



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

SACRE

Date and Time

3.30 pm, TUESDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2024

Location

**Virtual Meeting - Zoom
(for public access please contact us)**

Contact Point

Jasmine Jones

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SACRE

MEMBERSHIP (7)

Plaid Cymru (4)

Councillors

Menna Baines
Elin Walker Jones

Meryl Roberts

Paul John Rowlinson

Independent (3)

Councillors

Anne Lloyd-Jones
Angela Russell

John Pughe Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Christian and Other Religions and Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

Natham Abrams
Mr Mohamed Arabi
Eurfryn Davies
Bethan Davies Jones
Edward Parri-Jones
Eirian Bradley Roberts
Dr Sibani Roy
Rev. Nick Sissons
Patrycja Bielak Smith
Gwawr Maelor Williams
Naomi Wood

Judaism
Islam
Union of Welsh Baptists
Union of Welsh Independents
Humanist
Catholic Church
Hinduism
Methodist Church
Buddhism
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Church in Wales

Teachers

Miriam A. Amlyn
Heledd Jones
Emma Roberts
Vacant Seat - NAHT

NAS/UWT
NEU
UCAC
NAHT

Co-Opted Members:

Eleri Moss

Secondary Heads

A G E N D A

1. **QUIET REFLECTION OR PRAYER**

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies.

3. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

4. **URGENT ITEMS**

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

5. **MINUTES**

5 - 7

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 02 July, 2024 be signed as a true record (attached).

6. **JEWISH HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH WALES**

To receive a verbal presentation by Klavdja Erzen (Programme and Project Manager) about bilingual Holocaust educational resources.

7. **AN UPDATE ON THE WORK OF DEVELOPING THE COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDELINES**

To receive a verbal update by Councillor Menna Baines on the progress of the Collective Worship Guidelines.

8. **REPORT ON THE TEACHING PROVISION OF RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS IN SCHOOLS IN WALES**

8 - 31

To consider the report.

9. **GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES DRAFT SPECIFICATION SEPTEMBER 2025**

32 - 122

To receive a verbal update by Miriam Amlyn (NAS/UWT) on the draft proposal.

S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

02/07/2024

Present:

Councillors: Menna Baines, Anne Lloyd-Jones, Jina Gwyrfai, and Paul Rowlinson

Others:

Christian and Other Faiths and Non-religious Philosophical Convictions: Eirian Bradley-Roberts (The Catholic Church)

Teachers:

Officers: Buddug Mair Huws (Assistant Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Co-opted Members: Eleri Moss (Secondary Headteachers)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Item 9: Nia Eleri Roberts (School Pilgrimage Engagement Officer, Llan Project)

1. PRAYER OR QUIET REFLECTION

The meeting opened with an opportunity for quiet reflection.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Menna Baines as chair for 2024/25.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Meryl Roberts as Vice Chair for 2024/25.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- Councillors Meryl Roberts, Elin Walker Jones, John Pugh Roberts and Beca Brown.
- Teachers: Heledd Jones and Emma Roberts
- Nathan Abrams (Judaism)
- Eurfryn Davies (The Baptist Union of Wales)
- Nick Sissons (The Methodist Church)

Einir Rhian Davies (Democracy Services Officer) was thanked for years of service to the SACRE Meetings. Best wishes were extended to her in her new post.

5. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

6. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Sadness was expressed at the shocking death of Bethan James (GwE) and she was thanked for her work and support over the years. Expressions of sympathy were shared with Bethan's family.

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 21 November, 2023 as a true record.

8. ANNUAL REPORT – GWYNEDD SACRE 2022/23

The Report was presented by the Chair highlighting the following main points:

It was recognised that it was a difficult year because the context for the SACRE's work had changed quite a bit.

It was directed that one of the main duties of the SACRE was to monitor standards in the schools. Reference was made to the fact that this was a challenging task because ESTYN review methods had just been revised. Members were reminded that the SACRE had been asking schools to complete self-appraisal questionnaires in the past but confirmed that this questionnaire was no longer circulated.

The second main duty of the SACRE which is to consult on Worship in schools was highlighted. It has been noted that this had been on the programme of work recently, with the aspiration of updating the Collective Worship Guide in schools.

Disappointment was expressed that the agreed syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics of the New curriculum was not timely. It was elaborated that this was not possible because there was some time between the agreed syllabus being agreed and the Cabinet approving it.

Members were reminded that there were currently empty seats on the Gwynedd SACRE and Members were encouraged to suggest suitable individuals to fill these to secure full membership.

A correction to the Report was noted prior to publication ensuring that Membership was updated.

Everyone was thanked for their work for the SACRE and all their valuable contributions over the past few years. Gratitude was also extended to the Assistant Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk for producing the Report.

RESOLVED to accept the Report with the amendments raised as part of the discussion.

9. LLAN PROJECT

The item was presented by the School Pilgrimage Engagement Officer, Llan Project highlighting the following main points:

It was reported that the project received the support of the Church in Wales Evangelism Fund for the development of pilgrimage within the Diocese and the learning of the Welsh language. It was elaborated that the project had been funded for 7 years.

One element of the project's work was detailed, which was to re-develop pilgrimage routes. It was noted that the first of these 'Llwybr Cadfan' was launched at the National Eisteddfod in 2023, detailing the route going from Tywyn to Ynys Enlli. It was confirmed that a link on the 'Eventbrite' website allowed users to walk the path as well as to join groups walking the path. It was explained that a map of the route was also available on the Outdoor Active website and a paper copy of the map would be available to be purchased shortly. It was elaborated that a second route called the 'Llwybr Cybi a Seiriol' was also currently being developed in Anglesey. It was confirmed that work was ongoing to develop maps and share information on these routes.

It was explained that one of the main roles of the School Pilgrimage Engagement Officer, the Llan Project was to motivate teachers to use the theme of 'pilgrimage' within their classwork as well as promoting religious history and the Welsh language. It was stressed that this project was available to all schools, not just church schools. It was noted that it was hoped that lesson packs, visits and presentations would be available to all schools soon. Examples of these teaching packages were shared. Pride was expressed that teachers were sharing positive feedback from the project so far and appreciated the resources available to schools.

Other projects being developed as part of the project were highlighted including a website for teachers, projects across schools, workshops on church sites, a film resource and also books about local saints.

Everyone involved in the project were congratulated for their work in the field of pilgrimages and in developing the confidence of schools in the teaching of Religion, Values and Ethics.

10. JEWISH HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH WALES

It was confirmed that officers had received a request from the Jewish History Association of South Wales to postpone this item until the next meeting. It was elaborated that this item would be presented at the SACRE meeting to be held on 19 November 2024.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

A copy of the minutes of the recent Wales SACREs meeting was shared, thanking Eurfryn Davies and Councillor Meryl Roberts for attending the meeting on behalf of Gwynedd.

A letter circulated to Welsh religious leaders as well as the Welsh Government to develop a Collective Worship Guidance was shared. Members were reminded of the need to update the guidance and Councillors Elin Walker Jones and Nick Sissons were thanked for looking at the current guidance as well as formulating recommendations about the way forward. However, it was acknowledged that there were few responses to the letter at this time.

RESOLVED for the Chair to re-send the letter to religious leaders and the Welsh Government and to discuss any responses at the 19 November 2024 meeting.

The meeting commenced at 3.30 p.m. and concluded at 4.15 p.m.

CHAIR



Report on the teaching provision of Religion, Values and Ethics in Schools in Wales (April 2024)

Research By:

Dr Joshua Andrews

Dr Gareth Evans-Jones

Ms Rachel Healand-Sloan

and Prof Lucy Huskinson

Online accessible version: May 2024

CONTEXT AND AIMS

A central remit of the National Centre of Religious Education for Wales is to provide free academic expertise and pedagogical support in the subjects of philosophy, religion, and ethics to teachers and students from GSCE to Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) levels through a variety of activities including workshops, revision sessions, and Continual Professional Development (CPD) events. Since October 2022, the Centre has received a steady stream of negative reports and feedback from primary and secondary teachers across Wales over the implementation of the new curriculum for Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE).

In Wales, the Curriculum and Assessment Act, which came into being in September 2022, renamed 'Religious Education' (RE) to 'Religion, Values and Ethics' (RVE) with the stipulation that it be a compulsory subject for all students aged 3 to 16. It was subsequently integrated into the Humanities Area of Teaching and Learning.

To clarify the problematic issues received by the Centre and to ascertain potential remedies, the Directors of the Centre, Dr Joshua Andrews, Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, and Prof Lucy Huskinson, and a research assistant, Ms Rachel Healand-Sloan, conducted investigative research using qualitative and quantitative questionnaires circulated to teachers of RVE across Wales. Responses were anonymised. Responses were received from 58 schools across 17 different Welsh counties and boroughs, and from primary and secondary schools, special educational needs schools and those specialising in lifelong learning. 34 responded through the medium of English and 24 through the medium of Welsh.

KEY FINDINGS

Findings revealed systematic challenges in the teaching of RVE in Wales, including issues of legal compliance, with over half the schools in Wales are failing to provide the minimal legal provision of RVE teaching across Key Stages 3 and 4, inadequate resources, and instructional deficiencies.

AIMS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire sought to understand how educational institutions across Wales have integrated RVE into their curriculum for Key Stages 1-3. Specifically, it sought to understand, (1) how teachers perceive distinctions between RVE and RE, in terms of their respective learning outcomes, skills-sets, diverse content, teaching methodologies, aims and objectives; (2) the extent to which the updated curriculum incorporates a variety of distinctive global religions, worldviews, and philosophies; (3) whether RVE is taught independently as a standalone subject or as one of several subjects integrated into a broader Humanities curriculum. Where RVE is taught as part of an integrated Humanities curriculum, additional questions were asked to ascertain the time allocated to teaching RVE compared to the other subjects taught alongside it, and whether there are variations in staffing levels and training opportunities for RVE teachers compared to the other subjects.

The questionnaire also solicited information about the potential impact of introducing RVE at Key Stage 3 on the provision of RE and Religious Studies (RS) at Key Stage 4.

PARTICIPANTS

Questionnaires targeted primary schools, secondary schools, and Special Educational Needs (SEN) educational institutions throughout Wales, covering state schools and those with a religious character, to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. Because responses from primary school educators were relatively few, this dataset was not included in our analysis, but it was considered in our assessments of the wider context of the new provision of RVE.

There were 43 respondents. These were teachers who taught in either secondary schools or schools that taught Key Stage 3, such middle schools. 32.56% respondents taught in bi-lingual schools, 30.23% in Welsh medium schools, and 37.21% were from English medium schools.

Responses were received from teachers in the following counties/boroughs:

- Anglesey
- Bridgend
- Cardiff
- Carmarthen
- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Glamorgan
- Gwynedd
- Neath Port Talbot
- Newport
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea
- Wrexham

Participants were asked to identify their teaching role. A variety of answers were given:

- A newly qualified teacher (NQT)
- Classroom teacher
- Head of RVE
- Head of Humanities
- Senior Leadership Team

As expected, the respondents represented teachers with a broad spectrum of teaching experiences, spanning those who identified themselves as newly qualified teachers to those who had been teaching for up to 36 years.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire includes closed and open-ended questions to enable statistical insights through the collation of quantitative data sets, and exploration of qualitative data that provided us with a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the participant's responses. Participants had the option to complete it in English or Welsh.

Data Collection

Initial contact was established with school administrators, and their co-operation was sought in circulating the questionnaire to relevant teaching staff. Informed ethical consent was obtained from participating schools and teachers to ensure they understood the purpose of the questionnaire, their rights to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality safeguarding measures in place. An open call was also issued on social media, and the respondents were informed of their right to withdraw their answers at any time. Participants were anonymised to encourage fuller and unrestricted responses. The questionnaire was administered electronically to allow for efficient data collection, reduced environmental impact, and to allow teachers and institutions to respond at their convenience within the prescribed deadline.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from closed questions were processed using statistical software to generate descriptive and inferential statistics, providing a quantitative overview of trends and patterns. Open-ended responses were subject to thematic analysis, allowing for the identification and exploration of recurring themes, opinions, and insights.

FINDINGS

This section examines responses to the key questions in turn.

1. Is RVE at your institution a compulsory subject for all students between the ages of 3 and 16?

As noted, it is a legal requirement that RVE is taught in Welsh schools (Curriculum and Assessment Act for Wales 2022). However, our findings reveal a significant proportion of schools are not fulfilling this legal requirement. Only 17 (39.53%) confirmed that RVE was a compulsory subject in their school, while 25 (58.14%) indicated it was not treated as such. One teacher did not provide a response (2.33%).

Discussion

This disparity demonstrates a failure to comply with legal mandates but also suggests there are significant and detrimental implications for the educational development of students. The new curriculum for RVE places a strong emphasis on the need to understand diverse religious beliefs, ethical principles, and societal values. By neglecting to include RVE as a compulsory subject, schools are in effect deskilling their students from vital social skills and denying them opportunities to understand their role as responsible citizens in an increasingly multicultural society in Wales and beyond. RVE plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and cultural understanding within Welsh society. Through the exploration of different religious traditions, moral dilemmas, and ethical frameworks, students develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills required to navigate an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Failure to provide this educational foundation not only undermines principles of inclusivity and tolerance but also perpetuates ignorance and prejudice.

The reluctance of schools to make RVE compulsory reflects a systemic problem that extends beyond individual institutions. It underscores the need for greater accountability and enforcement of educational standards to ensure all students have access to a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum.

Some respondents also noted that their school has excluded RVE from their Key Stage 4 curricula, which indicates that some schools may fail to fulfil the legal obligation to teach RVE until the end of Key Stage 4. This prompts the need to investigate the future of GCSE qualifications in the subject area.

2. Which religions are studied as part of the new curriculum?

While the new curriculum framework aims to empower teachers to incorporate a broader range of ethical and philosophical worldviews, it is evident that many schools are still primarily focusing on the study of the traditional 'big six' religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism). Subsequently, these schools are delivering a RE curriculum rather than embracing the rationale of the RVE curriculum.

The survey results reveal that the study of Christianity has a monopoly on religions studied, with a sizeable 98% of respondents noting its inclusion within their curriculum. The study of Judaism was included in 88% of curricula, and the study of Islam in 84% of curricula. These results reflect traditional trends in Welsh religious education. While dharmic religions are represented, such as Hinduism (72%), Buddhism (70%), and Sikhism (63%), the inclusion of other minority religions, such as Paganism, Humanism, and Bahai is minimal, with only 5% of teachers reporting their study.

The data indicates a lack of significant consideration given to secular and philosophical viewpoints, with only 2% of teachers reporting the study of atheism and non-religious beliefs. This suggests a missed opportunity for schools to diversify their curricula and provide students with invaluable exposure to a broader spectrum of moral and philosophical perspectives.

Discussion

The absence of specific worldviews relevant to local and regional areas of Wales, or those related to staff specialisms is concerning. Despite the flexibility afforded by the new curriculum framework, there is little evidence to suggest that schools are using this opportunity to incorporate the diverse perspectives that may resonate more closely with the lived experiences of their own students and/or with the expertise of their teaching staff.

Our findings highlight a significant gap between the objectives of the RVE curriculum and its implementation in schools across Wales. Most schools appear to be maintaining a narrow and limited view of religion, focusing only on traditional religions, while neglecting the broader mandate of introducing students to a wide range of secular and philosophical viewpoints. Moving forward, it is imperative for schools to embrace the principles of RVE by diversifying their curricula to ensure that students are upskilled and equipped with a more comprehensive understanding of ethics, values, and worldviews.

3. Are there resources available to assist schools to develop and deliver the new RVE curriculum?

Only 18 (41.86%) respondents stated that resources were available to assist schools in developing the new curriculum. 25 (58.14%) respondents indicated resources were severely insufficient and that there were no readily available resources. It was noted that there is only one official textbook and that is in English only.¹

Discussion

Our findings reveal a concerning lack of support and guidance for teachers. The scarcity of resources poses serious questions about the planning and implementation of the new

¹ Parry, L. and Hayes, J. (2022) Curriculum for Wales: Religion, Values and Ethics for 11-14 years, Hodder Education: London (ISBN-10: 1398348740; 232 pages).

curriculum. Adequate teaching materials are fundamental to ensure adequate development of the subject and its effective instruction within schools.

The fact that only one official RVE textbook has been published, and only in English, for pupils aged 11-14, is wholly inadequate. Moreover, the focus of this handbook is predominantly on different religions, and as such, it fails to address the wider remit and principles of RVE. This is problematic, particularly when a teacher is attempting to plan for its teaching alongside other subjects, such as History and Geography, as part of the mixed Humanities curriculum.

The absence of a Welsh-language version of the textbook further exacerbates the issue and raises significant concerns about the provision of Welsh-medium resources and attitudes towards Welsh-medium education. Despite the legal parity of Welsh and English in Wales since 2011, the failure to publish a Welsh version of this textbook simultaneously with the English version suggests teaching and learning RVE in Welsh is of lesser value than it is in English. Respondents have responded to the English-only textbook with frustration, with one noting that they had personally contacted the publisher, Hodder Education, to request permission to translate some parts of the book. Permission was denied. It has since come to light that Hodder Education have no intention of translating this textbook in to the medium of Welsh.

Despite these challenges, some positive examples of useful sources were mentioned by respondents, notably, by respondents who were based in south-east and south-west regions of Wales, where it was mentioned on several occasions that Swansea's Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE) has been consistent and clear in its guidelines for the implementation of the RVE curriculum. Additionally, pedagogical resources that are available on online platforms such as the NATRE website, Humanist websites, and RVE Facebook groups were noted as offering some support to teachers who are navigating the new curriculum.

