

Gwynedd Agreed Syllabus Religion Value and Ethics

Preface:

As RVE is a locally determined subject, the agreed syllabus specifies what should be taught in RVE within each of the 22 local authorities in Wales for those schools that teach the agreed syllabus.

Cyngor Gwynedd local authority convened an Agreed Syllabus Conference in February 2022 to review the syllabus and to recommend an appropriate syllabus for the local authority to adopt. The agreed syllabus will be reviewed every five years.

All maintained schools and settings are required to have regard to the agreed syllabus including schools of a religious character, in their design of the agreed syllabus element of their RVE provision.

Introduction

Religion, values and ethics (RVE) is a statutory requirement of the Curriculum for Wales and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. RVE forms part of the Humanities Area. This Area encompasses geography; history; religion, values and ethics; business studies. These disciplines share many common themes, concepts and transferable skills, whilst having their own discrete body of knowledge and skills.

There is no parental right to request that a child is withdrawn from RVE in the Curriculum for Wales.

The purpose of this RVE guidance: This RVE guidance has been written by practitioners and religious education experts to provide additional support on how RVE can be taught within the Humanities Area. It emphasises the integral nature of RVE within this Area and outlines the unique and distinct contribution that RVE makes to the Curriculum for Wales. More information on the legal status of this RVE guidance can be found in the legislation summary of the Curriculum for Wales Framework.

2. Audience

The Agreed Syllabus for RVE sits within the Humanities Area and has been written to be accessible to all those responsible for designing a curriculum. Those persons who must have regard to the guidance when designing a curriculum are:

- the headteacher of a maintained school or a maintained nursery school
- the governing body of a maintained school or a maintained nursery school
- a provider of funded non-maintained nursery education
- the teacher in charge of a pupil referral unit
- the management committee for a pupil referral unit
- a person who provides teaching and learning for a child, otherwise than at a maintained school, maintained nursery school or pupil referral unit, by virtue of arrangements made under section 19A of the Education Act 1996 (c. 56)
- a local authority in Wales

In addition, the guidance may also be useful to

- practitioners, regional consortia,

- awarding bodies, Estyn,
- teacher unions,
- religious organisations, non-religious organisations,
- parents and carers and other bodies in Wales with an interest in RVE.

3. Religion Values and Ethics within the Curriculum for Wales

RVE within the Curriculum for Wales can offer a distinctive contribution to the realisation of the four purposes for all learners. As such, this guidance supports schools and settings in developing provision for RVE that prepares learners in Wales for life and work in a fast-changing and diverse world, as responsible and informed citizens.

RVE is situated within the Humanities Area and incorporates a range of disciplinary approaches that can be used by learners to engage critically with a broad range of religious and non-religious concepts. For example, disciplinary approaches relevant to RVE may include religious studies, philosophy, theology, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. There are also strong relationships between RVE and the other disciplines within Humanities as well as with other Areas.

Concepts are important in RVE because they are central ideas that help learners to make sense of and interpret human experience, the natural world and their own place within it. Learners will have opportunities to explore RVE concepts through a variety of sub lenses which make up the RVE disciplinary lens.

These concepts and sub lenses are set out in this RVE guidance. In the Curriculum for Wales RVE is objective, critical and pluralistic, both in content and pedagogy; it is not about making learners ‘religious or ‘non-religious’. The expression ‘objective, critical and pluralistic’ comes from European Convention on Human Rights case law. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 ensures that all learners must be offered opportunities through RVE to engage with different religions and non-religious philosophical convictions in their own locality and in Wales, as well as in the wider world.

4. Spiritual development

One of the features of the four purposes of the curriculum is that learners will be supported to develop as healthy, confident individuals, ready to live fulfilling lives as valued members of society. Statements of what matters and RVE has many valuable and distinctive contributions to make. The statements of what matters are set out in the What Matters Code and include the key concepts for each Area.

In the context of RVE, spiritual development is concerned with our natural ability to look for, express and understand what is important in life, and to question who we are and why we are here. Spiritual development may or may not involve religion. Through experiencing and reflecting on our relationships, spiritual development may be apparent in the following: awareness of self in relation to others; connections to the wider and the natural world (and, for some people, to a higher power or ultimate reality); creativity and going beyond the everyday; exploration of ultimate questions and contemplation of meaning and purpose.

