



PENNINE
LEARNING

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Reviewing provision & quality

January 2026

Introduction

The primary purpose of religious education is to give pupils a broad understanding of Christianity, world faiths and non-religious beliefs; this is sometimes referred to as religious literacy. It is essential that the curriculum ensures that there is both depth of study (some areas investigated in detail) and breadth (an overall general understanding of the faiths and related philosophical and ethical questions).

RE can contribute dynamically to children and young people's education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

Properly taught, RE is a rigorous academic subject, supporting problem solving and critical thinking skills. It nurtures SMSC development, nurturing understanding of diversity and skills of empathy. Alongside this, it can enable them to develop their own views and beliefs, not necessarily religious.

It is critical to have a clear rationale and purpose for RE in a school which will form the basis of the curriculum intent.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit can be used in one or more of these ways:

1. As a concise checklist for statutory compliance
2. As a review of the quality of RE in school
3. As preparation for an inspection
4. As evidence towards your SACRE's local RE Merit scheme
5. As a staging post for application for the national REQM

It may be used as a means of self-evaluation or alongside an external consultant who can help to facilitate a review. SACRE and the local authority may be able to offer free support.

Please see contact details on page 11 to enquire further.

The Law and statutory requirements

All schools, including academies, must teach RE to all pupils from ages 5-18.

Maintained schools and Church of England (VC) schools must use their local authority agreed syllabus. Schools can supplement this syllabus with other materials, such as *Understanding Christianity*.

Church of England (VA) schools and Roman Catholic schools will normally use their relevant diocesan syllabus.

Academies do not have to use the local syllabus. However, if they choose not to do so, they must provide an alternative syllabus compatible with existing legislation and taught to all pupils.

There must be sufficient time and resources to deliver the curriculum to all learners in the school.

More details about the statutory requirements will be in your local agreed syllabus. If you have any questions or worries about which syllabus you should use, please feel free to contact us at enquiries@penninelearning.com.

What Ofsted says

The curriculum (whether adopted, adapted or constructed) covers the statutory requirements set out in the basic curriculum (which includes the national curriculum, and relationships, sex and health education, and religious education) and is at least as ambitious in breadth and depth as the national curriculum; this curriculum is an entitlement for every pupil **p19 State-funded school inspection toolkit 2025**

A checklist for compliance

This is a concise checklist of things that should be in place for your RE provision to meet the requirements for statutory compliance and effective management. They may help you evaluate where you feel confident and confirm which areas may need further exploration. You may find it helpful to RAG rate each and then decide what to follow up in more detail.

1. The school uses the appropriate **local agreed syllabus** as the basis for its curriculum
2. Learners receive their **full entitlement to RE** throughout their time in school
3. There is a coherent **subject intent** which is understood by all staff and learners and, links to the wider ethos of the school
4. **Long and medium-term planning** delivers a broad, balanced, comprehensive and sequenced curriculum
5. The **lead teacher** has a clear role and is supported and resourced by the leadership of the school
6. **Teachers** are suitably qualified, supported and resourced
7. **Effective monitoring** enables leadership to be alert to the strengths and needs of the subject, its learners and teachers
8. **An improvement plan** is in place which is reviewed regularly and linked to the school improvement plan
9. **Appropriate policies** are in place including an overall policy for RE and a policy and protocol for any withdrawals from class.
10. **School leaders**, including governors, actively support RE and enable good communication with parents and the local community

RE review

An RE review is offered to schools as an opportunity to review the quality and provision of their religious education and to discover their strengths and priorities for future improvement. It can be used as an internal self-assessment tool or it can be the focus for a review with the RE Consultant, leading to recognition by a badge and award.

The criteria emphasise the importance of RE in community cohesion, SMSC and the fundamental values that we seek to encourage among young people as citizens of the UK.

Programme for a review

The normal programme will include:

- Conversation with a group of pupils (20 minutes)
- Discussion with subject lead based on this document (60 minutes)
- Look at documentation, pupil work etc (20 minutes)
- Focused learning walk (20 minutes)
- Discussion with head or appropriate member of SLT (20 minutes)

A brief summary of the review and any important agreed findings will be prepared by the consultant. This will be produced just for the school and will not be sent elsewhere, though it can be used as evidence or in school improvement planning as appropriate.

