

READ ME FIRST

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Rationale for the DEMAT RE curriculum

Caveat: This is the first draft of our RE curriculum. We will continue to develop materials with subject leaders over the course of the year. Please see page 4 for more information.

A lot is happening in RE right now. RE missed the boat with the change in NC 2014 and got left behind in an old model of teaching. This has been picked up in a huge number of reports from government, Ofsted (see subject review), religious organisations, Church of England, university-based research. They all identify that the quality of RE education across the country in all phases is very weak. No blame has been apportioned to teachers; the reports identify the support hasn't been there. Amanda Spielman's annual report for Ofsted at the end of the autumn 2023 contained purely negative comments for RE. As a result, there is a huge shift in the approach to teaching RE across the sector.

Frames of reference for the curriculum work include the RE Ofsted research review, which contains all the available research on what best practice should look like in RE. NB the 'greatest hits of the big six' is not considered to be best practice.

What is best practice?

Three types of knowledge:

- Substantive: the content we want children to **know and remember**
- Disciplinary: how we introduce our pupils to the ways in which we **engage with that content**
- Personal: How we help children **use their learning** to critically analyse their **own world views**

This goes beyond a child saying what they believe and what they value. It supports them to articulate the 'why' that sits behind their views.

Why do I believe what I believe?

Why do I value what I value?

Why do I live the way I do?

How does the particular context in which I'm in shape the way I view the world around me?

Curriculum structure

- Ensure the three areas of knowledge are in appropriate balance.

Previously, the driver of the curriculum was substantive knowledge. Due to the huge body of knowledge, children were often only receiving a broad, and generalised knowledge that led to blanket statements such as all Muslims pray 5 times a day.

- The shift in curriculum design aims to shift to a more nuanced understanding of a more authentic reality of religion and belief.

One big practical change: we will not teach all six major world religions plus humanism. We will not teach lots of topics previously taught, e.g. rites of passage, festivals, places of worship, key stories, key people. NB this is not just happening in DEMAT; it is a nationwide shift.

We can use our approach to the study of history to help us understand what this looks like. When studying a historical event or key figure (substantive knowledge), the disciplinary driver is to help children better understand the sorts of questions historians ask, for example questions about chronology, causation, similarities and difference. The substantive knowledge is the vehicle used to deepen the disciplinary knowledge. This is the change we are making in RE. Rather than the content driving the curriculum, the disciplinary knowledge will drive it.

- Disciplinary knowledge will drive our curriculum choices in RE

RE has lots of different disciplinary lenses. We need to teach children how to think like a theologian, philosopher, and human/social scientist

Disciplinary lens	Questions we ask in this lens			Tools or skills
Theology	What people believe	Believing	Theo	Textual interpretation of special texts and stories.
Human/social sciences	How people live and how the context affects where they live	Living	Livvy	Information that helps to analyse context e.g. map, video, interview, survey
Philosophy	How people think or reason about themselves and the world around them	Thinking	Sophie	Content helps to develop reasoning and critical thinking skills

Alongside being introduced to these lenses, children will be introduced to the tools or skills these people use to help them answer these questions. For example, when theologians ask questions about believing, they very often interpret people's special stories. Here, the key skill is textual interpretations of special texts (e.g. the bible).

- There are three separate lessons to introduce children to the disciplinary lenses: theology, human/social sciences and philosophy.
- Teachers can choose whether they teach the three lessons first, or whether they teach each lesson as children are introduced to each disciplinary lens.

The curriculum is designed to introduce children to the lenses, questions, tools and skills incrementally and to deepen this knowledge as they progress through the curriculum. This will then support them to reflect and articulate their own personal views.

- Legislatively it is still called RE but there is a shift nationwide to recognising that we are engaging with people's world views. People's world views can be religious or non-religious; they can be a tapestry of both. Everybody has or occupies a world view.
- The subject is now being framed so that children understand it has significance to their own experience of human life regardless of whether they are religious or not.
- **The majority of the learning is rooted in Christian worldviews.**
- Theo, Livvy and Sophie are purposefully separate in our curriculum to build children's schema. In secondary school they will learn that these lenses have crossovers.

Planning

Long-term plan

- Sequenced from EYFS to Y6
- Reflects our regional context: we have looked at the census data.
- Identifies 'Why this? Why now?'

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
EYFS	Myself I am special I have my own way of living in the world Where I live influences my way of living in the world	Special People Jesus is special for Christians Prophet Muhammad is special for Muslims Rama and Sita are special for Hindus	Special Stories Some stories are particularly special to religious people Good Samaritan Lost Sheep Prophet Muhammad and the Spider Prophet Muhammad and the Crying Camel	Special Times Different people celebrate their festivals differently, depending on where they live in the world Easter is a special time for Christians Vaisakhi is a special time for Sikhs Eid is a special time for Muslims	Special Places and Things Some places and things are very special to religious people Special places and things can look different in different contexts	Special World Many religious people believe that the world is a special place Christians and Muslims read about why the world is special in their special books (story of creation) Christians and Muslims think carefully about how they treat the world because they believe it is a special place Different people look after the natural world
Why this? Why now?	At the start of the year, pupils will be learning more about each other. This is a chance for them to learn that, for some people, occupying a religious worldview is part of who they are.	Having introduced the idea of religious worldviews, this is an opportunity to introduce some people who are important within a range of religious worldviews. Where relevant, the Understanding Christianity unit offers an opportunity to be found, do this with a focus on the significance of Jesus for Christians.	At this point in the year, pupils should feel more secure in phonics. This is a good opportunity to explore more about religious worldviews through story, including the special books in which these stories can be found.	Having learned about stories that are important to religious people, this is an opportunity to look in depth at a story that is very important to Christians. It also gives pupils the opportunity to begin to understand how context (time, place, age, etc.) can affect ways of celebrating festivals.	Having learned about how religious people value and treat their special books, this is an opportunity to explore objects and places that are special to religious people. It also builds on pupils' understanding about how context can affect ways of living.	This unit broadens the pupils' understanding of special places by looking beyond places of worship into the wider natural world.