5. Awareness of self in relation to others

Learners can:

- develop a sense of their uniqueness and value
- reflect upon their own beliefs, values and actions, and express and justify their own feelings and opinions
- develop aspirations and learn to live with disappointment
- show empathy and consideration for others
- develop compassion and help others
- develop a voice and listen with respect to the voices of others
- form good relationships
- talk about themselves in relation to others, the world and/or a higher power or ultimate reality
- gain awareness of and respect for the beliefs, teachings and practices of others, as well as an ability to articulate their own
- explore how religious and non-religious beliefs and practices impact on the lives of individuals, the local community and wider society

Connections to the wider and the natural world Learners can:

- develop an appreciation of belonging in their locality, Wales and the wider world
- experience the natural world, value the environment and work towards sustainable futures for all
- experience the richness of the stimuli around them through use of the senses
- experience being present in the moment
- develop awareness of the world around them and their place within it
- make sense of their experience of the natural world and of human relationships

6. Develop creativity and use their imagination Learners can

- develop creativity and use their imagination
- experience awe and wonder or be amazed by things
- foster curiosity and develop insight

7. Exploration of ultimate questions and contemplation of meaning and purpose Learners can:

- ask, consider and reflect on ultimate questions (the ‘big’ questions about life)
- discover meaning and purpose in their own lives
- experience that which is beyond the ordinary

Spiritual development can also occur as learners engage with their cynefin and occur in everyday life within their local, national and global communities.

8. Designing your curriculum for RVE

All schools and settings must also have regard to their locally agreed syllabus for RVE when designing their curriculum.

Curriculum design and development must incorporate, where appropriate, opportunities for learning and consideration of cross-cutting themes in the Curriculum for Wales. These cross-cutting themes are: careers and work-related experiences, human rights, diversity, local, national and international contexts and relationships and sexuality education. It is also important that the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence, as well as the skills integral to the four purposes (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, personal effectiveness, planning and organising) are considered in curriculum design.

When realising their curriculum, schools and settings need to decide how RVE best works within their approach to the Humanities Area.

For example, curriculum design can be integrated, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or disciplinary. Curriculum design should be evaluated regularly in line with the Curriculum for Wales Framework guidance.

9. RVE and the four purposes

At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales are the four purposes, which are the key drivers for curriculum design and, as such, should be the focus of all curriculum development. The four purposes set out the aspirations for all learners.

By the age of 16, they should be:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

In the Humanities Area, the statements of what matters contribute to realising the four purposes of the curriculum.

Mandatory RVE makes an important and distinctive contribution to supporting the four purposes by giving learners opportunities to:

- engage with and explore ultimate and philosophical questions about the meaning, significance and purpose of life, and about the nature of human thought and of the universe, and the connections between them
- undertake enquiries and engage with sources of wisdom and philosophies that encourage them to explore the challenges, opportunities and responses of human beings in the context of their cynefin, locally, in Wales and the wider world, as well as support them in evaluating their own perspectives and those of others
- develop and express their own informed viewpoints, which prepares them for lifelong learning in a pluralistic and diverse world

- use their knowledge and understanding of both institutional and personal religious and non-religious beliefs and practices to think critically about their own values and about how they might make important social and personal decisions
- explore the ways in which religion and non-religious philosophical convictions have influenced human experience throughout history, so that they can make sense of their place in the world, imagine possible futures and create responsible solutions that take in to account the diverse needs and rights of all people
- evaluate and use evidence from a range of religious and non-religious sources to engage with ethical and moral issues, past and contemporary, that challenge their knowledge and values. This enables learners to develop an understanding of religion and belief, culture, community, their cynefin, Wales and the wider world now and in the past, which can help to nurture a sense of place and belonging
- respond sensitively to religion and non-religious philosophical convictions and explore the beliefs and practices of people in their community, Wales and the wider world, and how these might impact their actions and choices
- develop secure values and establish their ethical beliefs and spirituality through the exploration of religion and non-religious philosophical convictions on a range of issues, which can in turn enable them to form positive relationships based upon trust and mutual respect
- discuss and reflect on their own perspectives and those of others on a range of issues, which help them to build their mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing by developing confidence, resilience and empathy

10. RVE and the statements of what matters

Before any detailed planning can begin, it is essential for practitioners and school leaders to consider the Humanities statements of what matters, which contribute to learners realising the four purposes of the curriculum. Practitioners and leaders should also consider the statements of what matters in other Areas where RVE may be able to contribute to learning.