4. Have the government's guidelines² helped you to develop RVE in your school?

More than half of the respondents (23: 53.49%) expressed dissatisfaction with the Welsh Parliament's (WP) guidelines. These respondents found the guidelines ambiguous and potentially misleading. Several noted the guidelines were vague, unclear, and open to radically different interpretations, thereby suggesting the potential for radically different RVE curricula being taught throughout schools in Wales. Some noted that they approach their teaching of RVE as if it were still RE. Others noted they are developing their curriculum to focus more on philosophy and less on religion.

Several respondents felt the terms 'values' and 'ethics' in RVE required clear definitions, and guidance on the topics that ought to be included in the study of values and ethics. Some of

² The WP Guidelines are available at:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/consultation-document-curriculum-for-wales-religion-values-and-ethics-guidance.pdf>

these respondents felt this was of particular concern for those teaching RVE in special educational needs (SEN) schools.

One teacher acknowledged that the guidelines outlined at the end of the Welsh curriculum document were useful “to some extent”.

Discussion

The WP’s failure to provide a coherent and cohesive vision for RVE has left teachers struggling to interpret and implement the curriculum effectively. This lack of clarity results in varying and contrasting interpretations, which has the potential to lead to disparities in the quality and content of the subject across schools in Wales. This raises questions about whether students across Wales are being adequately prepared for GCSE RE within their Key Stage 3 curriculum, and whether schools are realistically addressing topics of ethics and values in their curriculum or simply reverting to the older RE curriculum. Furthermore, the lack of guidance for SEN schools underscores the need for further research and tailored support in this area.

5. Have you had the opportunity for professional training to assist you with the new curriculum?

Among the respondents, 24 (55.81%) indicated they had received some form of training, while 19 (44.19%) reported they had not. A notable discrepancy emerged between English medium and Welsh medium teachers, with a significantly higher proportion of Welsh medium teachers noting they had not received any form of training.

Discussion

The lack of clarity on WP’s guidelines is compounded by the fact that relatively few RVE teachers have received training for the new curriculum. There is an expectation that every teacher should receive adequate training to manage the substantial changes in the curriculum. The lack of training for Welsh-medium teachers is particularly concerning, and this concern is exacerbated with the absence of the Welsh-medium textbook (see above). The lack of Welsh-medium training for RVE undermines the principles of bilingual education and risks alienating Welsh-speaking students both individually and by perpetuating linguistic disparities within the educational system.

There were positive responses from respondents whose schools provided them with training for the new curriculum. Specific initiatives were lauded. These include the efforts of some individuals, such as Jennifer Harding-Richards, an RE Advisor and a member of the SACRE, for Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire who conducted evening training sessions for teachers in schools across this region to explore different religions and world views. Another initiative mentioned was that of Lat Blaylock, from *RE Today*, who hosts training sessions for teachers, and a conference, StrictlyRE, both of which are targeted at teachers across the UK and require payment to attend (£100+).

One respondent mentioned that the Diocesan Education Department offered some training sessions online (through TEAMS). It is unclear from their response what these involved. Similarly, a respondent from Powys mentioned that educational trips and a working group were available to them to help them tackle the new curriculum, but the details of these are unclear. The initiatives mentioned suggest training opportunities are sporadic and unavailable to many regions in Wales, unless individuals are willing and able to pay for the opportunities available to them online, coming out of England.

It is important to note that the training sessions available to students in Swansea and Carmarthenshire are held in the evenings and weekends. This required teachers to sacrifice personal time, and it inevitably meant some teachers would not be able to attend. Furthermore, these sessions rely on the goodwill of academics with expertise in philosophy, religion, and ethics to contribute to the training sessions. Indeed, members from our Centre have contributed to them.

Some respondents who noted that some training was given to them from within their own institution, described sessions that were unhelpful. Others found them relatively helpful. The consistency and effectiveness of training provided by schools varies substantially.

Given the comprehensive overhaul of the curriculum to include broader philosophical and ethical perspectives, it is concerning that widespread training is not accessible to all RVE teachers to ensure they feel adequately prepared to deliver the new curriculum. It is crucial that gaps in training are addressed. Further research is required to identify the training available for every region across Wales and the feasibility of its costs and timing of its delivery.

6. Has the new curriculum for Wales benefited RVE?

25 (58.14%) respondents believe the new curriculum is beneficial in theory and could be effective if carefully developed and applied. 17 (39.53%) stated that the new curriculum was not beneficial, with several noting its lack of coherent vision. A significant number of those who expressed dissatisfaction were from Welsh-medium schools, being 11 respondents. One respondent chose not to answer this question.

Discussion

Respondents acknowledge the potential benefits of the curriculum's broader scope with its capacity for transformative education by encouraging students to explore diverse lived experiences, various religious traditions, and philosophical perspectives, and to reflect more deeply on ethical issues. But respondents also expressed concerns about the inconsistencies and ambiguities that surround the implementation of RVE across schools in Wales. It was noted by some that RVE does not have a coherent identity. This was mirrored in several responses where teachers expressed confusion and difficulties in transitioning from traditional RE curriculums to the broader, and more inclusive framework of RVE. The lack of unified guidance and clarity from the Government on the differences between the two subjects was noted again here by teachers as a key source of the problem.

Ultimately, while teachers recognise the inherent value and potential of RVE, addressing the current gaps in implementation and providing adequate support and guidance are crucial steps towards realising its fuller benefits in Welsh education.

7. How many hours of curriculum time does RE/RVE currently receive in your school?

The hours allocated to the teaching of RVE varies significantly across schools. On average, the time allocated to teaching RVE is one hour per week. However, varying allocations of time were reported. Some respondents noted more favourable circumstances, such as two hours per week, with one respondent reporting an allocation of five hours per week for Year 7 students, followed by two hours per week for students in Years 8 and 9. One respondent noted that RVE was allotted only 15 hours per year as part of a mixed Humanities curriculum.

Discussion

There is considerable disparity in the hours allocated for RVE across schools in Wales. This reinforces inconsistencies in curriculum delivery and poses significant questions around equal opportunities available to students studying RVE in Wales. Where the time allocated to RVE is severely limited and restricted, students are unlikely to be exposed to the diversity of religious perspectives and ethical dilemmas required for the RVE curriculum, and, by the same token, it is likely to lead to superficial understandings and to skewed impressions of the values adopted within society and those upheld in other cultures. A reduction in time-allocation could therefore inadvertently undermine and damage the intended outcomes of the new curriculum.

One respondent highlighted that RVE is taught for only 15 hours per year as part of a mixed Humanities curriculum. This is alarming, since Humanities subjects are collectively assigned 4 hours a week. This means that other subject areas heavily prioritised to the detriment of RVE.

Further research needs to be undertaken to understand whether the shift from a standalone RE curriculum to its integration into a broader Humanities framework has had a negative impact on the aims and objectives and teaching quality of RVE, and, by extension, a reduction in religious literacy, problem-solving skills, critical skills of analysis, ethical reasoning, and moral understanding among school leavers in Wales.

8. Does RVE receive the same amount of time as the old curriculum for RE in Wales?

26 (60.47%) respondents reported that RVE is assigned the same or similar hours as RE had been prior to the transition to the new curriculum. 15 (34.88%) respondents noted it has been assigned fewer hours. 2 did not respond. Two respondents noted that their schools have chosen either to reduce RVE/RE at Key Stage 4 or entirely remove it.

Discussion

The reduction of RVE provision compared to its older counterpart, RE, is widespread. The removal or reduction of RVE from Key Stage 4 is alarming in two respects. First, it directly contravenes the legal requirement that RVE is taught to all students up to the age of 16. Some schools are thereby failing in their legal obligation to provide a comprehensive education to their students by failing to teach them essential content and skills related to inclusivity and tolerance. Second, it deprives students of the opportunity to develop life skills that are crucial for personal and social development.

9. Does RVE need more curriculum time?

32 (74.42%) respondents believe RVE requires a greater allocation of taught hours in the curriculum to ensure it is properly taught to allow students sufficient time to learn its content and skills.

Comments from respondents include:

"We get half the time that History and Geography do in year 7 and 8 and even less in year 9. Yet we are expected to make the same level of progress with the students."

"The only other subjects allocated such a small amount of time are the Arts. As an academic subject RVE should receive similar hours as the other humanities."

"RVE is one of the most relevant subjects we teach students as they will have to understand religion, ethics and philosophy when they go into the real world. Yet despite dealing with such important things, it is given less time than the other humanities."

Discussion

The call for increased time allocation to RVE highlights a perceived deficiency in the current curriculum structure compared to other subjects in the Humanities curriculum. Despite the legal mandate to teach RVE as a compulsory subject, our research suggests that schools may be struggling to integrate it effectively within existing schedules and priorities. This may be exacerbated by competing demands to teach other subjects, by limited resources for RVE, and insufficient training and support for RVE teachers.

Comments from teachers suggest that the widespread desire for more time allocated to RVE may reflect broader perceptions about the increasing significance of RVE in society today, to equip students with the skills required to navigate real-world challenges, complex moral and ethical dilemmas, and to engage constructively with diverse communities.

One respondent noted, "RVE doesn't have a specified 5%, not in the guidance on Hwb."³ This underscores the lack of clear guidelines given to required time allocation for the

³ Hwb: the online government repository of resources to support the Curriculum for Wales: <https://hwb.gov.wales/resources>.

subject, and this, in turn, hampers efforts to situate RVE fairly and sufficiently within the curriculum.

10. Is RE/RVE a standalone subject or part of the Humanities curriculum?

25 (58.14%) respondents reported that RVE is integrated into a mixed Humanities curriculum at their school, and 18 (41.86%) respondents stated it is taught as a standalone subject.

Discussion

Teaching RVE as part of a mixed Humanities curriculum suggests an interdisciplinary approach, where themes of religion, values, and ethics are interwoven with other subjects such as history, geography, and social studies. This approach has the potential to provide students with a more holistic understanding of how religious beliefs and ethical principles intersect with broader societal issues. By integrating RVE into the humanities curriculum, schools may foster a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of different cultural perspectives and moral frameworks.

However, the data we have acquired from the survey suggests this integrative and holistic approach is not being adopted, but, rather, that RVE is side-lined with focus given to the teaching to other subjects represented in the mixed Humanities curriculum. In addition to the ease with which subjects can be side-lined in favour of others, the mixed Humanities approach increases the likelihood that students are being taught by someone who has no specialism in one or more of the subjects studied. This means the depth and quality of the instruction and education may be compromised.

Teaching RVE as a standalone subject offers the advantage of dedicated time and focus specifically on religious education, values, and ethics, and opportunities for deeper, more meaningful discussions and critical reflections on complex issues related to morality, identity, and belief. Both approaches have their merits and drawbacks, and the decision to teach RVE within a mixed Humanities curriculum or as a standalone subject will vary depending on factors such as school resources, curriculum priorities, and pedagogical preferences. Regardless of the approach taken, it is imperative that RVE is taught comprehensively.

The next three questions (10b-10d) sought to provide clarity into the positive and negative aspects to these different approaches to teaching RVE, and whether teaching RVE as part of an integrative humanities curriculum puts severe constraints on teaching it effectively, in terms of time allocated and lack of expertise to teach it.

10b. If RVE is taught as part of the humanities curriculum, does it receive the same amount of time as other Humanities subjects?

65% of the respondents (27 respondents) teach RVE as part of a mixed Humanities curriculum. Of this representative group, 12 respondents (27.91%) indicated that RVE does not receive the same amount of time as other Humanities subjects, whilst 16 (37.21%)

stated the subject was allocated equal time. 3 respondents provided further details on how RVE features within their Humanities curricula as follows. 1 respondent noted that while History and Geography receive three hours per week, RVE only receives two hours per fortnight. Another indicated that History and Geography receive a total of 70 hours of time each for students in Years 7 and 8, while RVE receives only 15 hours within the same timeframe. The third respondent mentioned they are allowed to teach RVE for just half the time allocated to History and Geography for students in Years 7 and 8, with a further reduction to 1 hour every fortnight for students in Year 9.

Discussion

Rates in response were split between 10b and 10c. Responses to 10b confirm that there is a substantial disparity between time allocated to RVE compared to other Humanities subjects and responses provide some insight into the dissatisfaction teachers feel about the disparity. Responses to this question highlight the importance of the teacher's feelings about their subject expertise and confidence in their ability to shape the delivery of RVE. One respondent noted that the allocation of time for RVE within the Humanities curriculum depends on the teacher's own proficiency and enthusiasm for teaching the theme of a unit. This indicates potentially substantial variations in the quality and consistency of RVE instruction across classrooms and raises concerns about the educational experience and outcomes for students.

10c. If RVE is taught as an independent subject, does it receive the same amount of curriculum time as other Humanities subjects?

One respondent noted that RVE as a standalone subject receives 2 hours every other week, compared to 3 hours per week for the standalone subjects of History and Geography. Another respondent noted that RVE receives 1 hour less per fortnight compared to other Humanities subjects and that RVE is not included or mentioned in Year 6 induction days. Several respondents mentioned that RVE receives less teaching time in Years 8 and 9 as a standalone subject compared to History and Geography. Some respondents simply stated "less," indicating a general perception or awareness of RVE receiving less attention or fewer resources compared to other standalone Humanities subjects. One respondent noted that Geography and History both receive double the instructional time of Religion and Ethics in Year 9 when taught as standalone subjects. Some respondents expressed uncertainty about the differences in teaching time between RVE and other Humanities subjects when taught independently of each other. Two respondents note that RVE receives an hour less per week, highlighting there has been a specific reduction in time assigned to RVE compared to other standalone subjects. One respondent noted that there is no difference in teaching time for Year 8 students when RVE is taught as a standalone subject.

Discussion

Like responses for 10b, the information gleaned here confirms the disparities between time allocated to RVE compared to other Humanities subjects and the dissatisfaction teachers feel about this. The fact that RVE is not included or mentioned in Year 6 induction days in

one school suggests that RVE is not receiving the same or similar levels of emphasis or consideration as other subjects during key transitional periods in the education of their students.

10d. Does your school provide training for teachers who do not specialize in subjects to ensure that they can provide the best education for Humanities?

9 (20.93%) respondents said their schools provided training for Humanities teachers who were non-specialists in their Humanities subject. 33 (76.74%) respondents stated that there were no training opportunities available to non-specialists in humanities subjects. One noted that their Head of Department ensured training in History and Geography but not in RVE, because the subject is, to quote, “just opinion, anyway”. One respondent mentioned the necessity for History teachers to step in and teach RVE lessons due to staffing shortages.

Discussion

It is evident from comments of respondents that there is a palpable concern from teachers about the lack of subject expertise among teachers who are tasked with delivering RVE and other Humanities subjects. Some respondents highlighted the substantial differences in content and skills subjects of RVE, History, and Geography, and emphasized the need for specialised training to ensure teachers are properly equipped to manage their differences sufficiently.

Our research highlights the need to prioritise the training of non-specialist teachers tasked with teaching RVE and other Humanities subjects to ensure the integrity of the curriculum is not jeopardised. It is also clear that there needs to be greater recognition of the unique challenges and complexities of teaching RVE to ensure training is appropriately tailored to its pedagogical requirements.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Responses from the survey expose various challenges and opportunities with the teaching of Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) in Welsh schools. Key points underscore the need for comprehensive support, clearer guidance, and ongoing investment to ensure its successful integration into the curriculum. Immediately following the survey, the Centre has received numerous correspondences from teachers who are keen to make additional comments or to express their concerns more forcibly. Below is a summary of key points from the survey and points emphasised within subsidiary correspondence from teachers.

Perception of RVE as a pointless and undervalued subject. RVE tends to be viewed by schools as a mere administrative ‘tick box’ requirement, rather than an opportunity for transformative education.

Need for training and investment. This includes financial investment and professional development opportunities to upskill teachers and to improve levels of confidence and competence in delivering RVE sufficiently.

Clarity and consistency in the curriculum. There is confusion among teachers and schools about expectations placed on them for teaching the main religions in Key Stage 3, and that the current level of freedom granted to schools on shaping the RVE curriculum can lead to inconsistent provision, and, by extension, detrimentally harm their students’ preparations for, and performance in GCSE exams.

Availability of resources and confidence to teach. A recurring theme of our research is the lack of confidence among teachers in delivering sufficient RVE lessons, due to inadequate resources, textbooks, general support and guidance.

Workload and Staffing Issues. There are considerable staffing challenges, with some schools lacking teachers with specialism in RVE, or requiring them to teach multiple subjects. This raises concerns about the quality and consistency of RVE provision across schools in Wales.

Unclear government policies. There is a call from teachers and schools for clear educational policies to protect the status of RVE within mixed humanities curricula, and for greater guidance and support from Government bodies to ensure consistency and coherence in RVE provision.

Assessment and Progression. Linked to issues of ambiguity around the scope and focus of the RVE curriculum, are questions raised by teachers about how best to assess student progression across the RVE curriculum in line with principles of progression and ‘what matters’ statements. There is a desire for guidance on cross-curricula links and effective assessment methods.

Professional learning and development opportunities. Teachers recognise the need for ongoing professional development to deepen their knowledge and skills in teaching religious and non-religious beliefs.

Update the curriculum to keep it relevant. There is an expressed need to ensure the RVE curriculum is continually reviewed and updated to ensure its relevance and efficacy in meeting students' own expectations, interests, and needs. This includes providing greater context to the topics taught and avoiding unnecessary stretching the content to incorporate irrelevant facts and information.

Positive impact of RVE. Despite the challenges of teaching RVE, several respondents have noted that the curriculum change from RE to RVE has had a positive impact on their student culture and to the teaching and learning environments within their schools.

