

Secondary Religious Education Subject Knowledge Audit

This subject knowledge audit has been written by Karen Steele from Worcester University. We thank her for her work on this document.

SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE	Yes	A bit	No
Judaism			
Global/ national/ local picture: demographics/ patterns, including Census data etc.			
History/ background knowledge: where, when, how it originated; key figures e.g. Abraham & Moses and how the tradition has developed/ spread/ diversified			
Key concepts/ beliefs , including: Nature of God: Monotheism: God as One, Creator, Law-Giver and Judge, as well as loving and merciful. The divine presence (Shekhinah). Beliefs about life after death, including judgement and resurrection; The Messiah: his nature and the differing views of Orthodox vs Reform Judaism; The Covenant & Mitzvot: Covenant with Abraham, including promise of descendants and the Promised Land (Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17); Covenant at Sinai, involving Moses and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19) ; 613 mitzvot: the relationship between free will and obligation; Distinction between mitzvot between God and humans vs. mitzvot between humans; Moral principles: justice, tikkun olam (healing the world), charity, sanctity of human life, and pikuach nefesh (“saving a life”)			
Practices , including Family Life & Festivals: Life-cycle rituals: Brit Milah (circumcision), Bar / Bat Mitzvah, marriage, mourning ritual; Dietary laws: kosher / trefah, separation of milk and meat; Festivals: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Pesach (Passover), and their meaning for Jews in Britain today. Synagogue & Worship; Features of the synagogue: bimah, Aron Hakodesh, Ner Tamid; Worship forms: public services, Amidah (standing prayer), Shabbat (both in home and synagogue); The written law (Tenakh) vs. oral law (Talmud) and their significance			
Diversity , including a range of Jewish worldviews - Orthodox, Reform, (Progressive), Liberal as well as cultural Judaism, Also, an awareness of cultural/ ethnic diversity e.g. Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Masorti etc.			
Common misconceptions , including conflation of race, religion, nationality and religion			
Specific issues/ challenges , including antisemitism; Israel/Palestine conflict; ethical issues surrounding female rabbis/ gender roles etc.			



Christianity			
<p>Global/ national/ local picture: demographics/ patterns etc, including Census data etc.</p>			
<p>History/ background knowledge: where, when, how it originated; key figures including, Jesus, St Paul, St Augustine and how the tradition has developed/ spread/ diversified</p>			
<p>Key concepts/ beliefs, including nature of God (omnipotent, omnibenevolent, omniscient, eternal, transcendent and immanent); Trinity; Creation: (Genesis 1 & 2) – literal vs metaphorical interpretations; Incarnation; Salvation; Reconciliation; Atonement; Resurrection and Afterlife; Judgement: (including Parable of Sheep & Goats); Jesus Christ: Messiah, Son of God, saviour of humanity; Teachings: <i>Agape</i>; Love God and love your neighbour (Great Commandments); forgiveness, humility, compassion, justice. Key Events: Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost; Sources of Authority: The Bible: Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) and New Testament (Gospels, Epistles); Church Tradition; Conscience and Reason</p>			
<p>Practices, including Worship (Liturgical, Non-liturgical, Charismatic, private); Prayer – importance and purpose, Set prayers e.g. the Lord’s Prayer vs informal prayers); Sacraments (outward signs of inward grace) – Baptism - importance and purpose, infant baptism vs believer’s baptism. Eucharist (Holy Communion) – importance and purpose and differing beliefs e.g. Catholic belief in transubstantiation vx. Protestant view as symbolic. Other sacraments (Catholic/Orthodox): Confirmation, Reconciliation, Marriage, Ordination, Anointing the Sick; Pilgrimage- differing types and purposes, including examples like Iona and Lourdes; Celebrations/Festivals - significance and differences , including Christmas and Easter; Role of the Church in the Community, including outreach & mission: spreading the gospel (evangelism, missionary work), Charity & service: food banks, street pastors, supporting the poor; Worldwide Church, including promoting unity among Christians (ecumenism), working for reconciliation (e.g. healing divisions, peace-making). responding to persecution of Christians worldwide and supporting global development and social justice.</p>			
<p>Diversity, including a range of denominations and global Christian worldviews</p>			
<p>Common misconceptions, including the idea that Jesus 'started' Christianity/ was not a Jew, that Christianity is a western tradition, that Christianity is declining globally (needs teasing out), that Christians do not suffer persecution etc.</p>			
<p>Specific issues/ challenges, including secularisation, disagreements within Christianity about issues such as sexuality, gender roles, euthanasia etc.</p>			