11. RVE concepts

The statements of what matters in this Area allow learners to explore and critically engage with a broad range of religious and non-religious concepts, which should be carefully considered and underpin curriculum design.

When considering RVE concepts within their curriculum, schools and settings should:

- develop an understanding of the discipline and its value
- provide rich contexts for learners to be curious, to explore ultimate questions and to search for an understanding of the human condition, as well as providing opportunities for learners to reflect and to experience awe and wonder, in a range of meaningful real-world contexts
- develop rich contexts for enquiry into the concepts of religion, lived religion, worldviews, secularity, spirituality, life stance, identity and culture to develop learners' well-rounded understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs and practices
- provide rich contexts for engaging with concepts of belief, faith, truth, purpose, meaning, knowledge, sources of authority, self, origin, life, death and ultimate reality, which can enable

learners to develop an understanding of personal and institutional beliefs about the nature of life and the world around them

- develop rich contexts for exploring the concepts of identity, belonging, relationships, community, cynefin, diversity, pluralism and interconnectedness, which can enable learners to gain a sense of self and develop spirituality
- explore the concepts of equality, sustainability, tolerance, freedom, prejudice, discrimination, extremism, good and evil, which can give learners an insight into the challenges and opportunities that face societies
- reflect the concepts and contexts of religiosity, practice, ritual, tradition, worship, sacredness, symbolism and celebration to develop learners' understanding of religion and belief
- provide rich contexts for exploring the concepts of ethics, morality, justice, responsibilities, authority, humanity, rights, values and social action

12. The RVE lens

This agreed syllabus focusses on the RVE disciplinary lens and can help schools and settings consider relevant content for their curriculum design. In this guidance the RVE lens is divided into a number of sub lenses through which the RVE concepts can be viewed and explored. The sub lenses are interconnected and are not intended to be units or topics. They draw on a recognised body of knowledge for RVE in Wales and help to ensure sufficient breadth and depth for RVE in the Humanities. The sub lenses lend themselves to all of the statements of what matters and are also relevant to other Areas and to the realisation of the four purposes. They help schools and settings understand significant aspects of RVE and identify opportunities for RVE within the statements of what matters to support curriculum development.

Sub lenses in RVE include:

- Search for meaning and purpose

How people respond to the deeper questions of life in order to understand the human condition.

- The natural world and living things

How and why people show concern and responsibility for the world and experience awe and wonder in nature.

- Identity and belonging

What makes us who we are as people, communities and citizens living in a diverse world.

- Authority and influence

How and why different types of authority influence people's lives.

- Relationships and responsibility

How people live together and why developing healthy relationships is important.

- Values and ethics

How and why people make moral choices and how this influences their actions.

- The journey of life

What people experience as part of the journey of life and how these experiences are acknowledged.

13. Learner progression and learning journeys in RVE

Learner progression is an important driver for designing your curriculum. This is reflected in the statements of what matters and in the descriptions of learning for the Humanities, which help to provide more detailed guidance for practitioners. In order to develop a shared understanding of progression from ages 3 to 16 in relation to RVE within this Area, an example ‘learning journey’ for each sub lens is Page 16 provided. These learning journeys illustrate how a learner may develop their understanding of concepts in RVE through the various interconnected sub lenses, and may be useful when designing your curriculum, alongside the descriptions of learning for the Humanities. They have taken account of the descriptions of learning and encourage schools and settings to be creative and confident when planning for learner progression in RVE within their curriculum design. The learning journeys do not provide an alternative set of descriptions of learning, nor do they provide specific reference points or criteria for the pace of progression, and should not be used as such. All of the statements of what matters in this Area are reflected across the learning journeys.