CONCLUSION

The discrepancy between legal mandates for the teaching of RVE as a compulsory subject in Wales and the actual implementation of this teaching underscores a systemic failure throughout Welsh schools to adhere to the foundational principles of the new curriculum. The disconnection between government policy and educational practice raises fundamental questions about accountability and the enforcement of educational standards.

Overwhelming pressure on teachers, compounded by a substantial and unwarranted lack of resources and guidance on RVE, suggests that the new curriculum has been hastily arranged and implemented irresponsibly in Welsh schools without consideration and foresight into the inevitable problems that have arisen for schools, teachers, and students alike. While there are some 'good news' stories coming out of regions in the South East and the South West of Wales, the overall position suggests that most students are severely disadvantaged by current RVE education practices and the subject is unduly compromised.

The lack of adequate training for non-specialist teachers tasked with delivering RVE exacerbates concerns over the quality and consistency of RVE across Welsh schools. The dearth of RVE subject expertise among teachers, coupled with staffing shortages, and limited training opportunities, poses significant challenges to the successful implementation of the RVE curriculum. Without sufficient support and resources, teachers may continue to struggle to navigate the complexities of teaching RVE effectively, and their students' performance inevitably suffers as a result.

The narrow focus given to the study of traditional religions at the expense of diverse ethical and philosophical worldviews represents a missed opportunity to foster inclusivity and cultural understanding within the curriculum. While the framework for the new curriculum aims to broaden the scope of religious education and to promote skills of analysis and critical thinking, the persistent emphasis on the 'big six' religions fails to move beyond the older RE curriculum, and reflects a tired and sterile approach that inadequately captures the diversity of contemporary society.

These failings call for urgent action to address the status quo. Clear and unambiguous guidelines, comprehensive and freely accessible resources, and robust support mechanisms are essential to ensure the successful implementation of the RVE curriculum.

While most teachers appear to laud the transition from RE to RVE and cite as key the social importance and timely relevance of its subject matter, a prevailing sentiment of apprehension permeates the comments made by teachers throughout the survey, and this continues in the steady stream of correspondence we continue to receive in the Centre from teachers of RVE since the adoption of the new curriculum in Wales.

Proactive measures and initiatives, including targeted professional development, revisions to the curriculum, and enhanced support mechanisms, are essential to ensure the successful implementation of the RVE curriculum, and by extension, to realise the potentials of RVE as a transformative force in Welsh education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We make the following recommendations.

Government clarity in the use of terminology.

The terms, 'Religion', 'Values', and 'Ethics', have caused substantial confusion for teachers, especially with regards to the definition of 'Values' within this framework. Teachers urgently require explicit guidance from the WP to elucidate their meanings, especially the nuanced distinctions between 'Ethics' and 'Values'. Are 'Ethics' and 'Values' meant to be treated synonymously or are they intended to convey distinct meanings within the RVE curriculum? Similarly, are 'Values' in 'RVE' linked to specific kinds of values, akin, perhaps to the 'British Values' initiative in England? Clarity on the definition and meaning of 'Religion', 'Values', and 'Ethics', by explaining their purpose, significance, and alignment with overarching educational objectives is crucial to ensure a uniform understanding across educational institutions and to prevent incongruities in the educational values imparted by different schools in Wales.

Government guidance on content.

While teachers generally appear optimistic about the opportunities that RVE provides for integrating philosophical and ethical worldviews into their curricula, we have identified that many are unable to recognise and select suitable philosophical or ethical theories to incorporate into their teaching plans.

The current literature provided by the WP lacks comprehensive guidance on what constitutes an appropriate philosophical or ethical worldview, offering only limited examples, such as pacifism and ethical veganism. This has led several teachers and schools to hesitate in and sometimes to refrain from adapting their curriculum and choosing instead to revert to the RE curriculum instead of diversifying their curriculum to include a broader spectrum of religious and secular worldviews.

There is a pressing need for clearer guidance on the types of philosophical and ethical worldviews that could be seamlessly integrated into the curriculum. This needs to be supplemented with sample schemes of work circulated to all RVE teachers that serve as practical examples (either for direct implementation into their teaching or as sources of inspiration) that demonstrate effective ways to incorporate philosophical and ethical worldviews into an RVE curriculum.

Through the National Centre for Religious Education, we are well positioned to develop these schemes of work, and to that end, we invite the WP to collaborate with us.

Formally structuring the integrated/mixed Humanities curriculum, Key Stage 3.

Our research has identified that the adoption of a mixed or integrated humanities approach to the teaching of RVE has led to the distinct marginalisation of RVE within the curriculum, with its other subjects (notably, History and Geography) receiving disproportionately more

allocated time. While this is not an issue for all schools in Wales, it is apparent that a substantially high percentage of schools encounter significant challenges in delivering a Humanities curriculum that affords RVE equal time and space alongside other Humanities subjects. The suppression of RVE in the humanities curriculum risks stultifying essential social and analytical skills in students, skills that are vital for academic, social, and personal growth.

It is recommended that the impact of mixed Humanities curricula on GCSE results and A-level results is identified. Our research suggests that a great many students will be taught Key Stage 3 RVE by teachers who specialise in History or Geography, and who lack specialist RVE knowledge. There is a distinct probability that these students may not develop the requisite skills to progress to GCSE RS or A-level RS. By the same token, if these teachers fail to instil enthusiasm for RVE in their students, it could lead to a decline in students opting to take RS at the examination level. Furthermore, given the sensitive nature of some RVE topics, there is a risk that these teachers could inadvertently offend religious groups and compromise the integrity of the subject by presenting ideas inaccurately or introducing inappropriate tasks within their teaching.

Clear guidelines are required to safeguard RVE across educational settings. Given the pivotal role of RVE for preparing students for real life and work within multicultural Wales and beyond, there is strong argument for RVE to be taught only as a distinct and standalone subject. However, if the WAG seeks to continue to allow for the inclusion of RVE in mixed Humanities curriculums, it ought to provide explicit guidelines that specify the structure of these curricula to ensure equitable time is allocated for each subject. Furthermore, schools require clear guidance on whether mixed Humanities curricula should be delivered through distinct units, with each focussed on one Humanities subject, or whether a thematic approach ought to be adopted, where a specific theme is explored from different perspectives garnered from each Humanities subject.

We urge the WP to ensure that Estyn, the education inspectorate for Wales, reviews the delivery of RVE in all schools and establishes a mandate that ensures RVE is not side-lined within the school curriculum. We strongly recommend the WP collaborate with the National Centre for Religious Education to formulate a clear and comprehensive set of guidelines that positions RVE properly, fairly, and effectively within curricula. These guidelines will emphasise the minimum time requirements assigned to RVE across all Key Stages.

The provision of free and easily accessible sessions of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for RVE teachers and non-specialist teachers tasked with teaching RVE.

The teaching of RVE by teachers who have no specialism in the subject areas is concerning, especially when the sensitive nature of its subject matter is considered and the prospect that many non-specialist teachers may inadvertently misrepresent and potentially offend students and others with their lack of knowledge of religious and philosophical ideas, beliefs, and viewpoints. Furthermore, the skills of critical analysis and reflection that RVE teaches requires a degree of sophistication and proficiency that non-specialist teachers may

find challenging. This becomes especially problematic when preparing students for the demands of the GCSE examination in the subject.

Correspondence to our Centre by teachers indicate that the mixed Humanities approach to RVE is starting to impact detrimentally on the professional development of associate teachers, by preventing them from completing their PGCEs due to a lack of opportunities to teach RVE during placements.

Given these concerns, we strongly recommend that the WP discourages secondary schools from adopting a mixed Humanities curriculum at Key Stage 3. An alternative solution would be for the Government to work with the National Centre for Religious Education to establish Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes that are tailored to the needs of non-specialist teachers tasked with teaching RVE. These programmes would provide accessible online training at no cost to schools across Wales.

Online CPD sessions are currently available to teachers with specialism in RVE, but these are expensive, and available only in English and not in Welsh. CPD sessions will need to acquaint current RVE teachers with a diverse array of philosophical and ethical worldviews suitable for inclusion in the new RVE curriculum. They are vital to ensuring teachers possess the requisite subject knowledge to deliver these aspects of RVE meaningfully and accurately. They can help to install confidence in teachers to teach these subjects and help them to avoid common misrepresentation of diverse worldviews. We are well positioned to provide CPD opportunities to ensure the effective implementation of RVE in schools by specialist RVE and non-specialist RVE teachers alike.

Allocation of RVE pedagogical resources.

Our research highlights substantial challenges faced by schools and teachers to identify and access helpful pedagogical resources to aid their teaching of RVE. This is felt most viscerally in Welsh-medium schools where resources are scant, compared to English-medium schools which benefit from resources published in *RE Today* and CPD training sessions (with the caveat that *RE Today* is accessible only to members of the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), and CPD training sessions are often at personal financial cost). The disparity in resources available in English and Welsh has implications for the development of curricula. While some English- medium schools have managed to diversify their curriculums to encompass religious, spiritual, and philosophical world views that had not previously been included in their curricula, Welsh-medium teachers predominantly maintain curricula that mirror the former RE curricula, by focussing on the six major world religions.

To meet these challenges, the National Centre for Religious Education is committed to providing a range of free bilingual resources, including schemes of work, media resources, and CPD opportunities for all schools in Wales. But the Centre requires collaboration with the Welsh Assembly Government to acquire greater clarity on its vision for RVE. This will ensure the resources produced by the Centre align with the Government's goals.

Retention of RVE teachers in Wales.

Our Centre has received worrying correspondence from RVE/RE teachers that explain how the introduction of the mixed Humanities approach in Key Stage 3 has caused them, or their colleagues, to leave their schools in Wales to find teaching posts in RE in England. The common reports and stories we hear in these cases are about their frustration with the marginalisation of RVE in the humanities mixed curriculum adopted by their schools, and how they found themselves, consequently, having to teach History and Geography instead—subjects that they were not sufficiently qualified to teach and felt little enthusiasm for.

It is a cause for great concern if these examples reflect an increasing national trend of RVE teachers relocating to England. This would inevitably exacerbate the shortage of quality teaching of RVE in Wales. The concern is made more pressing when one considers the fact that bursaries of up to £10,000 are now available for those who wish to train as an RE teacher in England, while no such bursaries are available to trainee teachers in Wales. It is probable that more graduates from Wales will opt to enrol in PGCE programmes in England.

While it may not be possible for the Welsh Assembly Government to offer competing bursaries for PGCE RVE/RE to ensure the good quality trainee teachers are kept in Wales, the Government can begin to reduce the detrimental impacts on RVE in secondary schools by utilizing the recommended strategies we outline in this report.

Clear KS4 Guidelines.

Our research reveals that a substantial number of schools have either eliminated or significantly reduced mandatory Key Stage 4 provision for RVE/RE. This decision will inevitably hasten declining numbers of students in Wales who enrol in GCSE Religious Studies (RS). An additional obstacle that will likely contribute to this decline is to the recent decision to eradicate from September 2025 short course GCSEs in the subject. This means that there will no longer be accredited courses in the subject area that can be completed by schools within the time previously allocated to Key Stage 4 RE/RS of one hour per week. While the New Curriculum for Wales removes the legal requirement for schools to teach RVE/RE/RS up to the age of 18, there is an unequivocal legal obligation for secondary schools to provide RVE/RE/RS to students up to the age of 16.

We urge the WP to enforce the compulsory nature of RVE/RE/RS for all students up to the age of 16, by actively promoting and encouraging secondary schools to invite students to engage in GCSE courses in Religious Studies, and by ensuring that Estyn, the Education Inspectorate for Wales, is diligent in its monitoring of RVE/RE/RS provision at Key Stages 3 and 4 during its inspections. Schools failing to meet requirements for delivering RVE/RE/RS across Key Stages 3 and 4, should face due consequences.

Revise the existing proposals to change GCSE Religious Studies (RS).

We have profound reservations about the structure of the current GCSE Religious Studies curriculum, which came into being in 2017, and the nature of proposed changes to it. We

strongly urge that the following considerations are reviewed before the GCSE curriculum is changed. Prior to 2017, the previous incarnation of the GCSE RS adopted a thematic approach, which lent a dynamic quality and flexibility to its structure. By contrast, the structure of the current curriculum is rigid and unnaturally separates religion from philosophy and ethics. The current curriculum comprises two units that examine the beliefs and practices of two religions, and two units that examine the philosophical and ethical teachings of two religions in relation to a specific theme. While the current curriculum encourages academic rigour by fostering skills of analysis and extended writing, it falls short in its seamless integration of religious beliefs and practices with broader philosophical and moral considerations and contemporary social issues to which students can relate. It is perhaps unsurprising that the rigid and abstract structure of the current GCSE has coincided with a notable decline in students sitting RS at GCSE and A-level.

We have reviewed with interests the proposals to revise the current GCSE in Religious Studies. We had hoped there would be a return to a thematic approach to encourage students' meaningful reflection on religious beliefs in connection to philosophical and ethical issues while maintaining its rigorous academic skills. We are disappointed to see the proposals seek to maintain the rigid structure of the current curriculum.

We advocate for the renaming of the GSCE to 'Religion, Values and Ethics' to reflect its content more accurately and to provide a consistent pedagogical narrative across the student's educational experience, given that up to the point of taking the GCSE, students have only encountered RVE in primary school and at Key Stage 3. And we urge the WP to reconsider the proposed changes and are keen to collaborate to develop an approach that fosters student engagement with the ever-evolving educational needs and interests of new student cohorts, while upholding the integrity of the subject.

Final words: the need to look forward.

The new curriculum for Wales holds immense potential for Religious Values and Ethics (RVE), offering teachers the flexibility to craft meaningful schemes of work that familiarise students with diverse religious, philosophical, and moral beliefs within Wales and beyond. It stands as an opportunity to cultivate cultural awareness, challenge stereotypes, and nurture critically thinking and informed global citizens. RVE, under the new curriculum, can empower students to build strong academic foundations, to analyse and evaluate evidence, to formulate opinions grounded in rational arguments, and to develop informed and more objective perspectives, and to cultivate social awareness, respect, and empathy.

The current trajectory for RVE, however, is regressive and departs significantly from its potential. The National Centre for Religious Education is keen to work closely with the Welsh Assembly Government to curtail this downward trajectory and backward-looking approach and to secure the potentially bright future of RVE for Wales. To that end, the Centre advocates the need for further research and investigation into the issues outlined in this report.

There is currently insufficient data regarding the implementation of RVE in primary and SEN environments. While data has been processed from 43 teachers of Key Stage 3 throughout Wales, the Centre intends to expand its investigation through its network of schools to involve more secondary schools. This will lend greater clarity into the emerging issues we have identified in this report.

GCSE Religious Studies

Draft Specification

For teaching from September 2025

First Award 2027

This DRAFT specification has yet to be approved by Qualifications Wales. Centres should therefore expect changes in the final approved version.



Made for Wales.

Page 31
Ready for the world.

This specification meets the requirements of the following regulatory documents published by Qualifications Wales:

- [Made for Wales GCSE Qualification Approval Criteria](#) which set out requirements for any new GCSE qualification Approved for first teaching from September 2025 and beyond.
- [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#) which contains the rules that all awarding bodies and their qualifications must meet when offering qualifications to learners in Wales.
- Approval Criteria for [GCSE Religious Studies](#) which sets out the subject specific requirements for GCSE Religious Studies qualifications from September 2025 and beyond.

DRAFT

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GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

<p>Unit 1: Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes (to be confirmed) 30% of qualification</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Marks to be confirmed</p>
<p>Questions requiring objective responses, questions that require short and extended answers.</p>
<p>Unit 2: Religion and relationships Non-examination assessment: Duration to be confirmed 20% of qualification</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Marks to be confirmed</p>
<p>Set by WJEC, marked by the Centre and moderated by WJEC. The assessment will be based on one of two themes set by WJEC annually.</p>
<p>Unit 3: Roles, rights and responsibilities Written examination: Duration 1 hour 30 minutes (to be confirmed) 30% of qualification</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Marks to be confirmed</p>
<p>Questions requiring objective responses, questions that require short and extended answers.</p>
<p>Unit 4: Religion and human rights Non-examination assessment: Duration TBC 20% of qualification</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Marks to be confirmed</p>
<p>Set and marked by WJEC. The assessment will feature tasks based on stimulus materials, which will change annually. Available via the WJEC Portal.</p>

This is a unitised, untiered qualification.

Aside from Unit 1, which is an introductory unit, there is no hierarchy implied by the order in which the other units are presented.

The examinations for Units 1 and 3, and the submission of Unit 2 will be available for the first time in summer 2026. The submission of Unit 4 will be available for the first time in summer 2027. Each assessment will then be available every summer series.

The first award of the qualification will be 2027.

Qualification Approval Number: TBC

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims

GCSE Religious Studies supports learners to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, values, teachings, practices, and philosophical convictions
- engage with contrasting lived religious and non-religious experiences
- develop curiosity about the purpose of life
- explore ways in which religious and non-religious ethical and philosophical convictions have influenced human experience and society
- explore evidence from a range of religious and non-religious sources that engage with philosophical, ethical, and moral issues
- appreciate the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of society by understanding the need for tolerance, resilience, and empathy
- reflect on their own values, beliefs, and perspectives and those of others
- align with aspects of the Religion, values and ethics statutory guidance to enable learners to:
 - develop an awareness of self in relation to others
 - make connections to the wider and natural world
 - develop creativity and curiosity
 - explore ultimate questions and contemplate meaning and purpose
- make sense of and interpret human experience, the natural world, and their own place within it, from a pluralistic perspective, understanding different religions and non-religious philosophical convictions in their own locality and in Wales, developing their sense of cynefin, as well as in the wider world

These aims are set out in Qualifications Wales' Approval Criteria.

