

Guidance for curriculum RE in Catholic schools

RE is not a National Curriculum subject but is part of the **basic curriculum** and is therefore **compulsory in all schools (Education Act 2002)**. All schools must ensure that RE is taught (5% of curriculum time allocated), including academies and free schools, who are contractually required through their funding agreement. The content of this curriculum is determined locally by the Standing Authority for RE (SACRE), which is responsible for providing a locally agreed syllabus.

Catholic schools are not required to follow a locally agreed syllabus as **the curriculum content of RE in Catholic schools is determined by Catholic bishops**. The Department of Education and Formation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference set guidelines for the curriculum content of RE in Catholic schools in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD).

https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/images/RECD_2012.pdf

Each Diocesan bishop determines the content and assessment of RE based on these guidelines. Catholic schools must allocate **10% of curriculum time** to RE to teach the curriculum content from the RECD, **as directed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales**. The Age Related Standards for RE were introduced as a pilot document in 2017 to support schools in **assessing this curriculum**, without levels <http://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/NBRIA-Age-related-Standards-3-19-in-Religious-Education.pdf>.

Under **Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act**, inspections of denominational content and quality of curriculum RE are carried out by **Diocesan inspectors only, on behalf of the bishop**. Ofsted will not carry out a deep dive in RE as this is the purpose of the Section 48 inspection and schools should not direct Ofsted to RE for this purpose. Ofsted may comment on other aspects of RE, for example the contribution of RE lessons to SMSC and British Values.

Three main documents are currently being re-written and will be introduced in **September 2022**:

- The third version of the RECD, incorporating age related standards for RE.
- Catholic School Inspection (CSI) framework (currently a pilot document).

Each diocese will provide guidance on their requirements for the implementation of the RECD.

Supplementary information: guidance given to schools in Salford Diocese

Schools may follow any of the **nationally written schemes of learning for Catholic schools**, supplement national schemes with other materials or **develop their own schemes of learning**, as long as the RECD content is taught.

National schemes for primary RE include Come and See and The Way, the Truth and The Life.

National schemes for secondary RE include People of God (KS3), The Way, the Truth and The Life.

At KS4, **three GCSE specifications** have been recommended by the Catholic Bishops' Conference and schools in Salford Diocese are expected to follow one of these:

- Edexcel Specification A
- Eduqas Route B
- AQA Route B

These specifications include 75% Catholic Christianity and are based on the requirements of the RECD. The second religion studied should be Judaism.

Any permission granted to teach Islam as the second faith was for a 3 year pilot period only; this expired in July 2019. Schools who received permission have been contacted regarding this and offered support to change courses.

Purpose of the RECD - ensure the curriculum supports parents in passing on the deposit of faith by educating about the Catholic church, its teaching and its tradition.

Appendix 1: Why is Religious Education important in Catholic Schools?

Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school ([Pope St John Paul II](#)). Placing RE at the core of the curriculum in Catholic schools helps the school to fulfil its mission to **educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence**, since "Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also includes emotional and affective learning....Without religious education, pupils would be deprived of an essential element of their formation and personal development, which helps them attain a vital harmony between faith and culture." ([Religious Education curriculum Directory](#) p4). **Furthermore, religiously literate children and young people are able to engage in a fully informed critique of all knowledge**, "leading, for example, to an understanding of the relationship between science and religion or history, and between theology, sport and the human body." ([Religious Education Curriculum Directory](#) p4).

Appendix 2: What is the purpose of Religious Education in Catholic schools?

Catholic schools, with RE at their core, exist in order to **"help parents, priests and teachers to hand on the Deposit of Faith** in its fullness to a new generation of young people so that they may come to understand the richness of the Catholic faith, and thereby be drawn into a deeper communion with Christ in his Church." ([Religious Education Curriculum Directory](#) pvii). With this as their primary aim, Catholic schools serve diverse populations of pupils and within this context the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) makes the aims of Religious Education explicit:

1. To **present engagingly a comprehensive content** which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith;
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** so that pupils can make a **critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society**;
4. To **raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them**;
5. To develop the **critical faculties** of pupils so that they can **relate their Catholic faith to daily life**;
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;
8. To bring **clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture**.

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and 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 are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life ([Religious Education Curriculum Directory](#) p6).