Example learning journey 1: search for meaning and purpose

This learning journey draws mainly from two statements of what matters: ‘Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways’ and ‘Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs’. There are connections with other statements of what matters and with other Areas that can also be explored through this sub lens.

The descriptions of learning will help to provide more detailed guidance on progression.

This journey is about the ‘deeper questions of life’. At the early stages of learning, learners begin to ask deeper questions about themselves and others, and about the natural world and living things around them (for example, ‘Who am I?’ and ‘Why do things die?’), as well as listening to the opinions of others. Further along their journey, they gather and discuss religious and non-religious insights and consider their own and others’ opinions, viewpoints and interpretations with increasing sophistication. Later, issues of truth, meaning, purpose and value can be shared, debated and evaluated as learners engage more deeply with a range of challenging questions on these issues (for example the existence of good and evil, the nature of suffering, the use of wealth). They can recognise that responses to such questions are complex, as well as often partial and inconclusive.

This journey is also about ‘influence, continuity and change’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to know and express what they like and dislike, what makes them happy and sad, and what their hopes and dreams are for the future, as well as responding to the ideas of others. Further along their journey, they can identify and discuss religious and non-religious insights concerning human feelings and needs, including what influences these and how they are expressed in their own and other people’s lives. Later, learners can come to recognise both continuity and change in responses to questions about meaning and purpose in life, both in their own lives and in society and culture, across time and place. They evaluate relevant contemporary values and ideas of self-worth from religious and non-religious perspectives.

This journey is also about ‘human quests and contributions’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to show an awareness of the people and the ‘big ideas’ that have shaped their local places and everyday lives.

Further along their journey, they imagine and discuss what they may contribute both now and in the future, and increasingly engage with the relationship between aspiration and practice, while considering a variety of contributions from religious and non-religious sources. Later, as learners' understanding develops, they can make increasingly complex connections between aspects of health and well-being, the needs and demands of the world today and their own search for meaning and purpose.

Example learning journey 2: the natural world and living things

This learning journey draws mainly from two statements of what matters: 'Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions' and 'Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action'. There are connections with other statements of what matters and with other Areas that can also be explored through this sub lens.

The descriptions of learning will help to provide more detailed guidance on progression.

This journey is about 'care, concern and respect'. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to show care and respect for the natural world and living things around them. Further along their journey, they can identify how and why they and others show care, concern and respect, as well as considering religious and non-religious perspectives. Later, with increasing sophistication, learners can come to raise, and consider critically, ethical questions related to human activity, nature and place; engaging with religious, non-religious responses and their own responses.

This journey is also about 'awe and wonder'. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to experience awe and wonder in nature, which develops as they explore the world around them, observing and asking questions. Further along their journey, a sense of the complexity of life and its interconnectedness grows, as well as a sense of active responsibility. Later, experiences of awe and wonder are nuanced by deeper and more wide-ranging engagement with others and with place, as well as with the natural world and living things.

This journey is also about 'responsibility and action'. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to show an awareness of the variety of living things beyond themselves, and that their actions can impact these. Further along their journey, they can come to know religious and non-religious 'stories' about local places, the natural world and living things, and how these relate to themselves and others. Through religious and non-religious narratives (for example, about the origins of the world), learners can learn about different philosophies important to our understanding of the world and the place of humans within it. Later, with increasing sophistication, they become able to recognise how values and beliefs are reflected in action, from religious and non-religious perspectives, and how these relate to their own experiences.

This journey is also about 'place and space'. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to recognise that they are located in place and space, and this has meaning for them. Further along their journey, they recognise that places and spaces around them mean different things to different people, as well as considering places of special significance for religious and non-religious reasons. Later, learners can come to identify and explain various contested places (religious and non-religious), appreciating sensitivities surrounding place. They can understand the complexity of debates and of influences such as identity, authority, values, ethics and considerations of meaning and purpose in life.

Example learning journey 3: values and ethics

This learning journey draws mainly from two statements of what matters: ‘Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways’ and ‘Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action’. There are connections with other statements of what matters and with other Areas that can also be explored through this sub lens.

The descriptions of learning will help to provide more detailed guidance on progression.