1.2 Curriculum for Wales

This GCSE Religious Studies qualification is underpinned by the Curriculum for Wales framework and has been designed to ensure that learners can continue to make progress towards the four purposes whilst studying for this qualification. Central to this design are the [principles of progression](#), along with the [statements of what matters](#) and those [subject specific skills and concepts](#) outlined in the '[Designing your Curriculum](#)' section of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experiences

In developing this qualification, we have considered where there are opportunities to embed the cross-curricular themes and where there are opportunities for integral skills and cross-curricular skills to be developed. Appendix A provides a simple mapping, and information to support teachers will be provided in the Guidance for Teaching.

We have also considered where the qualification can generate opportunities for integrating the learning experiences noted in page 82 the Guidance for Teaching will include further information on integrating these learning experiences into delivery.

The GCSE Religious Studies qualification supports the Curriculum for Wales by:

- supporting the statements of what matters¹, giving learners the opportunity to:
 - gain a deeper understanding of the concepts underpinning humanities, and their application in local, national and global contexts
 - understand human experiences better
 - learn how various worldviews and factors can influence their own and others' perceptions and interpretations
 - develop an appreciation of how contexts influence the constructions of narratives and representations
 - develop an understanding of the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of societies
 - appreciate the interplay between a range of factors, including religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews
 - develop a common understanding of the ethnic diversity, identities, experiences and perspectives of their local area, Wales and the wider world
 - explore and develop a tolerant and empathetic understanding of the varied beliefs, values, traditions and ethics that underpin and shape human society.

- supporting the principles of progression² by encouraging learners to:
 - ask increasingly sophisticated enquiry questions
 - engage with an increasing breadth and depth of knowledge and underlying concepts
 - make supported judgements in more complex contexts
 - build an increasingly clear and coherent understanding of the world around them
 - move on to more focused awareness of the lives of others, in their own social context and elsewhere in the world
 - use evidence to construct and support an answer and relating that to representation and interpretation of enquiry results.

The construct of GCSE Religious Studies qualification is based on the Welsh Government subject specific considerations for Religious Studies³. The qualification provides:

- opportunities to understand religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, philosophical convictions, values and experiences from a local, national and international perspective
- opportunities to seek answers to ultimate philosophical questions, such as the purpose and meaning of life
- opportunities to explore the foundations of religious and non-religious viewpoints and the influence of religious and non-religious philosophical convictions on our pluralistic and diverse society over time
- learners with the skills to explore philosophical and moral issues, reflect on their own beliefs and values, and the beliefs and values of others
- opportunities to develop empathy, creativity, curiosity, resilience, tolerance, a sense of cynefin and human experiences within the natural world.

¹ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/statements-of-what-matters/>

² <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/principles-of-progression/>

³ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/designing-your-curriculum/#specific-considerations-for-this-area>

Please note – as explained in Qualifications Wales' report on their outcomes on the Approval Criteria consultation [<https://qualifications.wales/media/knaphlc0/consultation-outcomes-by-subject.pdf>], GCSE Religious Studies is not designed to cover all aspects of RVE guidance.

1.3 Prior learning and progression

Although there is no specific requirement for prior learning, the qualification is designed primarily for learners between the ages of 14 and 16 and builds on the conceptual understanding learners have developed through their learning from ages 3 – 14.

The qualification allows learners to develop a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding which supports progression to post-16 study and prepares learners for life, learning and work. The qualification provides a suitable foundation for the study of Religious Studies at either AS or A level. In addition, the specification provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for learners who do not progress to further study in this subject.

1.4 Guided learning hours

GCSE Religious Studies has been designed to be delivered within 120 – 140 guided learning hours. The qualification has been primarily designed as a 2-year programme for learners in years 10 and 11.

1.5 Use of language

As our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion evolves, so must our language. Updated terminology better reflects individual identities and fosters respect and accuracy. Language used should be specific as possible. Staying informed and adaptable is crucial, as inclusive language promotes dignity and equity. Recognising that language will continue to evolve, we will remain open to further amendments to ensure it accurately represents and supports all individuals. WJEC will inform centres of any amendments and the most up to date version of the specification will always be on the website.

1.6 Equality and fair access

The specification may be followed by any learner, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. It has been designed to avoid, where possible, features that could, without justification, make it more difficult for a learner to access and achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are made for eligible learners to enable them to access the assessments and demonstrate their knowledge and skills without changing the demands of the assessment.

Information on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments is found in the following document from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and

Vocational Qualifications. This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

We will be following the principles set out in this document and, as a consequence of provision for reasonable adjustments, very few learners will encounter a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

DRAFT

2 SUBJECT CONTENT

How to read the amplification

The amplification provided in the right-hand column uses the following three stems:

- 'Learners should understand' is used when learners are required to demonstrate and apply knowledge to familiar or unfamiliar contexts and can synthesise and evaluate information for a given purpose.
- 'Learners should have a basic understanding' is used when learners do not need to understand all aspects of the specified content in detail. Teachers should refer to Guidance for Teaching documents for further guidance on the depth and breadth to which this content should be taught.
- 'Learners should be able to' is used when learners need to apply their knowledge and understanding to source material or demonstrate application of practical skills and techniques.

Centres must teach:

- **either** Christianity **or** Catholic Christianity

and

- **one** world religion from the following list:
 - Buddhism
 - Hinduism
 - Islam
 - Judaism
 - Sikhism (Sikhi)

and

- non-religious beliefs.

Please note that these choices **must** remain consistent across **all** Units.

Unit 1

Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices

Assessment Type: Written examination (1 hour 30 minutes – to be confirmed)

30% of qualification

Marks to be confirmed

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore key diverse religious and non-religious beliefs, practices and worldviews
- develop understanding of key elements of religious studies to enable conceptual understanding of the nature of belief
- explore sources of authority and ethical systems that shape religious and non-religious perspectives towards morality
- understand how beliefs and teachings shape religious and non-religious views on identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, and belief in life after death.

The unit is divided into four parts:

- Nature of belief – all candidates must study the nature of belief
- Christianity or Catholic Christianity - candidates must study **one** of the following options:
 - a - Christianity
 - b - Catholic Christianity
- World religions – candidates must study **one** of the following options:
 - a – Buddhism
 - b – Hinduism
 - c – Islam
 - d– Judaism
 - e – Sikhism (Sikhi)
- Non-religious beliefs – all candidates must study non-religious beliefs

Non-religious beliefs can be assessed in isolation and/or in relation to the religions studied.

Nature of Belief

1.1 Nature of Belief	
In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas: 1.1.1 Nature of belief	
Section	Amplification
1.1.1 Nature of belief	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What theists, monotheists, polytheists, religious pluralists and agnostics believe • Why some believe in a god or gods and identify as religious • What atheists and humanists believe • Why some people do not believe in a god or gods and identify as non-religious.

Christianity or Catholic Christianity

a - Christianity

1.2a Beliefs – Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.2.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Christianity

1.2.2a Christian belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.2.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Christianity	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about the nature of God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creator ex nihilo; Genesis 1:1-2 ● omnipotent ● omniscient ● omnibenevolent ● omnipresent. <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about the Trinity: three aspects of one God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Father: Luke 15:11-32 ● Son: John 1:1-3, 14 ● Holy Spirit: John 14:25-26 and Galatians 5:22-23. <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● birth: Matthew 1:18- 2:12, Luke 1:26-35 and 2:1-21 ● incarnation as the Word: John 1:1-3, 10: 30-38, 14:1-9 ● ministry; Luke 5: 17-24, John 11: 21-27 ● death: Mark 15:1-3 ● Resurrection: John 20:1-21 ● Ascension: Acts 1:9-11 ● Jesus as the Messiah: Matthew 16:13-17 ● as the way to salvation and atonement: John 3:16, 14:6. <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about the soul:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● created in the image of God; Genesis 1:27 ● a divine spark originating from God; Genesis 2:7 ● eternal and transcendent ● humans possess rationality and free will but have fallen; Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3. <p>Key beliefs and teachings of Christianity found within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Apostle's Creed ● the Lord's Prayer. <p>The importance of the Bible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● using the Bible as a source of wisdom and guidance - literal, conservative and liberal interpretations.

1.2.2a Christian belief in action	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Key Christian beliefs and teachings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• supporting the poor; Acts 20:35• giving generously; 2 Corinthians 9:7• duty to put faith into action; James 2:17. <p>Contemporary local or national examples of Christian faith and belief in action - community work and faith-based activism.</p> <p>How the aims and work of Christian Aid reflect Christian beliefs in action.</p>
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1.3a Beliefs about life and death – Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.3.1a Meaning of life in Christianity

1.3.2a Christian beliefs about life after death

1.3.3a Christian practices

Section	Amplification
1.3.1a Meaning of life in Christianity	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Christian beliefs about the meaning of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to worship God; Romans 12:1 teachings on loving God and others; Matthew 22:37-39 spiritual growth and transformation as essential for understanding life's purpose; Luke 8:1-15 - Parable of the Sower.
1.3.2a Christian beliefs about life after death	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The basis for Christian belief in life after death:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John 3:16 John 11: 25-26. <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about life after death:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heaven; John 14:1-4 hell; Luke 12:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9 resurrection; Luke 16:19-31; John 11:24-27; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-22; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.
1.3.3a Christian mourning and funeral practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> committing a person's body to God giving thanks to God for that person's life celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning showing the link between this life and Christian beliefs about life after death. <p>Christian mourning practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of symbols, such as wearing black prayers recited for the deceased. <p>Christian funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vigil service funeral service - prayers, hymns and eulogy burial or cremation and the rite of committal.

1.4a Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.4.1a Christian identity, belonging and practices

1.4.2a Christianity and morality

Section	Amplification
1.4.1a Christian identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of expressing a sense of religious identity and belonging for Christians, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● belonging to a worshipping community ● a shared sense of purpose, direction and morality in life. <p>Christian identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage.</p> <p>Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing commitment to God as an act of religious devotion ● learning more about Christian figures by visiting sites associated with their lives ● following in the footsteps of key figures in Christianity ● experiencing a sense of community ● pilgrimage sites may be associated with miracles. <p>The role, significance and features of the following sites of Christian pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● St David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire ● Taizé. <p>Christian identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions - rites of passage.</p> <p>The role, significance and features of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baptism: Mark 1:9-11, infant; implied in Acts 16:33 and believers' baptism; Acts 2:37-41 ● eucharist/communion: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ● confirmation: Acts 2:1-13.

1.4.2a Christianity and morality

Learners should understand:

Christian beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions:

- obeying divine commands: the Ten Commandments; Exodus 20:1-17
- the Bible as a source of morality:
 - Christian love (agape): Luke 10:25-37; Luke 13:34-35
 - forgiveness: Matthew 6:12; Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 23:34 and Matthew 5:43-44
- the use of conscience to make moral decisions; 2 Corinthians 1:12.

Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife:

- treasures on earth and in Heaven; Matthew 6:19-21 and Luke 16:19-31
- future judgement based on earthly actions; Matthew 25:31-46 - Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

Learners should have a basic understanding of:

- what is meant by the problem of evil - what is meant by moral evil (caused by humans) and natural evil (caused by nature)
- the philosophical challenges posed by belief in God and the existence of evil and suffering - the inconsistent triad
- what a theodicy is, and how the Irenaean (soul-making) and Augustinian (soul-deciding) theodicies attempt to address the problem of evil.

Christianity or Catholic Christianity

b - Catholic Christianity

1.2b Beliefs – Catholic Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.2.1b Key beliefs and teachings in Catholic Christianity

1.2.2b Catholic belief in action

Section	Amplification
<p>1.2.1b Key beliefs and teachings in Catholic Christianity</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about the nature of God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creator ex nihilo; Genesis 1:1-12 ● omnipotent ● omniscient ● omnibenevolent ● omnipresent. <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about the Trinity: three aspects of one God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● St. Augustine's De Trinitate 8.10 ● Father: Luke 15:11-32 ● Son: John 1:1-3, 14 ● Holy Spirit: John 14:25-26 and Galatians 5:22-23. <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● birth: Matthew 1:18- 2:12, Luke 1:26-35 and 2:1-21 ● Incarnation as the Word: John 1:1-3, 10: 30-38, 14:1-9 ● ministry; Luke 5: 17-24, John 11: 21-27 ● death: Mark 15:1-3 ● resurrection: John 20:1-21 ● ascension: Acts 1:9-11 ● Jesus as Messiah: Matthew 16:13-17 ● as the way to salvation and atonement: John 3:16, 14:6. <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about the nature of the soul:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the soul is created in the image of God; Genesis 1:27 ● a divine spark originating from God; Genesis 2:7 ● eternal and transcendent ● humans possess rationality and free will but have fallen; Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3. <p>Key Catholic beliefs and teachings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Nicene Creed ● the Lord's prayer. <p>The importance of the Bible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● using the Bible as a source of wisdom and guidance - literal, conservative and liberal interpretations. <p>The use and importance of other important texts in daily life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Papal encyclicals ● Catechism of the Catholic Church.

1.2.2b Catholic belief in action	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Key Catholic beliefs and teachings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• supporting the poor; Acts 20:35• giving generously; 2 Corinthians 9:7• duty to put faith into action; James 2:17.• Preferential Option for the Poor. <p>Contemporary local or national examples of Catholic faith and belief in action - community work and faith-based activism.</p> <p>How the aims and work of Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) reflect Catholic belief in action.</p>
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1.3b Beliefs about life and death – Catholic Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.3.1b Meaning of life in Catholic Christianity

1.3.2b Catholic beliefs about life after death

1.3.3b Catholic mourning and funeral practices

Section	Amplification
1.3.1b Meaning of life in Catholic Christianity	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs about the meaning of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to worship God; Romans 12:1 teachings on loving God and others; Matthew 22:37-39 St. Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law - the 5 primary precepts spiritual growth and transformation as essential for understanding life's purpose; Luke 8:1-15 - Parable of the Sower.
1.3.2b Catholic beliefs about life after death	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The basis for Catholic belief in life after death:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John 3:16 John 11: 25-26. <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about life after death:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heaven; John 14:1-4; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1022 hell; Luke 12:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1023 resurrection; Luke 16:19-3; John 11:24-27; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-22 and 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44 beliefs about Purgatory; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1022; 1030.
1.3.3b Catholic mourning and funeral practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> committing a person's body to God giving thanks to God for that person's life celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning showing the link between this life and Catholic beliefs about the life after death. <p>Catholic mourning practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mass for the deceased prayers recited for the deceased. <p>Catholic funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vigil service requiem mass funeral service, hymns, prayers and eulogy burial and the rite of committal

1.4b Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Catholic Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.4.1b Catholic identity, belonging and practices

1.4.2b Catholicism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.4.1b Catholic identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of expressing a sense of religious identity and belonging for Catholics, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● belonging to a worshipping community ● shared sense of purpose and direction in life. <p>Catholic identity and belonging expressed through practices and symbolism - pilgrimage:</p> <p>Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing commitment to God as an act of religious devotion ● learning more about Catholic figures by visiting sites associated with their lives ● following in the footsteps of key figures in Catholicism ● experiencing a sense of community ● pilgrimage sites may be associated with miracles. <p>The role, significance and features of the following sites of Catholic pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lourdes ● the Vatican. <p>Catholic identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions - rites of passage.</p> <p>The role, significance and features of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baptism; Mark 1:9-11 ● eucharist/communion; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ● first holy communion ● confirmation; Acts 2:1-13.

<p>1.4.2 Catholicism and morality</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● obeying divine commands such as the Ten Commandments; Exodus 20:1-17 ● St. Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law - the 5 primary precepts ● the Bible as a source of morality: Christian love (agape): Luke 10:25-37; Luke 13:34-35; forgiveness: Matthew 6:12; Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 23:34 and Matthew 5:43-44 ● the use of conscience to make moral decisions; 2 Corinthians 1:12. <p>Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● treasures on earth and in Heaven; Matthew 6:19-21 and Luke 16:19-31 ● future judgement based on earthly actions; Matthew 25:31-46 - Parable of the Sheep and the Goats ● Catechism of the Catholic Church 1022. <p>Learners should have a basic understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● what is meant by the problem of evil - what is meant by moral evil (caused by humans) and natural evil (caused by nature) ● the philosophical challenges posed by belief in God and the existence of evil and suffering - the inconsistent triad ● what a theodicy is, and how the Irenaean (soul-making) and Augustinian (soul-deciding) theodicies attempt to address the problem of evil.
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World religions a – Buddhism

1.5a Beliefs – Buddhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Buddhism

1.5.2a Buddhist belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Buddhism	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Beliefs and teachings of Buddhism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● no belief in a central deity or creator ● the nature of existence: The Four Noble Truths: types of suffering (dukkha); the cause of suffering (tanha); enlightenment as the end of suffering (nirodha) ● the path to liberation from suffering (magga) ● the Noble Eightfold Path as a way to end suffering; Dhammapada 20. <p>The three sections of the Eightfold Path:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● wisdom (panna) right understanding, right intention ● morality (sila) right speech, right action, right livelihood ● meditation (samadhi) right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. <p>The Three Marks of Existence (Lakshanas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● anicca – the concept of impermanence (Dhammapada 20). ● anatta – the concept of no permanent self, using the Story of Nagasena and the Chariot as an example of the idea of the Five Skandhas (Dhammapada 113 and 279) ● dukkha – dissatisfaction arising from an inability to accept anicca and anatta (Dhammacakkapayattana Sutta) <p>Buddhist beliefs and teachings about the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● early life: pre-birth, birth, prediction, life in palace ● Four Sights: old age, sickness, death, holy man ● renunciation: leaving palace, becoming ascetic ● Enlightenment: seeing the world as it really is ● revelation of the Dharma (Samyutta Nikaya)

1.5.2a Buddhist belief in action

Learners should understand:

Key Buddhist beliefs and teachings:

- dana: generous giving (Ittivuttaka 26)
- karuna - compassion due to all living things being interdependent
- metta: loving-kindness. "My religion is very simple, My religion is kindness." (Dalai Lama).