Islam			
<p>Global/ national/ local picture: demographics/ patterns etc, including Census data etc.</p>			
<p>History/ background knowledge: where, when, how it originated; key figures e.g. Ibrahim, Musa, Isa, Muhammad and how the tradition has developed/ spread/ diversified. A good understanding of the life of the prophet Muhammad (sunnah & Hadith) will provide a strong basis for your knowledge of Islam.</p>			
<p>Key concepts/ beliefs including nature of God (Allah): tawhid (see Tawhid surah in the Qur'an), shirk (associating partners with God), other attributes as seen in the 99 names of Allah in the Qur'an; Risalah (prophethood), including key prophets like Adam, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad (the final prophet); The authority of the Qur'an and other holy books (Torah, Psalms, Gospels etc.); Sunni/Shi'a Islam, including historical debates e.g. who should succeed Muhammad; Six Articles of Faith (Sunni Islam), including Tawhid, Angels (mala'ika), Holy; Prophets (nubuwwah), The Day of Judgement and Predestination (al-Qadr); Five Roots of Usul ad-Din (Shi'a Islam), including Tawhid, Adalat (justice of God, Nubuwwah (prophethood), Imamate (leadership through the Twelve Imam and Resurrection; Life after Death (Akhirah), including paradise (Jannah) and hell (Jahannam); Shari'ah: Islamic law; Ummah: the worldwide community of Muslims; Greater and Lesser Jihad</p>			
<p>Practices including, The Five Pillars of Sunni Islam; The Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam; Shahadah (Declaration of Faith); Şalâh (Prayer): significance, times, direction, ablution (wudu), rak'ahs, recitations, mosque vs home prayer, Jumu'ah (Friday Prayer), Sunni-Shi'a differences; Sawm (Fasting during Ramadan): origins, benefits, exceptions, Night of Power (Laylat al-Qadr); Zakâh (Almsgiving): its role, how/why it's given, benefits, and Khums in Shi'a Islam; Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca): its origins, performance, rituals at Ka'bah, Mina, Arafat. A close reading of Muhammad's final sermon will give a really good foundation to this knowledge.</p>			
<p>Diversity, including Sunni/ Shi'a divide and a diverse range of global Muslim worldviews, including cultural Muslims.</p>			
<p>Common misconceptions, including Muslims worship a different God (in fact, Allah is simply the Arabic translation for God); the nature of jihad (it is not simply 'holy war'), the role of women (see, for example, Muhammad's wives Khadijah and Aisha), Jesus as a prophet in Islam etc.</p>			
<p>Specific issues/ challenges, including Sunni/ Shi'a divide, Islamophobia, extremism, debates about sexuality, gender etc.</p>			



Hinduism			
<p>Global/ national/ local picture: demographics/ patterns etc, including Census data etc.</p>			
<p>History/ background knowledge: where, when, how it originated; key figures and how the tradition has developed/ spread/ diversified</p>			
<p>Key concepts/ beliefs, including Nature of God and Existence: Brahman, nirguna (formless divine consciousness) versus saguna (manifested, personal deity); also includes ideas of spiritual worlds; Divine features: The divine is seen as omnipresent, non-personal, residing within the heart, and/or as a personalized, loving God—referencing the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.9.1; Tri-murti: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, plus a range of male and female deities (e.g., Ganesha, Lakshmi, Hanuman, Saraswati) and the concept of avatāra (e.g., Krishna, Rama); Prakriti (matter), tri-guna (three qualities), maya (illusion), cosmology (Rig Veda 10.129.6–7), the cycle of four ages, and multiple worlds with diverse inhabitants. The Nature of Human Life: Atman; Samsara, Karma, Moksha; Concepts of free will, responses to suffering, knowledge vs. ignorance; Personal virtues such as ahimsa (non-violence), respect, empathy, self-control, humility, and love; The four aims of life: dharma, artha, kama, and moksha; Understandings of dharma: including sanatana dharma and varnashrama dharma (chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita is a good introductory religious text)</p>			
<p>Practices, including Worship and Festivals: Places of worship: Home, temple (mandir), outdoor shrines, and conceptually “space of the heart”; Worship forms: havān, puja, āratī, darśan, bhajan/kirtan, and japa/mantra; Differences in worship practices between Shaivism and Vaishnavism; various Hindu perspectives on worship’s importance; Focus of worship: One God (personal or impersonal), multiple deities, gurus, sacred natural objects (land, rivers, plants, animals), and murti (divine images); Key festivals: Diwali and Holi - origins and significance for British Hindus today. Lifestyle: The four paths (yogas) toward union with the divine)Karma yoga (action), Jnana yoga (knowledge), Āshtanga yoga (meditation), Bhakti yoga (devotion)); Pilgrimage: Role and purpose, sacred sites like Varanasi, and events like Kumbh Mela; Hindu environmental and social projects: including “cow protection” initiatives, and charities promoting well-being, social inclusion, and women’s rights .</p>			
<p>Diversity, including Vaishnavism and Shaivism etc. a range of global Hindu worldviews worldviews</p>			
<p>Common misconceptions, including debate surrounding whether Hinduism is monotheistic/ polytheistic etc; the idea that it is a single, unified tradition; that not all Hindus are vegetarian/ avoid beef; yoga is exercise etc.</p>			
<p>Specific issues/ challenges, including imposition of western/ colonial frameworks/ names etc (e.g. Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma); issues around Hindu identity and Hindu nationalism (e.g. controversies in India around beef); issues related to gender roles and caste</p>			