This journey is about ‘what people value’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to identify what is of value to them (for example, fairness, trust, love, life and kindness) and they listen to the opinions of others. They can recognise the need to respect others and can show what this looks like in their everyday lives. Further along their journey, learners become aware of different interpretations and expressions of common values, appreciating a variety of religious and non-religious influences. They learn how some values and rights have changed over time. As their knowledge and experience grows, learners can come to discuss a variety of religious and non-religious perspectives on instances of inequality and injustice, as well as the challenges of identifying and protecting human rights. Later they are increasingly able to form, defend and review their ethical positions on matters of religious and non-religious significance (for example, the sanctity of life, freedom of speech, animal welfare and war).

This journey is also about ‘beliefs, actions and consequences’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to show an understanding of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and how their actions and feelings relate to this.

Further along their journey, with increasing breadth and sophistication they can explain how their actions may have consequences for themselves and others, and for the world and living things, drawing on insights from a variety of religious and non-religious philosophical convictions. Later, they can come to postulate and evaluate the factors that influence their attitudes, behaviours and actions, and those of others, including factors relating to religious and non-religious belief and practice.

This journey is also about ‘decision-making’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to recognise basic moral dilemmas and offer solutions. Further along their journey, they can learn rules and codes of behaviour (both religious and non-religious) relevant to them and to others around them, and they can explain their impact on people’s lives. Later, with increasing sophistication, learners can come to identify and critically discuss the responsibilities and challenges of decision-making, showing understanding of relevant figures, processes and institutions that form part of decision-making, in both religious and non-religious contexts. Learners identify opportunities where appropriate moral action is needed in their communities, Wales and the wider world.

Example learning journey 4: identity and belonging

This learning journey draws mainly from two statements of what matters: ‘Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways’ and ‘Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs’. There are connections with other statements of what matters and with other Areas that can also be explored through this sub lens.

The descriptions of learning will help to provide more detailed guidance on progression.

This journey is about ‘what makes people who they are’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to show an awareness of who they are and that they are similar to and different from

others. Further along their learning journey, they discuss what can form identity (for example, relationships, lifestyles, beliefs and place) and how these influence people and their communities. Later, learners can review and evaluate a range of religious and non-religious philosophies, life stances and practices concerned with what it means to be human, and they can form and critically consider their own perspectives.

This journey is also about ‘communities, contributions and diversity’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to understand that they are part of various groups and communities and what belonging looks like. They are aware of diversity within relevant communities and that their experiences of belonging are similar to and different from others. Further along their learning journey, they can explore expressions of belonging in a range of religious and non-religious contexts. They can discuss the significance of belonging in people’s lives, including their own. Later, with increasing sophistication, learners can come to identify and evaluate relationships between belonging, commitment and contributions to society, culture and well-being.

This journey is also about ‘place, time and relationships’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to be aware that they exist in place and time, and that this shapes them and the communities around them. Further along their learning journey, they can explore interactions between a range of communities and societies, locally and more widely, and they can discuss the contributions of identity and belonging from religious and non-religious perspectives. They can come to recognise continuity and change in identity and belonging, and how these are experienced personally and collectively. Later, learners can investigate and evaluate relationships and interdependencies between a range of groups, communities and societies (locally, nationally and globally) and how these impact on human life and the natural world. They can critically consider the roles of identity and belonging in understanding and responding to shared contemporary issues, from religious and non-religious perspectives.

Example learning journey 5: authority and influence

This learning journey draws mainly from three statements of what matters:

‘Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different way’,

‘Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs’, and
‘Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action’.

There are connections with other statements of what matters and with other Areas that can also be explored through this sub lens.

The descriptions of learning will help to provide more detailed guidance on progression.

This journey is about ‘authorities and influences’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to recognise that they are influenced by some important people and that this affects how they feel, think and behave. Further along their learning journey, they can identify and explore different sources of authority within religious and non-religious contexts (for example, leaders, relationships, texts, codes of behaviour and traditions).

They can come to understand that sources of authority influence people’s lives in a variety of ways. Later, as learners’ understanding develops, they can analyse and evaluate complex relationships (including their own) that exist between and across sources of authority. They can come to critically

consider the authority of religious and spiritual experience and conscience, in the past and present, and their impact on people, society and culture.