Contemporary local or national examples of Buddhist faith and belief in action - community work and faith-based activism.

How the aims and work of the Karuna Trust reflect Buddhist beliefs in action.

1.6a Beliefs about life and death – Buddhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1a Meaning of life in Buddhism

1.6.2a Buddhist beliefs about life, death and rebirth

1.6.3a Buddhist practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1a Meaning of life in Buddhism	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs about the meaning of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● achieving enlightenment (Nirvana) through the Eightfold Path and other teachings ● cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline ● understanding the nature of suffering and its causes.
1.6.2a Buddhist beliefs about life, death and rebirth	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs about life, death and rebirth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the concept of karma (Dhammapada 1:1 and 1:2) ● the cycle of samsara (Dhammapada 1:16) ● the concept of rebirth (Dhammapada 1:17) ● achieving Nirvana ● different realms of existence ● the views of the Triratna tradition on 'moment-to-moment rebirth'.
1.6.3a Buddhist practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● transferring 'merit' to the deceased person ● using symbols to express meaning ● showing the link between this life and a future life ● remembering that death is not the end of life, but a stage of life between existence and rebirth ● celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased. <p>Buddhist mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mahayana mourning and funeral practices – Japanese and Tibetan ● Japanese practices - chanting, giving the deceased a new name, cremating the body and burying the ashes ● Tibetan practices - use of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, cremation, sky burial, giving offerings and offering food to the deceased ● Theravada mourning and funeral practices – monks chanting, sprinkling water, tying the deceased's hands and feet, placing monks' robes on the coffin and cremation.

1.7a Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Buddhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1a Buddhist identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2a Buddhism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1a Buddhist identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging in Buddhism, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● belonging to a Buddhist community – the sangha ● having a shared sense of purpose, morality and direction in life. <p>Buddhist identity and belonging expressed through devotional practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The practices and significance of three different types of meditation: samatha, vipassana and metta bhavana; Dhammapada 282 ● The practices and significance of chanting; Dhammapada 190 ● The uses and significance of using malas, mantras and mandalas. <p>Buddhist identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions - pilgrimage.</p> <p>Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing respect to the Buddha for his dharma and example ● learning more about Buddhas and Bodhisattvas by visiting sites associated with their lives. <p>The role, significance and features of the following sites of Buddhist pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bodh Gaya ● Lumbini.
1.7.2a Buddhism and morality	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Five Precepts as basic rules for everyday life ● avoidance of the Three Poisons - greed, ignorance and hatred ● the Six Paramitas (perfections) - generosity, morality, patience, energy, meditation and wisdom. <p>The connection between karma, rebirth and morality in Buddhism.</p>

World religions
b - Hinduism

1.5b Beliefs – Hinduism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1b Key beliefs and teachings in Hinduism

1.5.2b Hindu belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1b Key religious beliefs and teachings in Hinduism	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Beliefs and teachings about the nature of God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brahman as one God with many forms; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (391) ● Brahman as the universal soul or spirit, source of all life and in all things (Antaryami); Katha Upanishad 5:2; Chandogya Upanishad 3:14.1 ● Brahman as Bhagavan ● Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman ● nature and role of the Trimurti; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; Kurma Purana 1:6, 1:9, 1:26 ● the concept of avatar; Bhagavad Gita 4:5, 7-8, with reference to Vishnu - Rama (The Perfect Man) and Krishna (the Divine Statesman) ● the role and importance of other gods and goddesses to Hindus - Durga, Ganesh and Saraswati. <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about relationship between Brahman and atman (soul):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the atman as unchanging, indestructible and eternal; identical to the souls of all things (Advaita Vedanta); Bhagavad Gita 2:12, 2:17, 18:61 - similar to salt in water ● the atman is Brahman's creation, Brahman is all-knowing, all powerful but the soul is distinct from Brahman (Dvaita Vedanta) - like a tear and salt water (separate entities). <p>The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Upanishads and the Vedas.
1.5.2b Hindu belief in action	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Key Hindu beliefs and teachings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● dana: generous giving ● karma yoga: selfless action ● seva: selfless service. <p>Contemporary local or national examples of Hindu faith and belief in action - community work and faith-based activism.</p> <p>How the aims and work Sewa International reflect Hindu beliefs in action.</p>

1.6b Beliefs about life and death – Hinduism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1b Meaning of life in Hinduism

1.6.2b Hindu beliefs about life, death and reincarnation

1.6.3b Hindu practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1b Meaning of life in Hinduism	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs about the meaning of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The four aims of human life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dharma – moral duty • kama – worldly pleasure • artha – wealth and power • moksha – spiritual liberation and release from the cycle of samsara
1.6.2b Hindu beliefs about life, death and reincarnation	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs about life, death and reincarnation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the atman as distinct from the physical body and mind; Bhagavad Gita 2:222 • reincarnation; Bhagavad Gita 2:12-13 • the concept of samsara; Bhagavad Gita 2:27 • moksha; Bhagavad Gita 2:15; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.3–6.
1.6.3b Hindu practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning • showing the link between this life and a future life • remembering that death is not the end of life, but a stage of life between existence and rebirth • celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased. <p>Hindu mourning practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tarpana • the Shraddha period. <p>Hindu funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antyesti • Pinda Daan.

1.7b Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Hinduism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1b Hindu identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2b Hinduism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1b Hindu identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging in Hinduism, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● belonging to a Hindu community ● having a shared sense of purpose and direction in life. <p>Hindu identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage.</p> <p>Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing commitment to Brahman as an act of religious devotion ● learning more about Hindu figures by visiting sites associated with their lives ● following in the footsteps of key figures in Hinduism ● experiencing a sense of community. <p>The role, significance and features of the following sites of Hindu pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ayodhy ● Varanasi (Kashi). <p>Hindu identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions: the Bhakti Movement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vaishnav bhakti – devotion to Vishnu ● Shaiva bhakti – devotion to Shiva and Rudra.
1.7.2b Hinduism and morality	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about morality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● dharma – moral duty guiding everyday actions; Bhagavata Purana 1.2.6 ● kama – worldly pleasure - physical, mental and emotional pleasure ● artha – wealth and power, enough of each to feel secure ● Hindu believe in free-will and its link to karma ● due to ignorance Hindus fall into maya - a love of money, possessions and even family keep us bound to this world ● Hinduism encourages the cultivation of divine qualities (Daivi Sampad) and warns against the dangers of demonic qualities (Asuri Sampad); Bhagavad Gita chapter 16. <p>The connection between karma, rebirth and morality in Hinduism.</p>

World religions

c - Islam

1.5c Beliefs – Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1c Key beliefs and teachings in Islam

1.5.2c Islamic belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1c Key beliefs and teachings in Islam	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Beliefs and teachings about the nature of Allah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● one God – Allah: tawhid; Qur'an 3:18 ● the qualities of Allah in the Qur'an ● the 99 names of Allah ● immanent ● transcendent ● beneficent ● merciful ● omnipotent ● omniscient ● omnibenevolent ● omnipresent <p>Reasons for the prohibition of images of Allah; Qur'an 42:11 and the significance of shirk.</p> <p>Prophethood in Islam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the role and importance of prophethood within Islam - Adam, Ibrahim and Isa ● Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets - the revelation of the Qur'an by Allah, through Angel Jibril Qur'an 2:97-98. <p>Islamic beliefs about the soul:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● originates from Allah and is His divine creation; Qur'an 32:7-9 ● created by Allah and breathed into the human being at conception; the first man, Adam, was given a soul in this way; Qur'an 32:8-9. <p>Key beliefs and teachings of Islam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● submission to Allah - being Muslim, and the Shahadah as an expression of faith ● the importance of the Five Pillars of Faith ● the importance of greater jihad. <p>The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Qur'an and the Hadith.

1.5.2c Islamic belief in action	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about belief in action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the importance of the Ummah, Islam encourages a sense of unity; Qur'an 3:110; Qur'an 23:52• the Quran and Hadiths (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) repeatedly encourage Muslims to help others; Quran 2:195• mercy is a quality of Allah and those who show mercy in this life will be shown mercy by Allah in the next life; Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1924• Muslims have a duty to put faith into action; Qur'an 5:2; Qur'an 9:60. <p>Contemporary local or national examples of Islamic faith and belief in action - community work and faith-based activism.</p> <p>How the aims and work of Islamic Relief UK reflect Islamic beliefs in action.</p>
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1.6c Beliefs about life and death – Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1c Meaning of life in Islam

1.6.2c Islamic beliefs about life and death

1.6.3c Islamic practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1c Meaning of life in Islam	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs about the meaning of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> submitting to the will of Allah. Qur'an 33:35 performing acts of worship; Qur'an 40:65 and righteousness; Qur'an 18:30 preparing for the Day of Judgment (Qur'an 84:25) and serving humanity; Qur'an 3:185.
1.6.2c Islamic beliefs about life and death	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs about the afterlife (Akhirah):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the soul awaits judgement after death in Barzakh; Qur'an 23:100 the Day of Judgement; Qur'an 3:30 Hellfire (Jahannam); Qur'an 2:24 Paradise (Jannah); Qur'an 31:8 predestination (Al-Qadr); Qur'an 87:2 resurrection; Qur'an 46:33.
1.6.3c Islamic practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> committing a person's body to Allah giving thanks to Allah for that person's life celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning showing the link between this life and Islamic beliefs about the afterlife. <p>Islamic mourning practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased devotion receiving visitors and condolences avoiding decorative clothing and jewellery wearing white maximum period of mourning. <p>Islamic funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ghusl Mayyit Kafan Salat al-Janazah funeral attire burial facing Makkah within 24 hours relative performing dua at the graveside giving to charity (sadaqah) on behalf of the deceased.

1.7c Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:

1.7.1c Islamic identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2c Islam and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1c Islamic identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging for Muslims, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● belonging to a worshipping community ● a shared sense of purpose and direction in life. <p>Islamic identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage.</p> <p>Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing commitment to Allah as an act of religious devotion ● learning more about Islamic figures by visiting sites associated with their lives ● following in the footsteps of key figures in Islam ● experiencing a sense of community. <p>The role, significance and features of the following sites of Islamic pilgrimage during Hajj:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mount Arafat ● the pillars at Mina. <p>Islamic identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – observing dress and diet customs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the burkha ● the hijab ● the niqab ● halal food.
1.7.2c Islam and morality	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● obeying divine commands; Qur'an 7:28; Qur'an 54:49-55 ● following Prophet Muhammad's ethical teachings; Qur'an 4:59 ● sharia law as the ideal set of rules; Qur'an 45:18- using the Quran; Qur'an 38:29 or Hadith as sources of morality ● the use of conscience; Qur'an 75:1-2. <p>Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The judging of souls on the Day of Judgement; Qur'an 6:160-164; Qur'an 16:90; Qur'an 16:97; Qur'an 21:47.

World religions

d - Judaism

1.5d Beliefs – Judaism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1d Key beliefs and teachings in Judaism

1.5.2d Jewish belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1d Key beliefs and teachings in Judaism	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about the nature of God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creator ex nihilo; Genesis 1:1-12 • God as one • transcendent; Isaiah 55:8-9 • merciful • eternal • judge • law-giver • omnipotence • omniscience • omnibenevolence • omnipresent. <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about the Messiah (Mashiach) and the Messianic Age (often associated with Olam ha-ba):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being a descendent of King David; Jeremiah 23:5 • Anointed One and Judge; Isaiah 2:1-4 • the Messianic Age; Isaiah 11:9 • differing Orthodox and Reform views on the Messiah the Messianic Age (Olam Ha-Ba). <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about the soul:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the soul (nefesh) created in the image of God; Genesis 1:27 • a divine spark originating from God; Genesis 2:7 • eternal and transcendent, humans possess rationality and free will. <p>Key beliefs and teachings in Judaism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Shema prayer; Deuteronomy 6:4-5 • covenants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Abrahamic Covenant; identity, monotheism, circumcision and Promised Land, Genesis 12:1-3, 17:6-8, 17:11-14 • the Mosaic Covenant; law, commandments, identity, Promised Land, Exodus 3:11- 15 • the importance of the Covenants for Jews today. <p>The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the differing perspectives of Orthodox and Reform Judaism on the Torah, the Tenakh and the Talmud.

1.5.2d Jewish belief in action	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gemilut Hasadim; acts of loving kindness - doing good deeds to reflect God's compassion; Pirkei Avot 1:2 from the Mishnah• Jews are instructed by God to help the poor and needy; Deuteronomy 15:11• Tikkun Olam; repair of the world includes the idea of social justice. <p>Contemporary local or national examples of Judaism faith and belief in action - community work and faith-based activism.</p> <p>How the aims and work of Mitzvah Day reflect Jewish beliefs in action.</p>
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1.6d Beliefs about life and death – Judaism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1d Meaning of life in Judaism

1.6.2d Jewish beliefs about life and death

1.6.3d Jewish practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1d Meaning of life in Judaism	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs about the meaning of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● living in accordance with the covenant with God ● observing the mitzvot of the Torah ● pursuing justice, compassion, and lifelong learning ● fostering strong family and community ties.
1.6.2d Jewish beliefs about life and death	<p>Jewish beliefs about the afterlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gan Eden (paradise) ● Gehenna (hell) ● Resurrection; bodily (Orthodox) and spiritual (Reform) ● Olam Ha-Ba (the world to come - the afterlife also often linked to the Messianic Age) ● Sheol (where souls are cleansed and purified).
1.6.3d Jewish practices	<p>The importance of mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● committing a person's body to God ● giving thanks to God for that person's life ● celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased ● using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning ● showing the link between this life and Jewish beliefs about the afterlife. <p>Jewish mourning practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● aninut ● shiva ● shloshim ● yartzheit. <p>Jewish funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● taharah ● the funeral service.

1.7d Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Judaism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1d Jewish identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2d Judaism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1d Jewish identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging for Jewish people, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● belonging to a worshipping community ● shared sense of purpose and direction in life. <p>Jewish identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions - going to significant places.</p> <p>Possible reasons for going to significant places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing commitment to God as an act of religious devotion ● learning more about Jewish figures by visiting sites associated with their lives ● following in the footsteps of key figures in Judaism ● experiencing a sense of community. <p>The role, significance and features of the following significant places for Jews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Western Wall ● Yad Vashem. <p>Jewish identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions - observing dress and diet customs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● kippah ● tefillin ● tallit ● kosher food.

1.7.2d Judaism and morality	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• obeying divine commands - the Ten Commandments that form part of the covenant; Exodus 20:1-17• the 613 Mitzvot (Orthodox and Reform perspectives)• use of conscience (matzpun) in conjunction with the Torah• good inclinations (yetzer ha tov) versus evil inclinations (yetzer hara) and the free will to make these judgements• ethical teachings of the Torah, the Tenakh, and the Talmud (Orthodox and Reform perspectives). <p>Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God judging your every deed; Ecclesiastes 12:14• a time of distress but also divine judgment; Daniel 12:1-2.
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World religions

e - Sikhism (Sikhi)

1.5e Beliefs – Sikhism (Sikhi)

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1e Key beliefs and teachings in Sikhism

1.5.1e Sikh belief in action

Section	Amplification
<p>1.5.1e Key beliefs and teachings in Sikhism</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Beliefs and teachings about the nature of God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the many names for God; Guru Granth Sahib 877; ● as found in the Mool Mantra - Ik Onkar (one God); Sat Nam (whose name is truth), Nirankar (formless); immortal, without fear; without hate, Nirgun; Guru Granth Sahib 290, Sargun; Guru Granth Sahib 294, self-illuminated; the true Guru ● omnipotent ● omniscient ● omnibenevolent ● omnipresent ● self-revealing; Guru Granth Sahib 1 ● genderless ● Waheguru (Wonderful Guru). <p>Sikh beliefs and teaching about Waheguru as Creator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the world created through divine will (hukam); Guru Granth Sahib 1399 ● created the universe and all life within it; sustains everything in existence; Guru Granth Sahib 294 ● Waheguru exists beyond and separate from the universe (Nirgun and Sargun). <p>Sikh beliefs about the atma (human soul):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the soul as a divine essence; a spark of Waheguru; resides within every living being - animals and humans ● humans are the highest form of living creature; pure; transcendent, eternal ● the atma comes from the Waheguru and returns to it. <p>Key beliefs and teachings of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guru Nanak ● Guru Gobind Singh. <p>The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Guru Granth Sahib.

1.5.2e Sikh belief in action

Learners should understand:

Key Sikh beliefs and teachings:

- all humans are equal; Guru Granth Sahib 272:12-13
- seva: selfless service
- taan; physical service
- maan; mental service
- dhan; material service.

Contemporary local or national examples of Sikh faith and belief in action - community work and faith-based activism.

How the aims and work of Khalsa Aid reflect Sikh beliefs in action.

1.6e Beliefs about life and death – Sikhism (Sikhi)

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

- 1.6.1e Meaning of life in Sikhism
- 1.6.2e Sikh beliefs about life and death
- 1.6.3e Sikh practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1e Meaning of life in Sikhism	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs about the meaning of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gurmurkh - living in a Waheguru centred way as laid down in the Guru Grath Sahib • practicing seva and accepting the divine will (hukam) • achieving union with Waheguru through righteous living and devotion • achieving mukti.
1.6.2e Sikh beliefs about life and death	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs about life, death and reincarnation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • karma • reincarnation • samsara; Guru Granth Sahib 13:11-12 • mukti.
1.6.3e Sikh practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of mourning and funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving thanks to the Waheguru for that person's life • celebrating and remembering the life of the person and their soul reuniting with God • using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning • showing the link between this life and Sikh beliefs about life, death and reincarnation • remembering that death is not the end of life, but a stage of life between existence and rebirth. <p>Sikh mourning practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no formal mourning custom, but there are expressions of grief • providing a supportive environment for those who are grieving • charitable acts in memory of the deceased, such as organising a langar or making donations to the community, reflecting the Sikh value of seva (selfless service). <p>Sikh funeral practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antam Sanskaar • Cremation • Antim Ardas • The Bhog ceremony.