Unit Rationale: KS1A Who is God to Christians and Why Does God Matter to Them?	
Key End Points (Substantive Knowledge Goals) Christians believe in one God who created the world The Bible is a key source of authority for Christians The Bible is a collection of books written at different times Different Christians live out their beliefs differently	
Sequencing Narrative Pupils have the opportunity to build on learning in EYFS by exploring in detail ways in which Christians articulate their beliefs about God. They also deepen their understanding of how context influences the ways in which Christian express their beliefs.	
Key Concept Coverage Meaning and purpose Influence and power	
Key Disciplinary Knowledge Theo (theology) Livvy (human / social sciences)	Key Vocabulary Bible Christian Church Creation Cross God Stewardship

MTP

- Uses a similar model to PKC documents
- Aligns with our curriculum and teaching principles: not activities but hard thinking
- We have trialled materials in schools and iterated based on feedback
- We will continue to iterate materials based on our best bets for teaching and learning
- Each MTP has a unit overview to show how the unit builds on what has come before and lays foundations for what is coming next.

Cycles

- EYFS consists of 1 year of planning
 - RE is not statutory in pre-school
 - Units are sequential so the order should not be changed
- KS1 and KS2 Planning is organised in phases on a two-year cycle
 - Planning is sequential through the year, so the order should not be changed
- Cycle A would be Year 1/3/5 planning in single year group schools
- Cycle B would be Year 2/4/6 planning in single year group schools

Ways of knowing – Disciplinary Lenses

- Standalone lessons
- Teachers choose whether to teach the three ways of knowing first and then begin teaching a unit or if they teach a way of knowing as it is introduced in the MTP.

Implementation support

Please see the July 2024 curriculum bulletin.

- Introduction to the RE Curriculum
 - 23.09.24
 - Twilight with Gillian Georgiou (RE advisor for Diocese of Lincoln) who has written the curriculum
- Video walk throughs for each year group
 - Autumn, spring and summer terms
 - Identifies where the unit fits into the LTP
- Termly twilights for RE leads
 - Led by Gillian Georgiou
- Working group for RE leads
 - Led by Kate Lund
 - Opportunity to share resources
 - Space for reflection and next steps based on our Principles of the Curriculum and teaching

Religious Education

New DEMAT RE curriculum
We have been working with Gillian Georgiou, RE advisor at the Diocese of Lincoln, on an RE curriculum that places disciplinary knowledge and worldviews at the heart of the curriculum. This aligns with the changing landscape of RE teaching nationally. Frames of reference for the new RE curriculum including the Ofsted RE research review 2021 and the Ofsted RE subject report 2024. Previously, the driver of the curriculum was substantive knowledge leading to generalised knowledge that led to blanket statements for each of the major six world religions. The change in curriculum design aims to shift to a more nuanced understanding of a more authentic reality of religion and belief.

A working group has been trialling materials this term. Planning for the autumn term will be available at the beginning of September at the latest for all year groups from YR to Y6. We will upload planning materials to the [RE subject community folder](#).

Implementation support
To support implementation of the curriculum, Gillian Georgiou will run an introductory session for everyone teaching RE. We will also have video walk-throughs of the year group content explaining how disciplinary and substantive knowledge is developed, built on from earlier years and further developed in later years. These videos will be available via the RE subject community folder. Gillian will run termly network meetings for RE leads to follow up on curriculum implementation and discuss what's going well and where further support is needed.

Introduction to the RE curriculum
(suitable for everyone teaching and / or monitoring RE)
Monday 23rd September 2024
3.45 – 5.00 pm online
In this session, Gillian Georgiou will talk through the overview of the new RE curriculum and the rationale. This will include disciplinary lenses, golden threads of substantive knowledge and curriculum structure.

Network meetings for RE leads
3.45 – 4.45 pm
These sessions are for RE leads to discuss curriculum implementation and receive support from Gillian. Please submit questions to Kate.Lund@demat.org.uk at least one week before each meeting to help us ensure questions are responded to as fully as possible.
Session 1 online twilight 15.10.24
Session 2 online twilight 05.02.25
Session 3 online twilight 24.04.25

To Grow - To Grow - To Grow

NB As with all curriculum work, we will continue to review and iterate the curriculum based on feedback via RE leads. The structure of the curriculum will remain the same, but as with all planning, we will seek to add more detail around resources and further refine tasks. We will draw on the expertise and experience of EYFS and PSHE leads, particularly for the EYFS curriculum to add further detail on CP and EP.

If you would like to be part of the working group, please email Kate Lund kate.lund@demat.org.uk

Ofsted research review

Published 12 May 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-publishes-research-review-on-religious-education>

Ofsted Subject report series: religious education

Published 17 April 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-religious-education>

National Content Standard for RE for England

1st Edition 2023

<https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resource/national-content-standard-1st-edition-2023/>