This journey is also about ‘experiences and interpretations’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to be aware of important influences in the lives of others, and that their experiences are similar to and different from their own. Further along their learning journey, they can explore how sources of authority are interpreted in different ways by various people and groups, within religious and nonreligious contexts. They can come to recognise influences on interpretations and that some sources of authority carry more weight than others for different people, groups and societies. Later, learners can draw on multiple sources of authority to evaluate religious and non-religious interpretations of issues relevant to the human condition, and they can present their own informed positions. They can critically consider how and why experiences and concepts of authority may change over time.

This journey is also about ‘choices and actions’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to understand that their actions can be affected by choices. They can show awareness of influences on their choices. Further along their learning journey, they can come to recognise how people and communities draw on religious and non-religious sources of authority to guide them in their lives and to inform important decisions. Later, as learners’ understanding develops, they are able to use their knowledge and understanding of a range of sources of authority to engage critically in contemporary ethical issues or debates, and to influence possible actions and outcomes (for example, challenge, consensus and reconciliation).

Example learning journey 6: relationships and responsibility

This learning journey draws mainly from two statements of what matters:

‘Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions’ and

‘Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs’.

There are connections with other statements of what matters and with other Areas that can also be explored through this sub lens.

The descriptions of learning will help to provide more detailed guidance on progression.

This journey is about ‘how people live together’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to understand that they live in a number of relationships. They are aware of what helps them to live with others.

They can offer opinions about how disagreements can be resolved. Further along their learning journey, they can identify and discuss how the importance of relationships (personal, social, environmental and transcendental) is expressed in people’s lives, drawing on religious and non-religious contexts. Later, learners can come to recognise that relationships are dynamic and complex.

They can critically consider influences that can contribute to harmony and discord globally, locally and personally (including religious and non-religious influences). They can review and evaluate challenges presented by relationships, drawing on a range of religious and non-religious insights and experiences. This journey is also about ‘responsibilities and interconnectedness’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to be aware of connections between their own lives and the lives of other people, the natural world and living things. They can show responsibility for others through simple actions. Further along their learning journey, they can identify how and why people

show responsibility for people and places outside their personal relationships. They can discuss important material and non-material dimensions of relationships (including spiritual, religious and moral dimensions), and they can come to recognise connections with human growth and how people can live together responsibly in the world. Later, learners can come to develop critical appreciation of significant issues affecting relationships at a global level and they can imagine possible futures.

They can critically engage with a range of religious and non-religious philosophies exploring interconnectedness in life, as well as the nature and understanding of human beings within it.

This journey is also about ‘well-being, identity and inclusion’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to be aware of their own experiences and feelings when they engage in activities with others. They can recognise that other people have experiences and feelings, too, which are similar to and different from their own. They show curiosity about other people’s lives. Further along their learning journey, they can explore how action can involve significant commitment and sacrifice (past and present) and have major effects on the lives and well-being of others and on the wider world. They can come to recognise connections between actions and identity, including religious and non-religious influences. They can identify unfairness and inequality in their own personal lives and in wider society and suggest appropriate challenges. Later, learners can critically consider what healthy relationships look like and their contributions to well-being, drawing on a range of religious and non-religious perspectives.

They can come to understand and evaluate relationships between personal identity and relevant group identity.

Example learning journey 7: the journey of life

This learning journey draws mainly from two statements of what matters:

‘Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways’ and

‘Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs’.

There are connections with other statements of what matters and with other Areas that can also be explored through this sub lens.

The descriptions of learning will help to provide more detailed guidance on progression.

This journey is about ‘meaning, purpose and influence’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to recognise that people have personal life stories. Learners start to tell their own life story.

Further along their learning journey, they can explore a variety of paths through life that people have experienced, drawing on religious and non-religious contexts and influences. They can come to identify connections with meaning-making and purpose. Later, learners can analyse and critically consider the concept of vocation, in the past and present, from religious and non-religious perspectives. They can examine challenges encountered in people’s life trajectories and evaluate religious and non-religious responses.