1.7e Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Sikhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1e Sikh identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2e Sikhism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1e Sikh identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging for Sikhs, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● belonging to a worshipping community ● shared sense of purpose and direction in life. <p>Sikh identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage.</p> <p>Possible reasons for pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing commitment to Waheguru as an act of religious devotion ● learning more about Sikh figures by visiting sites associated with their lives ● following in the footsteps of key figures in Sikhism ● experiencing sense of community. <p>The role, significance and features of the following sites of Sikh pilgrimage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amritsar ● Anandpur Sahib. <p>Sikh identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions - the 5Ks:</p> <p>The significance of the 5Ks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kesh ● Kara ● Kanga ● Kaccha ● Kirpan.
1.7.2e Sikhism and morality	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● using seva as a guide to ethical service - social justice out of a love for Waheguru and humanity ● Kirat Karo (working honestly) as one of the 3 pillars of Sikhism ● avoiding the 5 vices and develop the 5 virtues in order to progress on the spiritual path towards unity (mukti) with Waheguru. <p>The connection between karma, rebirth and morality in Sikhism.</p>

Non-religious beliefs

1.8 Beliefs about life and death – Non-religious beliefs	
1.8.1 Non-religious perspectives on the meaning of life 1.8.2 Non-religious perspectives on life and death 1.8.3 Non-religious practices	
Section	Amplification
1.8.1 Non-religious perspectives on the meaning of life	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on the meaning of life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no agreed meaning of life individuals determine their own life's meaning people should be free to live their lives as long as they do not harm others some people gain a sense of meaning in their lives through, for example, engagement with the natural world and spending time in nature.
1.8.2 Non-religious perspectives on life and death	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on life and death: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> death as an end of existence no future reward or punishment the significance and value of having no belief in the soul or life after death.
1.8.3 Non-religious practices	Learners should understand: Non-religious mourning practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no specific, agreed mourning customs mourning as an expression of grief celebration and remembrance of the life of the deceased mourning as providing a supportive environment for those who are grieving. Non-religious funeral practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no specific, agreed burial or cremation structure celebrant may lead a service eulogy may be given as a celebration of life music is usually used during the service.

1.9 Non-religious beliefs in contemporary society	
1.9.1 Non-religious perspectives on identity, belonging and practices	
1.9.2 Non-religious perspectives towards morality	
Section	Amplification
1.9.1 Non-religious perspectives on identity, belonging and practices	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives on identity, belonging and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the significance and value of identity and belonging without religion ways that non-religious people may express a sense of identity and belonging such as being part of charities and organisations that promote good causes.
1.9.2 Non-religious perspectives towards morality	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Ways in which non-religious believers make moral decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of conscience the use of reason and free will the act itself (absolutism) the situation (relativism) in which the act is performed and the consequences (consequentialism) of it.

Unit 2

Religion and relationships

Assessment Type: Non-examination assessment (Duration to be confirmed)

20% of qualification

Marks to be confirmed

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- develop and apply knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices relating to relationships
- research information relating to religion and relationships, and analyse findings
- explore how the changing landscape of religious beliefs and societal attitudes relating to relationships, and changes in relevant UK law where appropriate, interconnect
- gain an insight into religious and non-religious perspectives and experiences relating to relationships
- analyse findings, and evaluate the societal and ethical implications of findings
- reflect on personal values and beliefs relating to relationships.

This unit builds on the foundation of Unit 1's themes of belief and practice in action. Learners must select **one or two** of the religions chosen for Units 1 and 3.

2.1 Religion and the changing landscape of relationships

In this unit learners will gain knowledge understanding and skills in the following areas:

2.1.1 Religious beliefs, teachings and practices relating to relationships

2.1.2 The changing landscape of relationships

Section	Amplification
2.1.1 Religious beliefs, teachings and practices relating to relationships	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religious beliefs, teachings and practices relating to relationships. <p>Learners will focus on one of two themes set annually by WJEC from the following list (themes to be confirmed):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Marriage, adultery, divorce and remarriage Artificial contraception and natural family planning Cohabitation and sex before and outside marriage Same-sex relationships, civil partnerships and same-sex marriage Interfaith relationships and marriage outside the religious tradition Roles within family, including gender roles within relationships Religious upbringing, childhood ceremonies and faith-based schooling.

<p>2.1.2 The changing landscape of relationships</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the changing landscape of religious belief in the context of relationships• societal attitudes relating to relationships• where appropriate, relevant changes to UK law linked to relationships• how the changing landscape of religious belief and societal attitudes, and changes in relevant UK law where appropriate, interconnect• societal and ethical implications of the changing landscape of religious belief and societal attitudes, and changes in relevant UK law where appropriate.
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2.2 Skills - TBC

Unit 3

Roles, rights and responsibilities

Assessment Type: Written examination (1 hour 30 minutes – to be confirmed)

30% of qualification

Marks to be confirmed

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore key diverse religious and non-religious beliefs, practices and worldviews
- develop an understanding of the different perspectives and interpretations about what makes us human, caring for the world, animal rights, freedom of religious expression and medical ethics
- explore sources of authority and ethical systems that shape religious and non-religious perspectives towards what makes us human, caring for the world, animal rights, freedom of religious expression and medical ethics.

The unit is divided into three parts:

- Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives
Choose **one** of the following options:
 - a - Christian perspectives
 - b - Catholic Christian perspectives
- World religion perspectives
Choose **one** of the following options:
 - a – Buddhist perspectives
 - b – Hindu perspectives
 - c – Islamic perspectives
 - d – Jewish perspectives
 - e – Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives
- Non-religious perspectives

Non-religious beliefs can be assessed in isolation and/or in relation to the religions studied.

Areas of content**Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives****a – Christian perspectives**

3.1a Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Christian perspectives	
<p>In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:</p> <p>3.1.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world from Christian perspectives</p> <p>3.1.2a Animal rights - Christian perspectives</p>	
Section	Amplification
3.1.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Christian perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Christian beliefs, teachings and practices about humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on the belief that God created the world ex nihilo; Genesis 1:2, and humans are created in the image of God; Genesis 1:1 • humans have been given control as part of God's plan - dominion; Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 8:6 • humans have been given a unique, God-given duty to protect creation - stewardship; Genesis 2:15 • stewardship also implies using natural resources wisely and sustainably; Leviticus 25 8-25. <p>How the aims and work of A Rocha UK reflect Christian beliefs about stewardship.</p>
3.1.2a Animal rights - Christian perspectives	<p>Christian beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animals were created by God and He declared all creation 'very good'; Genesis 1:31 • God gives humans dominion over animals; Genesis 1:26-28 • stewardship - humans are expected to care for and manage animal life wisely and compassionately, Proverbs 12:10; Exodus 20:10. <p>Christian perspectives on using animals for human benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:26-28 – different interpretations of the concepts of 'dominion' and 'stewardship' • balancing using animals for human benefit and avoiding unnecessary harm; Matthew 10:31; Proverbs 12:10 • the use of animals for food; Genesis 9:3 • vegetarianism or veganism based on teachings such as Genesis 1:26-28. <p>Christian perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essential for advancing human health and well-being • must try to minimise suffering • call for strict regulations to ensure humane treatment • supporting the development of alternatives to animal testing (such as computer modelling). <p>How the aims and work of Christian Vegetarians & Vegans UK reflect Christian beliefs about animal rights.</p>

3.2a Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life - Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.2.1a What makes us human - Christian perspectives

3.2.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Christian perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.2.1a What makes us human - Christian perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • created in God's image; Genesis 1:26-27 • possess a soul, a spiritual dimension; Matthew 10:28; Ecclesiastes 12:7 • possess autonomy - free will, and moral responsibility; Genesis 3; Romans 2:14-15 • fell into sin, but given an opportunity for redemption through Jesus - John 3:16.
3.2.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Christian perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Christian perspectives of when life begins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for many, that human life begins at conception • that at the point of conception, the embryo is fully human with inherent dignity and worth; Psalm 139:13-16 • a minority of Christians believe that personhood or full human life begins at birth. <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principle of the sanctity of life - created by God in his image; Genesis 1:26 • many oppose abortion, seeing it as the taking of an innocent life; Exodus 20:13 <p>God has a plan for each human life and abortion prevents this; Jeremiah 1:5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some may accept abortion in certain extraordinary circumstances • some Christians advocate for alternatives to abortion, such as adoption. <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about euthanasia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principle of the sanctity of life - created by God in his image; Genesis 1:26 • only God should decide when a life should end • many strongly oppose active euthanasia viewing this as ending a life given by God; Exodus 20:13 • palliative care is an opportunity to show love and compassion; Galatians 6:2 • some support passive euthanasia on compassionate grounds • some are concerned about the 'slippery slope' argument

3.3a Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.3.1a Freedom of religious expression - Christian perspectives

3.3.2a Personal wealth - Christian perspectives

Section	Amplification
<p>3.3.1a Freedom of religious expression - Christian perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Great Commission; Matthew 28:19-20 ● part of humanity's God-given free will ● the importance of people of other faiths having the same right to religious expression; Matthew 7:12 ● supporting the right to religious expression due to historical and contemporary persecution of Christians ● religious expression in all forms should be allowed in public spaces; Matthew 5:14-16.
<p>3.3.2a The use of personal wealth - Christian perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Christian beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● linked to the concept of stewardship ● the use of wealth should reflect God's purposes and values ● tithing as a traditional practice ● contributions during church services ● wealth as a blessing that comes with great responsibility; Matthew 25:14-30 ● wealth for its own sake as incompatible with a life of faith; Matthew 19:24 ● Matthew 6:24 – cannot worship God and money ● focus on storing up “treasures in heaven” rather than on earth; Matthew 6:19-21 ● “Love of money is the root of all evil”; 1 Timothy 6:10 ● loving money will never bring real satisfaction; Ecclesiastes 5:10 ● monks and nuns take a vow of poverty - more focus on spiritual values ● the Prosperity Gospel.

Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives
b – Catholic Christian perspectives

3.1b Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth - Catholic Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.1.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Catholic perspectives

3.1.2b Animal rights - Catholic perspectives

Section	Amplification
<p>3.1.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Catholic Christian perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs, teachings and practices about humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● based on the belief the God created the world ex nihilo; Genesis 1:2 ● humans are created in the image of God; Genesis 1:1 ● Pope Francis' teaching in '<i>Laudato Si</i>' ● humans have been given control as part of God's plan - dominion; Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 8:6 ● humans have been given a unique, God-given duty to protect creation - stewardship; Genesis 2:15 ● stewardship implies using natural resources wisely and sustainably; Leviticus 25 8-25. <p>How the aims and work of The Laudato Si Movement reflect Catholic beliefs about stewardship.</p>
<p>3.1.2b Animal rights - Catholic Christian perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● animals were created by God in Genesis 1:31, God declares all of creation, including animals, "very good" ● God gives humans dominion over animals; Genesis 1:26-28 ● stewardship - humans are expected to care for and manage animal life wisely and compassionately, Proverbs 12:10; Exodus 20:10 ● St. Francis of Assisi taught about the interconnectedness of all life as part of God's creation (Canticle of the Creatures). <p>Catholic perspectives on using animals for human benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● there is justification for using animals; Genesis 1:26-28 ● others see animal rights as a form of stewardship, balancing using animals for human benefit and avoiding unnecessary harm; Matthew 10:31; Proverbs 12:10 ● many accept the use of animals for food; Genesis 9:3 ● some Catholics choose vegetarianism or veganism based on teachings such as Genesis 1:26-28.

	<p>Catholic perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• many argue that it is essential for advancing human health and well-being• most believe it should be done ethically, with efforts to minimize suffering• many support the development of alternatives to animal testing• many call for strict regulations to ensure humane treatment. <p>How the aims and work of Catholic Concern for Animals reflect Catholic beliefs about animal rights.</p>
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3.2b Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life - Catholic Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.2.1b What makes us human - Catholic perspectives

3.2.3b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Catholic perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.2.1b What makes us human - Catholic Christian perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> created in God's image; Genesis 1:26-27, The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena (of Discretion) possess a soul, a spiritual dimension; Matthew 10:28; Ecclesiastes 12:7 possess autonomy - free will, which comes with moral responsibility; Genesis 3; Romans 2:14-15 the concept of Original Sin – St Augustine (The Enchiridion 3:11) Thomas Aquinas – humankind does not choose sinful acts, (Summa Theologica) fell into sin, but have the opportunity to gain redemption and be restored to a right relationship with God, through belief in Jesus; John 3;16.
3.2.3b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Catholic Christian perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic perspectives of when life begins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholics believe that human life begins at conception the embryo is considered a human person at the point of conception the embryo has inherent dignity and worth; Psalm 139:13-16. <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that abortion is a grave moral wrong (Pope John Paul II Evangelium Vitae) the principle of the sanctity of life – made in God's image; Genesis 1:26 the Catechism of the Catholic Church - that life is a fundamental human right from conception to natural death all human rights are grounded in the right to life (The Common Good, 1996) abortion is the taking of an innocent life, forbidden in the Ten Commandments; Exodus 20:13 the Bible states that God has a plan for each human life and abortion prevents this from taking place; Jeremiah 1:5 some Catholics may accept abortion in certain circumstances, such as when the mother's life is at risk, in cases of rape or incest, or when severe foetal abnormalities are present, but this is not official Catholic teaching Catholics advocate for alternatives to abortion, such as adoption

- The Doctrine of Double Effect allows procedures that may also lead to abortion, but only under very specific circumstances.

Catholic beliefs and teachings about euthanasia:

- euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God – Pope John Paul III (Evangelium Vitae, 1995)
- Catholics do not accept 'right to die' arguments, as only God has control over life and death
- the principle of the sanctity of life - created by God in his image; Genesis 1:26
- strong opposition to active euthanasia viewing this as ending a life given by God; Exodus 20:13
- the belief that suffering and pain do not make a life less valuable or sacred
- the importance of 'dying well' and to show compassion for those who are suffering; Galatians 6:2
- strong support for palliative care and hospices
- concerns about the 'slippery slope' argument
- The Doctrine of Double Effect allows for treatment to be given that may cause death, but only in very specific situations

3.3b Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth - Catholic Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.3.1b Freedom of religious expression - Catholic perspectives

3.3.2b Personal wealth - Catholic perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.3.1b Freedom of religious expression - Catholic Christian perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) Jesus' instruction to share the faith with others. this is part of humanity's God-given free will Catholics are instructed to evangelise - Pope Francis (Evangelii Gaudium 15. 48-49, 197-198, 264-265) the importance of people of other faiths having the same right to religious expression; Matthew 7:12 the role of the Catholic Church in inter-faith dialogue it is the duty to speak about their faith, even in the face of opposition; Acts 4:19-20 many Catholics are sensitive to the right to religious expression based on their own history of persecution religious expression should be allowed in public spaces, includes the freedom to pray, wear religious symbols, and participate in religious activities; Matthew 5:14-16.
3.3.2b The use of personal wealth - Catholic Christian perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Catholic beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> this is linked to stewardship and should reflect God's purposes and values at Mass, Catholics are called upon to contribute to the collection, if they can afford it wealth is often viewed as a blessing that comes with great responsibility; Matthew 25:14-30 warnings about the dangers of greed and the love of money; 1 Timothy 6:10 wealth for its own sake is often viewed as incompatible with a life of faith; Matthew 19:24 Christians cannot serve both God and money; Matthew 6:24 Pope Francis stated "Money must serve, not rule" (2024) a reminder to focus on storing up "treasures in heaven" rather than on earth; Matthew 6:19-21 loving money will never bring real satisfaction; Ecclesiastes 5:10 Catholic monks and nuns such as the Franciscans, advocate a life that is less focused on money and more on spiritual values. some Catholic monks and nuns swear a vow of poverty

World religion perspectives

a – Buddhist perspectives

3.4a Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Buddhist perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Buddhist perspectives

3.4.2a Animal rights – Buddhist perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Buddhist perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs, teachings and attitudes about humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent Origination (Pratityasamutpada) – inter-dependency • all living things should be respected • humanity affects the environment and the environment affects humanity • the concept of karma teaches that all actions have positive or negative consequences • the concept of Right Action teaches Buddhists to avoid harming the environment • the second of the Five Precepts warns against taking what is not freely given, including from the environment. <p>How the aims and work of Eco Dharma Network reflects Buddhist beliefs about caring for the natural world.</p>
3.4.2a Animal rights – Buddhist perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the status of human beings is no higher than that of other living beings • human compassion, wisdom and loving kindness must be extended to all living beings (Dhammapada 129) • the First Precept teaches the concept of ahimsa • the principle of Right Action - harming animals would accrue negative karma • animals are also part of the cycle of samsara. • being re-born as an animal is due to bad karma in past lives and considered a serious spiritual setback • animals cannot improve their karmic status. They must continue to be re-born as an animal until their bad karma has been used up. <p>Buddhist perspectives on using animals for human benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) was not a vegetarian and did not teach his followers to be vegetarian • some say the First Precept refers more to direct killing than the indirect killing of animals for food • eating meat is another example of the reality of dukkha • vegetarianism avoids causing suffering (ahimsa)

- vegetarianism avoids industrial farming which can lead to climate change/environmental damage
- the concept of 'Right Livelihood' teaches that Buddhists should avoid work that involves killing or harming animals.

