

Introduction

The 2020 Cornwall Agreed Syllabus has been created for Cornwall SACRE and approved by Cornwall Council. It provides a syllabus for RE for all our schools. Since 1944, all schools have been required to teach RE to all pupils on roll (except those withdrawn by their parents, see p. 9). RE remains part of the basic curriculum for all pupils. This syllabus explains the value and purposes of RE for all pupils and specifies for teachers what shall be taught in each age group. It provides a coherent framework for setting high standards of learning in RE and enabling pupils to reach their potential in the subject. It builds on the good practice established in the previous Cornwall syllabus over many years. These elements will be familiar to teachers:

Continuity:

Religions and beliefs: The 2020 syllabus broadly maintains the required study of religions and beliefs in each key stage, as in the previous syllabus. Teachers are still free to teach RE flexibly, through weekly timetabled lessons, RE days or RE weeks, for example, or a combination of different models.

RE and personal development: The 2020 syllabus retains its emphasis on RE contributing to the personal development of pupils. RE is not simply about gaining knowledge and understanding about religions and beliefs. It also helps pupils to develop their own understanding of the world and how to live, in the light of their learning, developing understanding, skills and attitudes. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as important opportunities for exploring British values.

Open, enquiring RE: The 2020 syllabus continues to offer open, enquiring, exploratory RE, suitable for pupils who have religious faith of their own as well as for those who have no religious faith – the latter form a substantial proportion of pupils in many of our classrooms (note the local Census statistics on p. 146).

Planning process: The planning process that was integral to the 2014 syllabus has been retained. It encourages and empowers teachers to develop their own excellent RE lessons, taking them through the steps of using the syllabus to underpin their planning (long-, medium and short-term) and creative classroom practice.

Curriculum Kernewek – the statutory annexe reflects Cornish element materials produced in 2011 and 2014, and the four units presented here must be used by schools to replace the corresponding units in the Cornwall syllabus.

New emphasis:

Coherent understanding: There is an increased emphasis on helping pupils to develop a coherent understanding of several religions, by studying one religion at a time (systematic study) before bringing together and comparing different traditions (thematic study). The thematic study allows pupils to draw together their learning each year (see the sample long-term plan on p. 147).

Core concepts: Clarity about identifiable core concepts of religions and beliefs helps teachers and pupils to understand how beliefs and practices connect, so that pupils are able to build effectively on prior learning as they progress through the school (see the key question overview on pp. 16–17 and concept outlines on pp. 137–145).

Teaching and learning approach: There is a clear teaching and learning approach at the heart of the 2020 syllabus, whereby all units enable pupils to 'make sense' of the religions and beliefs studied, 'understand the impact' of these beliefs in people's lives, and to 'make connections' in their learning and their wider experience of the world (see pp. 13–14).

Assessment: Flexible assessment opportunities are given, based on end-of-phase outcomes, linked to the teaching and learning approach. Each unit has specific outcomes that help pupils to achieve the end-of-phase outcomes (see pp. 18–19). Schools can also continue to use the RE Assessment Guidance found on the Cornwall RE website.

Understanding Christianity: The 2016 resource from RE Today is being used in many schools in Cornwall. This syllabus incorporates the Understanding Christianity approach, so that schools who are using that resource can be confident that they are meeting the requirements of the agreed syllabus with regard to the teaching of Christianity.