This journey is also about ‘life stages and events’. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to be aware that they grow and change over time. They experience and compare how their own and other people’s growth is acknowledged and celebrated. They can show how their lives

are connected to special times and seasons. Further along their learning journey, they can explore significant life events and rites of passage, and they can discuss the roles that these play in people's lives by drawing on religious and non-religious insights.

Later, learners can analyse and critically discuss human ritual action in the marking of significant events and time. They can come to evaluate relevant philosophies of time from religious and non-religious perspectives and demonstrate how these may impact beliefs, practices and actions.

This journey is also about 'physical and spiritual journeying'. At the early stages of their learning journey, learners begin to recognise that they go on many different journeys for various reasons. They show interest in the journeys of other people and can see how their journeys are similar to and different from their own experiences. They are aware that journeys have physical features as well as non-material features. Further along their learning journey, they can explore people's experiences of important journeys from religious and non-religious perspectives, and they can identify reasons for these journeys. They can come to understand that journeys are connected to place and time. They can imagine what an important journey might look like in their own lives. Later, learners can identify and evaluate relationships between physical and spiritual journeys and their effects on the lives of individuals, communities and wider society (for example, in relation to identity, human formation, diversity, culture). They can critically consider the interconnectedness of journeys, landscapes and people across place and time, drawing on religious and non-religious contexts.

14. Enriching learner experience in RVE

Whichever approach is taken to curriculum development, schools and settings need to ensure rich learning in RVE across a broad range of experiences. Learning experiences are a central aspect of the philosophy of the Curriculum for Wales framework. When designing their curriculum schools and settings should ensure that a developmentally appropriate range of experiences relevant to RVE is provided for learners.

These experiences can include opportunities to:

- engage with religious and non-religious local communities in ways that learners will find meaningful and valuable
- engage in role play and participate in, or observe, activities such as celebrations or re-enactments
- consider what influences people in their response to ethical dilemmas, solve real and present problems, and explore past events
- experience and reflect on the mystery, awe and wonder of the natural world, historical locations and religious and cultural sites
- observe and participate in cultural activities that help learners to understand human experiences
- handle and explore religious artefacts and objects, including sacred and other texts
- visit local places of worship and other special places, landscapes and environments, including those with a significant religious and spiritual dimension
- meet people for whom faith and belief is important to help learners explore lived experiences
- ask big questions relating to higher powers or ultimate reality, the world, the meaning and purpose of life and of their own experiences

- engage with religious and non-religious sources, for example religious leaders, people of faith and belief, philosophers, places of worship, artefacts, sacred texts and philosophical writings
- learn to respond to the beliefs and convictions of others whilst exploring and analysing their own views and values

Enriching learner experience in RVE is also about schools and settings exploring their place within the local and wider community as an important step in designing their curriculum. This can be supported by schools and settings researching the faith and belief groups that are represented locally and across Wales, as well as sacred places and spaces, past and present.

15. Key links with other Areas

Curriculum development in schools and settings should explore clear links and interdependencies between RVE and the other Areas as part of a holistic curriculum. These links and interdependencies should be drawn upon during curriculum planning, with practitioners working creatively and collaboratively to support learners' realisation of the four purposes of the curriculum. Points to consider for schools and settings

The following questions can be used by schools and settings when designing their curriculum for RVE.

- Have you considered how RVE will work best within the Humanities Area?
- Have you had regard for your agreed syllabus for RVE?
- Does your curriculum design for RVE support the realisation of the four purposes?
- Have you used the statements of what matters for this Area to inform your curriculum design?
- Have you used RVE concepts in your curriculum design?
- Have you considered a range of sub lenses through which to view RVE concepts to support curriculum design?
- Have you considered learning progression in RVE, using the principles of progression and descriptions of learning in the Humanities Area?
- Have you considered the 'learning journeys' provided to support your understanding of progression in relation to RVE?
- Have you reflected on the possible learning journeys of your own learners to support curriculum design for RVE?
- Have you included opportunities in your curriculum design for enriching learner experiences in RVE?
- Have you made key links between RVE and the other areas of learning and experience?
- Have you included opportunities for learners' spiritual development in RVE?
- Does your curriculum design for RVE ensure an appropriate depth, breadth and quality of learning?