Buddhist perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research:

- many Buddhists agree with the UK Animal Welfare Sentience Act of 2022
- experimenting on animals is morally wrong if the animal concerned might come to any harm
- many acknowledge the value that animal experiments may have for human health
- some would point to drugs tested on animals damaging human health
- the experimenter must accept the negative karma of carrying out the experiment
- experiment only for a morally good purpose
- experiment only on animals where there is no alternative
- design the experiment to do as little harm as possible
- avoid killing the animal unless it is absolutely necessary
- treat the animals kindly and respectfully.

How the aims and work Dharma Voices for Animals reflect Buddhist beliefs about animal rights.

3.5a What makes us human and related medical ethics – Buddhist perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1a What makes us human – Buddhist perspectives

3.5.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Buddhist perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1a What makes us human – Buddhist perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist attitudes, beliefs and teachings about what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Buddha-nature: that all have the potential to achieve Nirvana (enlightenment) ● Mahayana - The concept of Buddhahood ● Theravada – The concept of Arhathood ● recognising and avoiding the Three Poisons ● recognising the Three Marks of Existence ● seeking Nirvana through Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.
3.5.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Buddhist perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs and teachings about abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the cycle of samsara means there is no point at which a foetus or embryo is not living ● human life is precious as only humans can reveal the buddha-nature or attain arhathood ● the first of the Five Precepts teaches against taking a life ● the principle of ahimsa guides against causing harm to living beings ● Precepts and principles are only guidelines, not rules or moral laws ● abortion is usually a complex issue and the complexity of each situation must be considered ● the concept of a skilful act means that abortion could be considered a negative act or a ‘necessary evil’. <p>Buddhist beliefs and teachings about euthanasia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● death is the point of transition between this rebirth and the next rebirth ● as human life is precious, it should carry on for as long as possible ● a person’s state of mind (karmic state) at the time of death can determine the kind of rebirth that will follow ● the First Precept guides against the killing of a living being, so euthanasia is considered unskilful ● the principles of ahimsa and metta encourage no harm and loving kindness ● even if the intention is merciful, the act of killing is still wrong; Vinaya III. 86 ● the principles of karuna and Right Intention, and individual circumstances, allow for euthanasia to be acceptable, as long as the intention to kill is avoided.

3.6a Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Buddhist perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1a Freedom of religious expression - Buddhist perspectives

3.6.2a Personal wealth – Buddhist perspectives

Section	Amplification
<p>3.6.1a Freedom of religious expression - Buddhist perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism is often considered to be a tolerant religion and evangelisation is not one of its main aims • the principles of Right Speech and Right Action guard against using freedom of expression unskillfully and giving offense • the principles of karuna and metta also guard against using freedom of expression unskillfully • positive karma is gained by living by these principles and ensuring that freedom of expression is used sensitively, causing no harm.
<p>3.6.2a The use of personal wealth – Buddhist perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Buddhist beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the example of the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) who abandoned extreme wealth to find enlightenment • stories about the Buddha's previous lives demonstrate his great acts of generosity • the Four Noble Truths teach that tanha (craving) leads to dukkha • the Buddha taught The Middle Way between wealth and poverty • the principle of Right Livelihood guides against making money from unskillful means or using money in a way that harms oneself or others • the principle of Right Action guides against taking money (or resources) that are not given freely • the principle of dhana (generous giving) is important and leads to positive karma • the principle of karuna encourages the use of money to help others, for example, the work of The Karuna Trust • Buddhist monks have no possessions of their own; they rely on dhana • wealth itself is not unskillful, but it must be used for the right purposes; Anguttara Nikaya 1.80.

World religion perspectives
b – Hindu perspectives

3.4b Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth - Hindu perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Hindu perspectives

3.4.2b Animal rights - Hindu perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Hindu perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ultimate reality is Brahman • every atman is a part of this divine essence and are manifestations of Brahman and interconnected; Bhagavad Gita 11:7; Chandogya Upanishad 4.10.4–5 • harmful actions towards nature can lead to negative karma • living in harmony with nature is essential to fulfilling one's dharma • the principle of ahimsa (non-violence) extends to all living beings several aspects of nature are often revered as gods or goddesses; this reverence leads to practices that protect and preserve natural resources • Hindu practices of yoga and meditation often emphasize connection with nature, such as Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation). <p>How the aims and work of Hindu Climate Action reflect Hindu beliefs about caring for the natural world.</p>
3.4.2b Animal rights - Hindu perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all living beings possess an atman and are part of Brahman; Isha Upanishad v6, and the cycle of samsara t; Yajurveda 12.32 • some animals are regarded as sacred, and their well-being is important for maintaining the balance of nature; Baghavata Purana 7:14.9 • ahimsa teaches that causing harm to living beings should be avoided caring for animals is part of one's dharma • harming animals can lead to negative karmic outcomes in this life or future lives • harming an animal could be harming a being that may have been a human in a previous life • depending on karma, their own atman may return in animal form in their next life • various animals are associated with deities and are considered sacred such as monkeys (Hanuman), elephants (Ganesha)

- the cow is particularly revered and protected (Gau Mata).

Hindu beliefs and teachings about the use of animals for human benefit:

- many practise vegetarianism, such as ISKCON, thereby adhering to ahimsa, and out of respect for animal life; Manu Smriti 5:48
- the Mahabharata reflects the Hindu view that the cow should be protected and honoured, the practice of factory farming directly contradicts the principle of ahimsa

Hindu beliefs and teachings about the use of animals in scientific and medical research:

- diverse views exist within Hinduism
- some Hindus may accept the use of animals in research if it is for the greater good and conducted with minimal harm
- others may oppose it outright on the grounds of ahimsa and the impact of negative karma
- many advocate for alternative methods to animal testing that align with ahimsa.

3.5b Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life - Hindu perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1b What makes us human - Hindu perspectives

3.5.2b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Hindu perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1b What makes us human - Hindu perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to the cycle of samsara, there is no point at which a foetus or embryo is not living • the core of human identity is the atman, the soul or self, which is part of Brahman • the atman's ultimate goal is unity with Brahman (moksha) and end the cycle of samsara • humans possess free will and have the ability to create good or bad karma which affects samsara • the prakriti (nature) of everything possess 3 qualities (the Three Gunas) • only humans can alter the balance of gunas • the senses, which cause instability and desire, have to be controlled; Bhagavad Gita 5:20-21.
3.5.2b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Hindu perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about medical ethics - abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindus hold different beliefs • Hindus generally believe all living beings possess an atman and are part of Brahman • dharma emphasizes the protection of life; Manu Smriti • dharma is also context-dependent – therefore abortion might be considered permissible in some situations • the principle of ahimsa and the belief that the atman exists from the moment of conception is stated in Hindu scripture; the Garbhpanishad • abortion can be seen as generating negative karma for those involved. <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about medical ethics - euthanasia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hinduism hold different beliefs • Hindus believe all living beings possess an atman and are part of Brahman • dharma - there is a conflict between the duty to preserve life and the duty to alleviate suffering • some argue that it is a person's dharma to endure suffering with courage and dignity, as it may lead to spiritual development • ending a life prematurely might be seen as disrupting the cycle of samsara; Manu Smriti • ahimsa - ending a life can be viewed as an act of violence • Hinduism also values karuna (compassion), so passive euthanasia may be acceptable in some situations.

3.6b Roles, rights and responsibilities : freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth - Hindu perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1b Freedom of religious expression - Hindu perspectives

3.6.2b Personal wealth – Hindu perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1b Freedom of religious expression - Hindu perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hindu view is that there are many paths to the same truth; Sarva Dharma and Sama Bhava • Hindu tradition encourages dialogue and debate – there are multiple schools of thought, such as Advaita (non-dualism), Dvaita (dualism) • ahimsa advocates for peaceful coexistence, harm that could be caused by religious intolerance or coercion • various reform movements within Hinduism emphasise freedom to pursue spiritual truths.
3.6.2b The use of personal wealth - Hindu perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Hindu beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one of the four main goals of human life is artha - the Bhagavad Gita teaches the importance of vairagya (detachment) from material possessions and wealth. • the true goal of life is spiritual progress - wealth should only be used to support this journey, not hinder it • wealth should not be obtained through unethical practices • dana is a highly valued virtue that earns positive karma.

World religion perspectives
c – Islamic perspectives

3.4c Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth - Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1c Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Islamic perspectives

3.4.2c Animal rights - Islamic perspectives

Section	Amplification
<p>3.4.1c Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Islamic perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the world was created by and belongs to God; Qur'an 7:54 ● humans are seen as khalifahs (stewards); Quran 35:39 of the earth (fil ardh); Qur'an 6:165 ● stewardship reflects a deep interconnectedness with the rest of creation ● humans are responsible for maintaining the balance (mizan) in the world; Qur'an 55. 7-9 ● tawhid, extends to the oneness of creation ● fitrah leads people to seek God and to live in harmony with the environment ● on the Day of Judgment (Akhirah), humans will be made accountable for their actions towards the natural world. <p>How the aims and work of Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES) reflect Islamic beliefs.</p>
<p>3.4.2c Animal rights - Islamic perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Prophet Muhammad showed kindness to animals ● Muhammed taught stating that those who are kind to animals are rewarded by Allah; Bukhari ● on the Day of Judgment (Akihras), humans will be accountable for their actions towards animals. <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about using animals for human benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God provided livestock for humans to use, including for food; Qur'an 40:79-80 ● some Muslims avoid factory farming and killing animals for sport ● Muslims are encouraged not to over-work animals ● Halal slaughter practices include thanking Allah for the animal's life. <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about use of animals in scientific and medical research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some Muslims believe that animal experimentation is permissible when it serves as beneficial to human life and health

- it must be conducted with the intention of achieving a greater good
- it must inflict as little harm as possible
- if alternatives are available, they should be used.

How the aims and work of Salam for Animals reflect Islamic beliefs about animal rights.

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3.5c Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life – Islamic perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1c What makes us human - Islamic perspectives

3.5.2c Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Islamic perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1c What makes us human - Islamic perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● human beings were uniquely created by Allah with the best physical, intellectual, and spiritual capabilities; Qur'an 95:4 ● the soul (ruh) is considered the essence of human existence, given by Allah; Qur'an 17:85 ● humans possess autonomy - free will ● humans have moral responsibility; Qur'an 76:3 ● humans are born with a natural disposition towards good ● humans can recognise the existence of Allah, which is part of the fitrah; Qur'an 30:30 ● humans have intellectual ability (aql) and can recognise Allah in creation.
3.5.2c Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Islamic perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic perspectives about when life begins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some believe that life begins at ensoulment ● some believe that when the foetus is physically formed, it then becomes a person ● some believe that that it is a person from conception. <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about medical ethics: abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Muslims hold different views, depending on their interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith ● sanctity of life is emphasised and taking a life unjustly is considered a grave sin; Qur'an 5:32 ● the intention (niyyah) behind actions are crucial in Islamic ethics ● the principle of darar (minimizing harm) is important ● many Muslims would argue that here are valid grounds for abortion. <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about medical ethics: euthanasia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sanctity of life is emphasised and taking a life unjustly is considered a grave sin; Qur'an 5:32 ● most Muslims agree that euthanasia, whether voluntary or involuntary, is not permissible in Islam ● the intention (niyyah) behind actions are crucial in Islamic ethics ● euthanasia is wrong as it involves intentionally ending a life prematurely; Qur'an 16:61 ● suffering is often viewed as a test from Allah, which Muslims are encouraged to endure with patience (sabr) and

	<p>trust in Allah's wisdom; Qur'an 67.2, Surah Al Baqarah 2.155</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• palliative care can relieve suffering without hastening death• some Muslims argue that withholding medical treatment may be acceptable if the treatment is prolonging suffering without a reasonable hope of survival.
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3.6c Roles, rights and responsibilities : freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Islamic perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1c Freedom of religious expression - Islamic perspectives

3.6.2c Personal wealth - Islamic perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1c Freedom of religious expression - Islamic perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Islam teaches that religious belief should not be compelled; Qur'an 2:256 ● the Qur'an acknowledges followers of Judaism and Christianity as "People of the Book" ● Muslims are instructed to respect Jews and Christians and their scriptures; Qur'an 29:46 ● sharia provides guidance on how to treat non-Muslims within an Islamic state, emphasizing justice and protection ● the degree of religious freedom in Muslim-majority countries varies widely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some have enshrined religious freedom in their constitutions and legal systems ● others impose strict limitations on religious expression, especially when it conflicts with Islamic law ● publicly reciting the Shahadah is an important practice to demonstrate commitment to Islam.
3.6.2c The use of personal wealth – Islamic perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Islamic beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● wealth is viewed as something God has trusted humans to use wisely (Amanah) ● Muslims are expected to use it in ways that reflect God's will ● Muslims must avoid israf - extravagance and waste ● zakah - is a mandatory act of charity for those who can afford to give it; Qur'an 73:20 ● sadaqah - can take many forms, including money, food, or time; Qur'an 3:92 ● khums - is one of the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam; Qur'an 8:41 ● Muslims are encouraged to invest their wealth in halal ventures ● Islam strictly prohibits the practice of charging interest on loans (riba).

World religion perspectives
d – Jewish perspectives

3.4d Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the Earth - Jewish perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1d Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Jewish perspectives

3.4.2d Animal rights - Jewish perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1d Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Jewish perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● humanity was given dominion over the earth; Genesis 1:28 ● humans are Shomrei Adamah (guardians/stewards of the earth); Genesis 2:15 ● the concept of Tikkun Olam includes the idea of social action including environmental responsibility ● bal tashchit (do not destroy or waste) promotes sustainability and respect for the natural world Deuteronomy 20:19-20 ● Tu B'Shevat (New Year of the Trees) is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the renewal of nature ● some modern interpretations of kashrut include eco-kashrut - environmental and ethical concerns about dietary practices. <p>How the aims and work of EcoJudaism reflect Jewish beliefs about stewardship.</p>
3.4.2d Animal rights - Jewish perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the principle of Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim (the prevention of animal suffering) Exodus 23:12; Deuteronomy 25:4 <p>Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about using animals for human benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● humane use of certain animals for food and work is permitted; Leviticus 12; Deuteronomy 14 ● animals used for kosher food must be slaughtered using the shechita method to minimise suffering the Torah prohibits certain practices; Exodus 23:19, Deuteronomy 22:6-7 some Jews (Rabbi Moshe Feinstein) object to practices such as overfeeding animals to produce delicacies ● only animals such as an ox or a donkey can be used for ploughing or carrying heavy loads ● animals cannot be beaten or forced to work excessively or unnaturally; Proverbs 12:10 ● the laws of Shabbat also provide a day of rest for working animals; Exodus. 20:10.

Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about the use of animals in scientific and medical research:

- Jewish teaching allows animal experiments when there is a clear benefit to human life and health
- the concept of Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim must be considered
- the concept of Bal Tashchit (do not destroy or waste items) must be considered
- each case may be subject to individual interpretation of Jewish religious law
- some Jews encourage alternative research methods that do not involve animals.

How the aims and work of the Jewish Initiative for Animals reflect Jewish beliefs about animal rights.

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3.5d Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life - Jewish perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1d What makes us human - Jewish perspectives

3.5.2d Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Jewish perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1d What makes us human - Jewish perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> created in God's image; Genesis 1:26-27 possess a soul or a divine spark, a spiritual dimension; Ecclesiastes 12:7 born with both a good, altruistic impulse (yetzer ha tov) and an evil or selfish impulse (yetzer hara) possess autonomy - free will which comes with moral responsibility; Genesis 3.
3.5.2d Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Jewish perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish perspectives on when life begins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jewish thought recognizes the foetus as having potential life a foetus is not considered a full person (nefesh) until birth according to the Talmud, it is considered part of the mother's body until then. <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Orthodox Judaism, abortion is generally permitted if the pregnancy endangers the life or health of the mother; Talmud - Ohalot 7:6-8; pikuach nefesh (saving a life) must be considered abortion may be permitted in certain situations but is subject to rabbinic guidance and is evaluated on a case-by-case basis abortion is both a medical and spiritual moral decision Reform Judaism places a strong emphasis on the woman's right to choose. <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about euthanasia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> life is considered sacred; and is of utmost value; Genesis 1:26-27 the principle of pikuach nefesh applies Jewish Law prohibits active euthanasia because only God has the authority to end a human life; Ecclesiastes 3:2 some Jews might support passive euthanasia if a person is suffering and death is imminent many Jews encourage the use of pain relief and palliative care, even if such treatments might hasten death Reform Judaism places importance on the dignity and free will of the individual to decide.

3.6d Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Jewish perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1d Freedom of religious expression - Jewish perspectives

3.6.2d Personal wealth – Jewish perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1d Freedom of religious expression - Jewish perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● humans are created in the image of God, with inherent dignity and worth ● humans are free to express their religious beliefs and personal identity ● there is an emphasis on justice, and all have the right to live according to their beliefs without fear of persecution or discrimination; Deuteronomy 16:20 ● Jews have often been persecuted for their religious beliefs, leading to support for religious liberty, both for themselves and for others ● Jews are obliged to live according to Jewish Law ● the Talmud teaches acceptance of diversity of religious expression ● the Talmud teaches the belief that morality and righteousness are not confined to the Jewish people alone ● the principle of dina de-malkhuta dina ("the law of the land is the law") must be applied ● if the laws of a country violate Jewish Law, they may not apply to Jews.
3.6.2d The use of personal wealth - Jewish perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Jewish beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Torah teaches that God gives the power to acquire wealth; Deuteronomy 8:18 ● Jews have a responsibility to use their wealth not just for personal gain but also for the greater good - Tikkun Olam ● Judaism warns against the dangers of greed and excessive attachment to wealth ● The pursuit of wealth can lead to unethical behaviour and neglect of spiritual and communal responsibilities; Proverbs 28:20-22 ● Tzedakah is often translated as charity but more accurately translated as "justice" of "fairness" ● charity giving is an act of justice not simply one of generosity ● Jews are required to give a portion of their income, usually 10% as a ma'aser (tithe) to those in need ● traditional Jewish homes often have a pushke box to collect money for charity.