Buddhism			
<p>Global/ national/ local picture: demographics/ patterns etc, including Census data etc.</p>			
<p>History/ background knowledge: where, when, how it originated; key figures e.g. Siddhartha Gotama and how the tradition has developed/ spread/ diversified</p>			
<p>Key concepts/ beliefs, including: Core Beliefs - Dhamma, interdependence, unsatisfactoriness, impermanence , no-self (<i>dukkha, anicca, anatta</i>); Personality: Five Aggregates (Theravada); emptiness and Buddha-nature (Mahayana); Goals: Arhat versus Bodhisattva paths, plus Pure Land; Teachings: Buddha's journey, Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path; Ethics: Karma, compassion, moral precepts, Six Perfections.</p>			
<p>Practices, including :Places of Worship & Devotional Rituals (include temples, shrines, monasteries (viharas), meditation halls, and learning halls); Puja, the devotional ritual, occurs both at home and in temples. It involves practices such as chanting, mantra recitation, bowing, using malas (prayer beads), and making offerings like flowers, candles, or incense; symbolic gestures and objects like in ritual e.g. lotus flowers; Meditation including Samatha (calming meditation), Vipassana (insight meditation) and Visualisation; Festivals & Retreats (Wesak, Vassa, Parinirvana Day and other observances e.g. Uposatha days; Ceremonies Surrounding Death in different traditions; Ethics in Practice (Five Moral Precepts, Karma, Compassion, Loving-Kindness(<i>metta/ karuna</i>)and The Six Perfections (Paramitas) in Mahayana Buddhism</p>			
<p>Diversity, including different schools of Buddhism (Thereavarda, Mahayana, Tibetan traditions and Pure Land) and a range of global Buddhist worldviews worldviews</p>			
<p>Common misconceptions, including that Buddha is worshipped/ God (this is complex and needs unpicking carefully); that Buddhism is atheistic (again, this is complex), all Buddhists are vegetarians; that the Dalai Lama is 'the Pope' of Buddhists'; that Buddhism is all about suffering and negativity etc.</p>			
<p>Specific issues/ challenges; the representation of Buddhism in the West, issues surrounding non-violence</p>			



Sikhi			
Global/ national/ local picture: demographics/ patterns etc, including Census data etc.			
History/ background knowledge: where, when, how it originated; key figures e.g. Guru Nanak (and all the Gurus) and how the tradition has developed/ spread/ diversified			
Key concepts/ beliefs, including Mool Mantra & Nature of God: Understand expressions of God as Creator and the dual understanding of God being both immanent and transcendent; Human Life & Virtues (life is an opportunity to unite with God and cultivate virtues); Karma, Rebirth & Mukti; Five Khandas & Barriers to Mukti; Gurmukh vs Manmukh & Ego (Haumai); Human Life and Community: Oneness & Equality, Sewa (Selfless Service) including physical (tan), mental (man), and material (dhan), Sangat (Religious Community)			
Practices, including Gurdwara & Worship: Gurdwara Features, Role of the Gurdwara; Prayer & Akhand Path; Community Practices: Langar, Nam Japna; Festivals & Life Events: Festivals: (Vaisakhi, Diwali, and Gurburbs (e.g., Guru Nanak's birthday)- including how they're commemorated in India and the UK; Pilgrimage: e.g. Golden Temple (Harimandir Sahib) in Amritsar; Lifecycle Ceremonies: Birth & Naming Ceremonies, Initiation (Amrit Sanskar) & Khalsa: Understand the initiation ceremony, meaning of the Khalsa, the Five Ks, and differences between sahadhari and amritdhari Sikhs; Names Singh & Kaur: The significance behind the adoption of the names Singh (male) and Kaur (female)			
Diversity, including distinction between Amritdhari and non-Amritdhari Sikhs and a range of global Buddhist worldviews worldviews			
Common misconceptions, e.g. that all Sikhs wear the 5Ks			
Specific issues/ challenges; issues around Sikh identity in the UK; Sikh Nationalism (Khaliastan); Sikhism or Sikhi?			