16. Ensuring inclusivity in RVE

All learners with additional learning needs (ALN) should be supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential in RVE. Schools and settings providing education for learners with ALN, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, should consider how best to meet the needs of all learners when planning and providing effective learning opportunities in RVE.

Considerations may include, for example:

- active, multi-sensory approaches to introduce new learning in RVE, taking account of the different learning styles and emotional needs of each learner
- inclusive opportunities for learners to experience awe and wonder in a variety of environments
- using a variety of stimuli, such as religious and non-religious artefacts and relevant contexts
- full participation of all learners including those who use a means of communication other than speech
- activities that include all learners both inside and outside the classroom, for example, when visiting local places of worship and other special places of significance.

When working with learners with additional learning needs, practitioners and carers should be aware of the school or setting's approach to RVE within the Humanities Area. For further information on ALN refer to guidance on Routes for Learning and the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021.

17. Education in funded non-maintained nursery settings

RVE provision in a funded non-maintained nursery setting should be considered as part of an overarching holistic approach to learning and development. The 'Designing your curriculum for RVE' section above provides further information on RVE for ages 3 to 16, to support practitioners in these settings with this holistic approach.

Young learners are endlessly curious; they enjoy exploring and investigating by themselves and with others, and naturally ask questions about life and the world around them. Through engaging, practical, integrated activities in this period of learning, they can begin to learn more about themselves, other people and the wider world.

Effective, learner-centred pedagogy, which is responsive, dynamic and embedded in strong relationships, should be central to the development of RVE provision in a setting. Through play, learners are able to develop their ideas, opinions and feelings with imagination, creativity and sensitivity, which can help inform their view of the world. Spending time outdoors supports learners' social, emotional, spiritual and physical development, as well as their well-being. Being outdoors also helps them to develop an awareness of the need to show care and respect for living things.

Learners in this period of learning are beginning to understand the concept of 'difference'. Practitioners should encourage them to share their knowledge and experiences of their own beliefs, heritage and traditions, as well as those of others (for example, through songs, stories and role play). This can help young learners understand more about themselves, as well as about experiences and viewpoints which may differ from their own.

A supportive, nurturing environment, where learners can learn about each other's differences and similarities, can help them to begin to develop respectful relationships and a sense of responsibility. They can begin to explore the language of rights and start to understand their right to believe different things and follow different beliefs. Through this, learners from an early age can begin to identify and understand how their actions may affect others, and learn to reflect on and revise their own perspectives, as appropriate.

18. Education other than at school

All learners have a right to an education.

When considering how best to meet the needs of their learners, providers of education other than at school (EOTAS), including pupil referral units (PRUs), are required to have regard to the mandatory curriculum components, which include RVE, and secure provision in relation to them so far as that would be reasonably possible and appropriate for the individual learner.

Learners' experiences should enable them to explore RVE concepts through the statements of what matters in the Humanities Area, using various sub lenses in RVE which are provided in this guidance. Such settings are not required to deliver the agreed syllabus. However, the RVE provided in these settings must still satisfy the pluralistic requirement.

More information on the legislative requirements for PRUs and EOTAS can be found in the legislation section of the Curriculum for Wales Framework.

19. Relationships and sexuality education in this Area

This Area provides an important opportunity for learners to understand how societal understandings of relationships, sex, gender and sexuality have changed over time and how they continue to evolve. Exploring RSE through the Humanities Area can inspire learners to deepen their understanding of key issues and develop the skills to interpret ideas and presentations about RSE throughout history and across different cultures and contexts around the world. For example, this could consider how norms and perceptions of LGBTQ+ people have changed over time. It also supports learners to engage critically with information, to understand the basis of information presented as fact, and make critical judgements about how to use and respond to the knowledge sources available to them.

This Area also offers learners opportunities to explore human rights, values, ethics, philosophies, religious views relating to relationships and sexuality. This provides learners with important opportunities to discuss, explore and develop understanding of different perspectives on RSE issues, shaped by religious and non-religious worldviews, ethical challenges and social inclusion issues. This also supports learners to understand and navigate the tensions between different perspectives. This can also support learners to engage critically with local, national and global RSE issues in both the past and present, helping them to become ethical, informed citizens and ready to play a full part in life and work.