World religion perspectives
e – Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives

3.4e Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Sikh perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1e Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Sikh perspectives

3.4.2e Animal rights - Sikh perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1e Humanity's relationship with the natural world - Sikh perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about Humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● all forms of life are interconnected ● the entire universe is a manifestation of Waheguru and deserves respect; Guru Granth Sahib 8; 723 ● the Guru Granth Sahib contains numerous hymns that celebrate nature as expressions of Waheguru's greatness ● the concept of Sarbat da Bhala (the well-being of all) includes the well-being of the planet and all its inhabitants ● harming nature is seen as harming a part of God's creation ● the concept of santok (contentment) in Sikhism applies to how one interacts with the natural world ● Sikhs are encouraged to live simply, avoiding excessive consumption and wastefulness. <p>How the aims and work of Eco Sikh UK reflect Sikh beliefs about caring for the natural world.</p>
3.4.2e Animal rights - Sikh perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Waheguru (God) resides in all forms of life, not just humans; Guru Granth Sahib 663 ● Sikh Gurus set examples of compassion towards animals. Guru Har Rai, the seventh Sikh Guru, was known for his kindness to animals ● the practice the virtue of daya (compassion) applies to animals as well as humans ● harming animals disrupts the balance of nature and is inconsistent with the principle of Sarbat da Bhala ● the concept of reincarnation means people live many lives on earth, some of these in the form of animals ● harming or killing animals could result in bad karma and lead humans further away from mukti. <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about the use of animals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sikhism allows for personal choice in dietary practices ● using animals for food is not forbidden

- the jhatka method of slaughter means that the animal must be killed as quickly as possible and experiences as little suffering as possible
- many Sikhs, especially those who follow the Khalsa code of conduct, are vegetarian; Guru Granth Sahib 467
- some consider that the concept of ahimsa applies just as much to animals
- langar kitchens in gurdwaras offer vegetarian food only.

Sikh beliefs, teachings and practices about the use of animals in scientific and medical research:

- there is no explicit prohibition against using animals in scientific and medical research
- many Sikhs see human life as ultimately of more value than animal life
- any research using animals would need to be balanced against the Sikh value of ahimsa
- any suffering must be justified by significant benefits to human life and health
- Sikhs might support the use of alternative research methods.

3.5e Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life - Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1e What makes us human - Sikh perspectives

3.5.2e Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Sikh perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1e What makes us human - Sikh perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● every human contains a divine spark known as atma (soul) ● the atma is part of the universal soul or Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 96 ● humans were all created by Waheguru and are worthy of respect; Guru Granth Sahib 272; 349 ● humans are the highest form of living creatures and are unique because they can make moral judgements ● humans have a spiritual essence ● human actions have consequences – positive or negative karma ● humans are encouraged to align their will with hukam (the divine will) ● karma affects the attainment of mukti ● Sikhs should aim for their lives to be gurmukh rather than manmukh ● Sikhs should aim to transcend haumai (the ego - self-centredness).

<p>3.5.2e Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - Sikh perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about medical ethics - abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● due to the cycle of samsara, there is no point at which a foetus or embryo is not living ● life is sacred and is a gift from Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 921 ● the atma (soul) enters the body at the moment of conception; Guru Granth Sahib 74 ● the concept of daya (compassion), ● the importance of intention behind actions ● the concept of miri-piri - the balance between religious teachings and practical situations ● in certain situations, Sikh ethics might support abortion as a compassionate choice ● there is a recognition of the complex moral decisions that are often involved. <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about medical ethics - euthanasia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a high value on the sanctity of life ● an emphasis on compassion, moral responsibility, and acceptance of hukam (Waheguru's will) ● all life is a gift from Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 921 ● most Sikhs believe that the timing of birth and death should be left in the Waheguru's hands; Guru Granth Sahib 376 ● suffering can be part of one's karmic cycle and lead to spiritual growth ● euthanasia could be seen as disrupting the karmic journey towards mukti ● daya (compassion) is a Sikh virtue ● Sikh teachings would encourage providing palliative care and pain relief rather than hastening death ● sewa (selfless service), involves caring for those in need.
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3.6e Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth - Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1e Freedom of religious expression - Sikh perspectives

3.6.2e Personal wealth - Sikh perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1e Freedom of religious expression - Sikh perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concept of Sarbat da Bhala (well-being of all) respects the rights of individuals to follow their own religious beliefs there are many paths to the Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 139 and 483 Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life to protect the religious freedom of Hindus Sikh leaders have allowed all religions to practice their faith freely (Maharajah Ranjit Singh's reign 1801 to 1839) Sikh Gurus consistently preached against coercion in matters of religion; Guru Granth Sahib 7 the Adi Granth also includes writings from Hindu and Muslim writers who believed in the oneness of God encourages Sikhs are encouraged to read the books of other religions for self-education; Rehat Maryada Chapter 10 the kirpan symbolises the importance of defending the Sikh faith.
3.6.2e The use of personal wealth - Sikh perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Sikh beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sikhs are encouraged to set aside a portion of their income - daswandh (traditionally 10%) for charitable purposes and to support community welfare 1 of the 3 pillars of Sikhism is Vand Chhako (giving) Guru Granth Sahib 1245 the avoidance of a desire for excessive wealth the encouragement of contentment through peace and spiritual fulfilment; Guru Granth Sahib 286 the pursuit of wealth should not lead to materialism or distract from spiritual goals; Guru Granth Sahib 5; Guru Granth Sahib 1331 Sikhs should aim for their lives, to be gurmukh rather than manmukh Sikhs need to transcend haumai (the ego - self-centredness).

Non-religious perspectives

3.7 Roles, rights and responsibilities: stewardship of the earth – Buddhist perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.7.1 Humanity's relationship with the natural world - non-religious perspectives

3.7.2 Animal rights - non-religious perspectives

Section	Amplification
<p>3.7.1 Humanity's relationship with the natural world - non-religious perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives about humanity's relationship with the natural world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the interconnectedness of all living things ● humans have the capacity to reason and foresee the consequences of their actions ● environmental justice - to protect vulnerable populations from environmental harm. <p>How the aims and work Humanist Climate Action reflect humanist beliefs about caring for the world.</p> <p>The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about humanity's relationship with the natural world.</p>
<p>3.7.2 Animal rights - non-religious perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives on animal rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Animal Welfare Act 2022 recognises that animals are sentient beings ● the concept of speciesism ● the concept of Deep Ecology ● commitment to preserving biodiversity and maintaining healthy ecosystems. <p>Non-religious perspectives on using animals for human benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● concerns about the humane treatment of animals in food production ● for some, the promotion of veganism or vegetarianism ● concerns about the impact of animal agriculture and industrial farming practices on the environment and on humans <p>Non-religious perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● justified where it could lead to significant human medical advancements ● minimising harm and trying to find alternatives (such as computer modelling) ● a concern that the prohibition of animal research could hinder scientific and medical progress

- a concern that some research on animals has resulted in harm to humans (e.g. thalidomide) for some, that animals and should not be used as a means to an end.

How the aims and work of the People for the Ethical Treatment reflect non-religious perspectives about animal rights.

The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about animal rights.

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3.8 Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life -Non-religious perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.8.1 What makes us human - Non-religious perspectives

3.8.2 Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - non-religious perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.8.1 What makes us human - Non-religious perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives on what makes us human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> humans are a defined species physical traits such as large brains and the ability to use complex language and symbols possess self-consciousness possess autonomy - free will and are moral agents capable of distinguishing right from wrong can explore the quest for life's meaning and purpose <p>The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about what makes us human.</p>
3.8.2 Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia - non-religious perspectives	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives on abortion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take different sides of the Pro-Choice vs. Pro-Life debate some argue it should be based on personal autonomy some stress the need for a legal framework to access abortion some want full access to abortion services as necessary to protect women's health some believe that personhood develops later in the pregnancy and allow early abortions a consideration of the individual situation and the consequences concerns about the 'slippery slope' <p>The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about abortion.</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives on euthanasia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> different views on when a person ceases to exist personal autonomy and quality of life - the right to die rational, informed, legal decision-making based on medical advice and personal values the need for a clear legal framework to protect patients and healthcare providers <p>The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about euthanasia.</p>

3.9 Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth - non-religious perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.9.1 Freedom of religious expression - non-religious perspectives

3.9.2 Personal wealth - non-religious perspectives

Section	Amplification
<p>3.9.1 Freedom of religious expression - non-religious perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives on freedom of religious expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a fundamental human right that promotes individual autonomy and dignity ● is not absolute, it should be limited when it conflicts with other rights or public order ● freedom of religious expression is enshrined in law in the UK - Human Rights Act 1998 ● support for a pluralistic society ● support for the need for a clear separation between religion and government ● some would oppose faith schools ● laws and policies should not favour religious expression or symbols over secular ones ● restrictions on the use of religious symbols or proselytizing in public schools, government offices, or other state-controlled spaces. <p>The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about freedom of religious expression.</p>
<p>3.9.2 Use of personal wealth - non-religious perspectives</p>	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <p>Non-religious perspectives on the use of personal wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● personal wealth as a tool to improve the quality of life for oneself and others ● personal wealth can contribute to comfort and security, but it is not the sole determinant of happiness ● spending money on goods and services is a driver of economic growth for all and brings personal satisfaction ● wealth is useful but should not lead to greed. <p>The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about the use of personal wealth.</p>

Unit 4

Religion and human Rights

Assessment Type: Non-examination assessment (Duration to be confirmed)

20% of qualification

Marks to be confirmed

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- consider an ethical and/or moral human rights issue from religious and non-religious viewpoints
- develop an awareness of their own rights, the rights of others and develop a commitment to justice.

Learners will apply their knowledge and understanding in the context of one of the following key themes:

- Freedom of religion and belief
- Commitment to justice
- Crime and punishment.

Learners must select **one** or **two** of the two religions chosen for Units 1 and 3.

Areas of content

4.1 Human rights

In this topic learners will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:
4.1.1 Introduction to human rights through the subject lens of Religious Studies

Section	Amplification
4.1.1 Introduction to human rights through the subject lens of Religious Studies	<p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of human rights • the impact on society of recognising and/or removing human rights • attitudes, beliefs, teachings and sources of authority relating to human rights from a religious perspective • attitudes, beliefs and sources of authority relating to human rights from a non-religious perspective • contemporary human rights issues, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender inequality and LGBTQ+ rights • racial inequality of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and communities • refugee and asylum seeker rights • rights of people with disabilities. <p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form their own beliefs and attitudes in relation to human rights issues • reflect on contemporary human rights issues and their importance to religious and non-religious believers.

4.2 Skills - TBC

4.3 Key themes

Learners will focus on either 4.3a, 4.3b or 4.3c in line with the pre-released information (TBC) from WJEC.

4.3a Freedom of religion and belief

Learners should understand the human rights issues associated with the freedom of religion and belief:

- the right to belong to a religion
- the right to change religion
- the right to hold non-religious beliefs
- the right to freedom of expression
- the right to freedom of speech and opinion.

4.3b Commitment to justice

Learners should understand the human rights issues associated with justice, such as:

- the importance of justice
- ways in which religious and non-religious believers work for justice
- ways in which organisations work for justice
- key religious attitudes, beliefs and teachings towards justice
- key non-religious attitudes and beliefs towards justice
- the role of justice to address discrimination towards Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and communities.

4.3c Crime and punishment issues

Learners should understand the human rights issues associated with crime and punishment, such as.

- how actions are considered right or wrong
- types of punishment
- the death penalty
- the aims of punishment
- the treatment of prisoners.

Opportunities for integration of learning experiences

Learners should be encouraged to consider the following learning experiences to further develop their understanding, appreciation and awareness of the subject content:

- develop independent thinking and confidence in articulating their own beliefs, values, and convictions with increasing sophistication
- explore their own beliefs, values, and convictions, understanding that beliefs can change over time
- develop empathy, tolerance compassion and curiosity through engagement with different religious and non-religious viewpoints and convictions
- engage in collaborative working.

The Guidance for Teaching will include further information on the opportunities provided by the qualification for teachers/centres to integrate these learning experiences into delivery.

For opportunities to develop cross-cutting themes, cross-curricular skills and integral skills please see Appendix A.

3 ASSESSMENT

The Assessment Pack will include all detailed information relating to assessment.

3.1 Assessment Objectives and Weightings

Below are the assessment objectives for this specification. Learners must:

AO1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, practices, and teachings

AO2

Apply knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, values, and philosophical convictions

AO3

Analyse, evaluate, or make judgements on a variety of ethical and moral issues, religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, values, and philosophical convictions

AO4

Select, use and apply skills and techniques in practice relevant to the study of Religious Studies

The table below shows the weighting of each assessment objective for each unit and for the qualification as a whole (to be confirmed).

	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
Unit 1	15%	8%	7%	0%	30%
Unit 2	0%	5%	10%	5%	20%
Unit 3	5%	11%	14%	0%	30%
Unit 4	0%	10%	5%	5%	20%
Overall weighting	20%	34%	36%	10%	100%

3.2 Overview of arrangements for non-examination assessment

Unit 2

For this assessment learners are required to explore religion and relationship. The assessment must be based on one or two of the two religions studied for Units 1 and 3.

This assessment contributes to 20% of the overall qualification grade.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be hand written and scanned, or completed digitally).

Further detail to be confirmed.

Unit 4

This non-examination assessment is based on stimulus materials, which will be set by WJEC annually and available via the WJEC Portal in September of the second year of study and every year thereafter.

Learners are required to complete tasks based on stimulus materials. The stimulus materials will change annually. Stimulus materials will relate to religious and/or non-religious perspectives of human rights issues associated with one of the following:

- freedom of religion and belief
- commitment to justice
- crime and punishment issues.

This assessment contributes to 20% of the overall qualification grade

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be set and marked by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned, or completed digitally).

Further detail to be confirmed.

4 MALPRACTICE

Before the course starts, the teacher is responsible for informing candidates of WJEC's regulations concerning malpractice. Candidates must not take part in any unfair practice in the preparation of work for GCSE Religious Studies. Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 3 will be available in 2026 (and each year thereafter). Unit 4 will be available in 2027 (and each year thereafter) and the qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2027.

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5 TECHNICAL INFORMATION

5.1 Making entries

This is a unitised qualification. Learners are entered for each unit separately.

Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer series each year, until the end of the life of the specification.

Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 3 will be available in 2026 (and each year thereafter). Unit 4 will be available in 2027 (and each year thereafter) and the qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2027.

The terminal rule is set at 40% of the overall qualification for GCSE Religious Studies. If the assessment being re-taken contributes to the 40% terminal rule requirement, the mark for the new assessment will count.

Pre-16 Candidates

Candidates may resit an individual unit once only. The better uniform mark score from the two attempts will be used in calculating the final overall grade subject to the terminal rule being satisfied first i.e. that candidates must complete a minimum amount of the assessment for a qualification in the series in which they are cashing in.

If any unit has been attempted twice and a candidate wishes to enter the unit for the third time, the candidate will have to re-enter all units and the appropriate cash-in(s). This is referred to as a 'fresh start'. When retaking a qualification (fresh start), a candidate may have up to two attempts at each unit. However, no results from units taken prior to the fresh start can be used in aggregating the new grade(s).

Marks for non-examination assessment may be carried forward for the life of the specification. If a candidate has been entered for but is absent for a unit, the absence does not count as an attempt. The candidate would, however, qualify as a resit candidate.

Post-16 Candidates

There is no limit on the number of times a candidate can resit an individual unit; however, the better uniform mark score from the most two recent attempts will be used in calculating the final overall grade subject to the terminal rule being satisfied first i.e. that candidates must complete a minimum amount of the assessment for a qualification in the series in which they are cashing in.

The 'fresh start' rule does not apply to post-16 candidates.

Marks for non-examination assessment may be carried forward for the life of the specification. If a candidate has been entered for but is absent for a unit, the absence does not count as an attempt. The candidate would, however, qualify as a resit candidate.

The entry codes appear below:

To be confirmed.

5.2 Grading, awarding and reporting

GCSE qualifications are reported on an eight point scale from A*-G, where A* is the highest grade. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award will be reported as U (unclassified).

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Appendix A: Opportunities for embedding elements of the Curriculum for Wales

Curriculum for Wales Strands	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Cross-cutting Themes				
Local, National & International Contexts		✓	✓	✓
Sustainability		✓	✓	
Relationships and Sexuality Education	✓			✓
Human Rights Education				✓
Careers and Work-Related Experiences		✓		✓
Cross-curricular Skills - Literacy				
Listening	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speaking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Writing	✓	✓	✓	✓

Curriculum for Wales Strands	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Cross-curricular Skills - Numeracy				
Developing Mathematical Proficiency				
Understanding the number system helps us to represent and compare relationships between numbers and quantities				
Learning about geometry helps us understand shape, space and position and learning about measurement helps us quantify in the real world				
Learning that statistics represent data and that probability models chance help us make informed inferences and decisions	✓	✓		✓
Digital Competence				
Citizenship				
Interacting and Collaborating				
Producing		✓		✓
Data and Computational Thinking		✓		✓

Curriculum for Wales Strands	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Integral Skills				
Creativity and Innovation		✓		✓
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving		✓		✓
Planning and Organisation		✓		✓
Personal Effectiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓

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