson planning is likely to make the teacher aware of their own biases. It is probably not wise to deem one's pedagogy as entirely objective, irrespective of how a teacher might be critical in their pedagogy (Cooling, 2020: 411). Striving to create learners who are reflexive will create a learning space which promotes a critical hermeneutic approach to all knowledge including the unconscious moments where teachers share their views.

A teacher seeking to create reflexivity in RE can approach it from different angles including art, where pupils create their interpretation of a knowledge that has been presented to them with the help of prompt questions or a thinking criteria. It can also be done orally, in classroom vocal debates or silent debates. The depth of evaluative essay writing is also a way of promoting reflexive learning. Pupils can at times be told to argue in writing or vocally against the view they personally hold to encourage them to reflect on their own views/ biases and those of others. It is however very important to make the knowledge being studied very relevant to the everyday life of pupils.

For reflexivity to happen the classroom must also be a safe haven where pupils must feel comfortable to allow themselves to be creative and evaluative. There has to be a relationship with pupils. Irrespective of the opposition they might face, there has to be a culture of respect and freedom to speak without being judged. Pupils must know they must respect others if they want to be respected. A mantra that can be a classroom law.

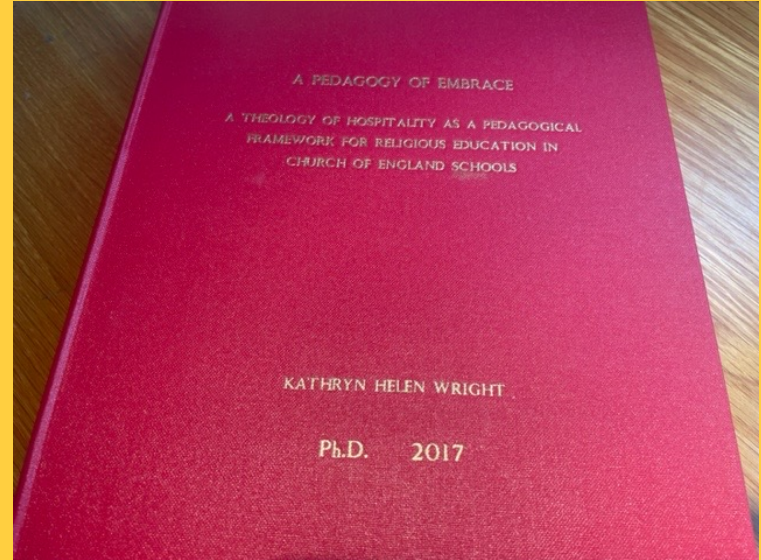
Blog by a a teacher in a Catholic secondary school

So what might this look like for Catholic RE?

- Approaching the study of texts hermeneutically, ensuring theological study is robust and scholarly
- Being attentive to the positionality of the different pupils in the class bearing in mind that RE does not 'assume assent of faith' (p.15)
- Enabling pupils to become wise interpreters and discerners of Catholic traditions, as well as other religious and non-religious worldviews
- Ensuring pupils engage with authentic lived experience of other religious and non-religious worldviews
- Giving due attention to the diversity within the Catholic tradition

Bringing it all together – a hospitable approach?

- Ontological
- Inclusive
- Relational
- Participatory





An Embrace

In an embrace I open my arms to create space in myself for the other. Open arms are a sign that I do not want to be by myself only, an invitation for the other to come in and feel at home with me. In an embrace I also close my arms around the other. Closed arms are a sign that I want the other to become part of me while at the same time I maintain my own identity. By becoming part of me, the other enriches me. In a mutual embrace, none remains the same because each enriches the other, yet both remain true to their genuine selves.

(Volf 1995, p. 203)

Is this analogy helpful?
How hospitable is your approach?

Discover more

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/research/>

Search our free research library

BEING AN RE TEACHER
Relevance ▾

NATURE OF RE
Relevance ▾

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE
Relevance ▾

TEACHING AND LEARNING
Relevance ▾

Submit

Resources

Resources from RExChange 2022 and partner conferences. Includes recorded sessions, PowerPoints and articles from research focused conferences.

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In Conversation

Recordings of the events. A researcher gives a very brief summary of a key piece of research and the host invites questions, feedback and comment.

[Read more >](#)

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Learn about research journeys people have taken and find out about what people are currently researching.

[Read more >](#)

Research of the Month

Features a different piece of research each month with extra resources to support its use by individuals as well as local and regional

Engaging in and with research

Links and resources to use when exploring research undertaken by others as well as carrying out

Research Bulletin

Culham St Gabriel's Masters and PHD students alongside other funded projects share their research with you.

Research Posters

Summaries of research in an easily accessible format.

<https://courses.cstg.org.uk/>

Available courses

Introduction to Religion and Worldviews

What is a Religion and Worldviews approach? Maybe you have heard the...

0% Complete

Digging Deeper: Religion and Worldviews

Welcome to the Digging Deeper level Religion and Worldviews course. You hav...

0% Complete

Introduction to Curriculum

This course offers an understanding of what curriculum is and the central role it...

0% Complete

Digging Deeper: Curriculum

Culham St Gabriel's 'Digging Deeper' level curriculum course is an opportunity to...

0% Complete

Introduction to Research

This course is aimed at teachers as a general introduction to educational...

0% Complete

Primary Beginning Teacher Course 1

Introduction to Religion and Worldviews This is the first of three short courses...

0% Complete

Primary Beginning Teacher Course 2

Teaching and Learning for Primary Beginning Teachers This course is...

Primary Beginning Teacher Course 3

Subject Knowledge for Primary Beginning Teachers This course is designed to take...