

RE Progression, Sequencing and Curriculum Rationale

How is the RE curriculum sequenced across the Academy?

Our RE curriculum is carefully sequenced in line with the Southend Agreed Syllabus 2024–2029, using the three strands:

- Believing (religious beliefs and sources of wisdom)
- Expressing (how beliefs are communicated)
- Living (values and ways of life)

The curriculum is mapped through progressive key questions, ensuring that knowledge and skills build systematically from EYFS → KS1 → LKS2 → UKS2.

EYFS:

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children begin to encounter religion and worldviews through play, stories, discussion, exploration and first-hand experiences. Learning is rooted in the EYFS Statutory Framework, particularly the prime areas of Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Understanding the World, alongside Expressive Arts and Design. Children develop curiosity, respect for others, and the language needed to talk about themselves, their experiences and the diverse communities around them.

Believing

Children begin to recognise that people have different beliefs, traditions and ways of belonging.

Explore who they are, who belongs in their family and community, and what is special to them and to others.

Encounter simple stories, people, places, symbols and special books from a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.

Listen to and retell stories from different traditions, recognising key characters, events and the values they communicate.

Begin to talk about why certain objects, places, festivals and stories are important to different people.

Expressing

Children explore the different ways beliefs, values and identity are expressed within families and communities.

Join in with songs, greetings, celebrations and simple practices linked to festivals and special occasions.

Respond through role play, music, art, storytelling and creative activities inspired by different traditions.

Handle artefacts with curiosity and respect, recognising that some objects are special to particular communities.

Develop vocabulary such as special, belong, celebrate, remember, care, thankful, promise and community.

Living

Children begin to understand how values influence everyday choices and relationships. Talk about kindness, honesty, fairness, forgiveness and caring for others.

Recognise similarities and differences between families, homes, routines and celebrations. Develop respect for different people, beliefs and ways of life within their class and wider community.

Show care for living things, the environment and shared spaces through everyday routines and responsibilities.

KS1: Foundations of Knowledge (Introducing Worldviews)

In Key Stage 1, pupils begin with concrete experiences and foundational knowledge. The curriculum focuses on:

- Encountering religions through people, stories, and symbols
- Understanding who believers are and what they believe
- Exploring special times, celebrations, and belonging

Sequencing model in KS1:

Autumn:

Who is Jewish...? → introduces artefacts, symbols, identity

Who is a Christian...? → builds understanding of beliefs through stories

Spring:

Who is a Muslim...? → extends knowledge to another worldview

How do we celebrate sacred times? → applies knowledge to festivals

Summer:

What can we learn from sacred books? → introduces sources of wisdom across religions

What does it mean to belong? and How should we care...? → moves into Living strand (values and actions)

Progression in KS1:

From knowing (facts, stories) → understanding meaning (beliefs, symbols) → applying values (care, belonging, community)

Lower KS2: Deepening Understanding and Introducing Comparison

In Years 3 and 4, pupils begin to:

- Compare religions and worldviews
- Understand that beliefs are diverse within and between communities
- Engage with more abstract concepts (e.g. God, prayer, morality)

Sequencing model in LKS2:

Year 3: Building breadth and introducing enquiry

- Start with lived religion (What does it mean to be a Hindu?)
- Move into belief and theology (What do people believe about God?)
- Explore practice and expression (festivals, prayer)
- Develop *moral thinking and life journeys

Year 4: Deepening and revisiting concepts

- Revisit key questions (e.g. God, belonging, Bible, Jesus) with greater depth
- Introduce philosophical thinking (e.g. "Does fasting make you a better person?")
- Strengthen comparison between religions and non-religious worldviews

Progression in LKS2:

From description → explanation → comparison

From single worldview → multiple perspectives

From concrete learning → abstract thinking

Upper KS2: Critical Thinking and Interpretation

In Years 5 and 6, pupils engage in higher-order thinking, moving towards:

- Philosophical and theological enquiry
- Evaluating beliefs and their impact
- Understanding diversity, ethics and global issues

Sequencing model in UKS2:

Year 5: Big questions and application

- Why do some people believe God exists? → philosophical enquiry
- What would Jesus do? → applying teachings to modern life
- What matters most? → comparing religious and non-religious ethics
- Green religion? → linking beliefs to global responsibility

Year 6: Evaluation, debate and reflection

- What happens when life gets hard? → ultimate questions (suffering, death)
- Is it better to express belief through art or action? → interpretation
- What difference does belief make? → impact on life
- Can religion reduce racism? → critical and contemporary application

Progression in UKS2:

From explanation → evaluation → critical analysis

From learning about religion → learning from religion

From understanding → forming reasoned personal responses

How does the curriculum build cumulatively?

The curriculum is designed to ensure:

1. Vertical progression (building over time)

- KS1: Encounter and recall
- LKS2: Explain and connect
- UKS2: Evaluate and respond critically

2. Horizontal links (within a year)

Each unit connects across strands:

- Believing → Expressing → Living

Example:

- Learning about beliefs (God, sacred texts)
- Seeing how these are expressed (prayer, festivals)
- Applying them to life (morality, community, responsibility)

3. Revisiting key concepts

Core concepts are revisited and deepened:

- God (KS1 stories → LKS2 beliefs → UKS2 existence debate)
- Belonging (KS1 groups → LKS2 identity → UKS2 global communities)
- Morality (KS1 care → LKS2 right/wrong → UKS2 ethical frameworks)

How does this reflect the Southend Syllabus?

Our curriculum directly reflects the syllabus by:

- Using the key question approach
- Ensuring coverage of required religions and worldviews
- Following progressive learning outcomes (emerging → expected → exceeding)
- Prioritising depth over breadth

It also reflects the syllabus emphasis on:

- Worldviews (religious, non-religious, personal)
- Sources of wisdom (texts, stories, teachings)
- Real-life application and diversity

Impact of Sequencing

Because of this coherent sequencing, pupils:

- Build secure, connected knowledge over time
- Develop the ability to compare, explain and evaluate
- Retain knowledge through revisiting and application
- Grow into thoughtful, reflective and respectful individuals

They leave primary school able to:

- Engage in informed discussion about religion and belief
- Understand diversity within modern Britain and globally
- Apply learning to ethical and real-world issues

Summary Statement

Our RE curriculum is carefully sequenced, knowledge-rich and enquiry-driven, ensuring that pupils move from early encounters with belief to deep, critical engagement with worldviews.

This progression reflects both the Southend Agreed Syllabus and Ofsted/NATRE expectations, enabling pupils to know more, understand more, and think more deeply about religion, belief and the world around them.