Non-religious worldviews			
Global/ national/ local picture: demographics/ patterns etc, including Census data etc.			
History/ background knowledge: where, when, how it originated; key figures e.g. Epicurus, Hume, Russell, Dawkins etc. and how the tradition has developed/ spread/ diversified			
Key concepts, including non-religious worldviews as ways of understanding life, morality, and purpose without appealing to gods or the supernatural. Role of reason, evidence, and human experience. Distinctions between (secular) Humanism. Atheism and agnosticism. Role of religion in public life (secularism) and emphasis on human rights. Other approaches, like existentialism, naturalism and materialism. Non-religious worldviews and ethics, including utilitarianism and environmental ethics. A useful text is the Amsterdam Declaration.			
Practices, including non-religious life ceremonies e.g. naming ceremonies, funerals etc.; political and environmental campaigning e.g. changes to law on assisted suicide etc.			
Diversity, including a range of non-religious worldviews from atheism to spiritual but non-religious; organised non-religion e.g. Humanists UK. A great resource for this is the Theos report <i>The Nones: Who are they and what do they believe?</i> (2022)			
Common misconceptions, including that Secular Humanism/ atheism accounts for all non-religious worldviews; that the majority of the world is non-religious			
Specific issues/ challenges: religious freedom, freedom of speech, ethical controversies e.g. abortion, euthanasia, human rights etc.			
Other Traditions			
Some knowledge of religious traditions in England other than the big 6 e.g. Baha'i, Paganism, Rastafarianism, Jainism, Church of Latter Day Saints , Jehovah's Witnesses etc. and how they are represented and related issues			



DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE			
Philosophy			
What it is & how it relates to teaching about religion & worldviews, including possible limitations.			
Methods used in this discipline and how they can be applied to RE e.g. conceptual analysis, Socratic dialogue, logical fallacies, Philosophy for Children (P4C)			
Key schools of thought/ scholars/ debates within the discipline e.g. <i>Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, St Augustine, Kant, JS Mill etc.</i> ; <i>rationalism vs. empiricism; deontology vs. teleology etc.</i>			
Some specific examples of this discipline being applied in RE e.g. <i>teleological, cosmological & ontological arguments for God; arguments against God e.g. problem of evil; ethical arguments e.g. utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, natural law, situation ethics; applied ethics e.g. environmental/ business ethics; arguments surrounding issues like abortion/ euthanasia/ war/ human rights etc.</i>			
Theology			
What is & how it relates to teaching about religion to worldviews, including possible limitations			
Methods used in this discipline and how they can be applied to RE e.g. textual analysis/ hermeneutics, practical theology			
Key schools of thought/ scholars/ debates within the discipline, including St Augustine, Karl Barth, John Hick, Liberation Theology, Feminist Theology, etc.			
Some specific examples of this discipline being applied in RE e.g. analysis of creation story in Genesis using Dawn Cox's DIALOG model or feminist readings of story of Hagar in Genesis 16 & 21 etc.			
Social Sciences			
What is is & how it relates to teaching about religion & worldviews			
Methods used in this discipline and how they can be applied to RE , including possible limitations e.g. quantitative vs. qualitative approaches; data analysis, ethnography, surveys etc.			
Sources of data for religion including Census, Pew Research Centre etc.			
Key schools of thought/ scholars/ debates within the discipline, e.g. Ninian Smart's Dimensions of Religion, Durkheim/ Marx/ Freud on religion, Linda Woodhead etc.			



Some specific examples of this discipline being applied in RE e.g. analysis of Census data to identify trends and patterns in religious affiliation in the UK			
PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE			
Key approaches and debates to/ about the aims and methods of teaching RE including World religions approach; Religion & Worldviews, Experiential RE, Critical RE, Dialogic/ethnographic RE etc.			
Current thinking regarding best practice in RE e.g. Ofsted Research Review/ Deep & Meaningful subject report, REC National Plan for Religion & Worldviews and National Content Standard			
Local Agreed Syllabus			
Professional organisations and resources for RE professionals e.g. NATRE, STARME, RE Hubs, RE Online (Culham St Gabriels), Farmington Foundation, blogs etc.			
QUALIFICATIONS			
Aims, content, format, assessment etc. of at least one GCSE qualification for Religious Studies.			
Aims, content, format, assessment etc. of at least one alternative to GCSE qualification for RE at KS4 e.g. Entry level			
Aims, content, format, assessment etc. of at least one approach to non-examined KS4 RE			
Aims, content, format, assessment etc. of at least one A-level qualification for Religious Studies.			
Aims, content, format, assessment etc. of at least one approach to non-examined KS5 RE			