

SEN in Religion and Worldviews

"Religion and Worldviews encourages pupils to ***develop their sense of identity and belonging***. It enables them to ***flourish individually*** within their communities and as citizens in a ***diverse society*** and global community. Religion and Worldviews has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop ***respect for and sensitivity to others***, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice."

National Curriculum

Our school

Our whole school policy regarding pupils with special needs and differentiation, applies to Religion and Worldviews. Teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This of course may not relate to their general educational ability. Religion and Worldviews should offer pupils the opportunities to:

- develop their self-confidence and awareness;
- understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups;
- develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their beliefs and experience; and
- deal with issues that form the basis for personal choices and behaviour'

Maintaining an inclusive learning environment

Staff can make Religion and Worldviews more accessible for all pupils by focusing on the senses:

using sensory materials and resources through sight, touch, sound, taste, or smell, for example, music, tactile artefacts, plants in a sensory garden;

giving pupils first-hand experiences, for example, visitors to school, visits to religious buildings, involvement in festivals;

organising a range of activities to give person experiences, for example, dance, drama, visits to a range of environments;

helping pupils to understand and appreciate their world and its diversity

As with all subjects of the curriculum, access to Religion and Worldviews can be improved where staff use a range of resources and specialist aids and equipment where appropriate,

adapting tasks or environments to allow space, time and freedom for pupils to develop skills for themselves

Working with additional adults

Consulting pupils:

- Wherever possible, pupils are consulted about the kind and level of support they require.

Planning support:

- Support from additional adults is planned to scaffold pupils' learning, allowing them increasingly to work independently.
- Planning should identify: which individuals/groups will receive support, where in the lesson pupils will need support, the type of support pupils should receive, and when pupils should be allowed to work independently.
- Additional adults should: be clear about the lesson objectives, know the sequence of the lesson, understand the lesson content, know how to break tasks into more manageable chunks, are provided with key questions to encourage formative assessment, and where appropriate, are familiar with any ICT used to support pupils.
- Effectiveness of support should be regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Teachers must consider the art activity and decide how best to support children with SEN/disabilities.

Managing peer relationships

Grouping pupils:

- All forms of pupil grouping include pupils with SEN/disabilities.
- Manageable mixed-ability grouping or pairing is the norm, except when carefully planned for a particular purpose.
- Sequence of groupings is outlined for pupils.
- The transition from whole-class to group or independent work, and back, is clearly signalled (this is key for autistic children).

Managing group work and discussion:

- Pupils move carefully from paired discussion to group discussion (the language necessary for whole-class discussion work may be a barrier for pupils who find it difficult to express themselves in public. Paired and small group discussions provide opportunities for all to take part).
- Pupils should be assigned specific roles to keep them focused and active, e.g. writer, reporter, observer.

- For some pupils, e.g. those on the autistic spectrum, developing ideas with others can be challenging. Pairings and groupings need to be sensitive to this.

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Developing responsibility:

- Pupils with SEN/disabilities should be given opportunities to initiate and direct projects, with support as appropriate.
- Pupils should be involved as equal contributors in class/governance and decision making.

Adult-pupil communication

Teachers' communication:

- Language used should be clear, unambiguous and accessible.
- Key words, meanings and symbols are highlighted, explained and written up, or available in some other way.
- Instructions are given clearly and reinforced visually, where necessary.
- Wording of questions is planned carefully, avoiding complex vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Questions are prepared in different styles/levels for different pupils - careful preparation ensures all pupils have opportunities to answer open-ended questions.
- Alternative communication modes are used, where necessary, to meet pupils' communication needs, e.g. signing.
- Text, visual aids, etc are checked for clarity and accessibility. E.g. some pupils might require adapted printed materials or simplified raised diagrams or pictures.

Pupils' communication:

Alternative communication modes, such as sign or symbol systems, are encouraged, and pupils' contributions valued.

Advice is sought from the SENCO, speech and language therapist, pupil themselves and art lead on the best way of using such communication modes in lessons.