SACRE Merit Award



If you wish the review can also be used as an assessment towards the local RE Merit recognising the quality and effort of RE in your school. Achievement of the merit is based on completion of the self-assessment document followed by a half day visit from the RE Consultant where the evidence is considered together. This is a joint review rather than an inspection and the aims are to identify shared areas of strength and find the main priorities for the future. Identifying areas for further improvement is every bit as much an indication of quality as proving perfection!

National RE Quality Mark (REQM)

The criteria dovetail with the four strands of the national RE Quality Mark and it can act as a stepping-stone towards achievement of that national recognition. The review will itself be evidence that can be used towards gaining the REQM. For details see www.reqm.org.

Further details and applications

To enquire further or apply please contact enquiries@penninelearning.com

SACRE and the local authority are often able to subsidise reviews or offer them free of charge. Please enquire.

Reviewing RE: criteria

Strand One: Learning		
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Areas for development</i>
<p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are developing knowledge and understanding through investigating big and challenging questions. • Learners are actively engaged through a variety of creative activities. • Learners' perspectives are widened through engagement with people of different beliefs and cultures. 		
<p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress is evident from data about learners' starting points and achievements. • Learners are aware of how they can improve and develop in the subject. • Learners support each other and are able to give and receive feedback. 		

Strand Two: Teaching

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Areas for development</i>
<p>Quality of planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long and medium-term planning ensures comprehensive coverage of the syllabus. • Planning is sequenced to build on prior learning and to promote challenging future objectives. • Effective tracking of pupils' progress informs planning, intervention and differentiation. 		
<p>Quality of teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use opportunities to develop this. • The overall quality of teaching is good, employing a range of strategies and using effective questioning • Planning promotes critical thinking and learners are increasingly able to express themselves confidently. • Teachers create a safe space for learners to discuss sensitive questions with clarity, mutual respect and tolerance. • Teachers provide opportunities for learners to reflect. 		

Strand Three: Curriculum		
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Areas for development</i>
<p>Syllabus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appropriate syllabus is in place. • The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the appropriate syllabus for all learners. • A coherent subject intent has been agreed and is understood by all members of staff and learners. • The curriculum is well supported with appropriate resources and materials. 		
<p>Nurturing tolerance and SMSC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum promotes tolerance of different beliefs and challenges prejudice and stereotyping • RE makes a significant and recognised contribution to the taught and hidden curriculum including SMSC. 		

Strand Four: Leadership

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Areas for development</i>
<p>Monitoring and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lead teacher has a clear schedule of self-evaluation and monitoring. • The lead teacher knows about the quality of teaching and identifies the needs of teachers and whole staff. • The lead teacher is developing their own skills and contributions through wider CPD and involvement. 		
<p>Plans, policies and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subject development plan is informed by the curriculum, learners' views and self-evaluation and links to the whole school improvement plan. • Policies for RE are in place and understood by all. • Senior leadership supports the RE lead teacher and there are clear links with governors and parents. 		

Sources of help and support

Guidance

There is written guidance and templates available on these areas:

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Being aware of faith issues in school
- Appreciating different beliefs and nurturing tolerance
- Directory of visits and visitors from faith communities
- Toolkit for SMSC and Fundamental British Values.

These can be downloaded from Leeds for Learning RE Resource page, and also from www.penninelearning.com.

RE Planning

The West Yorkshire RE Hub provides comprehensive and detailed planning to support the syllabus used in Braadford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds as well as many other useful resources. The subscription lasting until 2029 can be purchased for £220 for a one off fee. For more details contact Business.solutions@kirklees.gov.uk

Consultancy

Professional development is available through courses run by the local authority. An RE teachers' network is run in each local authority. Details can be found on Leeds for Learning or on www.penninelearning.com. Bespoke training and consultancy can also be arranged for schools or clusters.

Websites

These general RE websites may be a useful source of help and information:

RE Online: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/>

NATRE: <https://www.natre.org.uk/>

Pennine Learning: www.penninelearning.com

Local Support and Advice

For any questions or support you can email enquiries@penninelearning.com or these local emails.



www.penninelearning.com

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