Discussion of experiences and investigations is encouraged to help pupils understand them.

Pupils should be allowed time to discuss the answers to questions before verbal responses are given.

Pupils with communication impairments are given: time to think about questions before being required to respond, time to explain, and respect for their responses to questions and contributions to discussions.

Assessment

In Religion and Worldviews, as with other subjects of the curriculum, teachers are engaged in a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessing which takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of children.

Assessment for learning:

- Lesson objectives are made clear in picture/symbols/writing as appropriate.
- Objectives are challenging, yet achievable. This will promote self-esteem and enable pupils to achieve success.
- Pupils' own ways of learning and remembering things are emphasised.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk about how they achieved something.
- End of lesson discussions focus on one or more of the ideas explored and the progress that pupils have made towards them during the lesson.
- Pupils are encouraged to look back to previous work/photos/records to see how much progress they have made.
- Emphasis is on the pupils' progress and achievement. Weaknesses are presented as areas for development.
- Praise is given discreetly where pupils find public praise embarrassing or difficult.
- The number of goals/assessment criteria is kept small.
- Pupils are involved in setting their own goals.
- Self-assessment and peer assessment are encouraged.

Memory and consolidation

Religion and Worldviews learning can settle in children's long term memory through the use of the arts. Each religion has its own stories that support in the teaching of their beliefs. Through those stories, children make links to personal experiences and recognise points that are memorable to them. By doing so, children are open to recalling and consolidating previous learning.

Bilingual learners

'The modern world needs young people who are sufficiently confident in their own beliefs and values that they can respect the religious and **cultural differences** of others, and contribute to a cohesive and compassionate society.'

Religious Education Council

Religion and Worldviews focuses on 'Shared Human Experience' which means that all children should start by drawing on their experiences as human beings. This coincides with the first

principle of EAL pedagogy: Activation of prior knowledge. Many EAL learners come from families where a religious tradition, whether Muslim, Christian or Hindu, is highly valued. This should mean that they also bring to Religion and Worldviews plenty of personal experience of a faith tradition on which they may build a more academic understanding of their own and others beliefs and experiences. Creation of a classroom that recognises through display and openness to their backgrounds and experiences is therefore an important starting point. It is important to note at this point that Religion and Worldviews should include experiences of faith that the learners can recognise as similar to their own.

Classroom activities for EAL learners can be made a lot more EAL - friendly by ensuring that it is rich in visual support. This will include objects, posters and photographs that invite questions. It may be appropriate to have some key words displayed in a variety of the major languages in the school as well as English.

Differentiation and adaptation:

Task differentiation examples:

- Giving children an option between a challenging task and a slightly simpler version - they have the autonomy to pick which they want to do.
- Provide children with a tick list to aid them working through their task so they can follow the steps independently, whilst ensuring they have completed each one.
- Making tasks optional - e.g. extension tasks/homework etc.
- Allocation of time - some children may complete more than one draft and be able to in depth analyse their work, whereas some children may not reach this and instead achieve one draft with basic analysis.
- Scale down an activity to support children with SEN, e.g. if retelling a story, focus on either sequencing the pictures or writing the sentences (not both).
- Varying the way children present their understanding, e.g. pictures, poems, news reports
- Varying the way that the learning is presented to the children, focusing on engagement, e.g. interactive tablets, QR codes, graphics, quizzes, films, songs and a discussion café

Plenary:

- As part of our enquiry-based approach, it is vital that children express how the teaching has allowed them to reflect on their own beliefs. Children should be given ways of expressing that based on their needs. If a child's area of need is writing, then they should be given the opportunity to present their thoughts in a verbal or practical way.

RE Challenge

SEN-Inclusive Approach

Shallow curriculum	Use sensory materials, artefacts, music, drama, and stories to deepen understanding
Poor knowledge progression	Revisit prior learning; consolidate through arts and hands-on experiences
Over-simplistic assertions / stereotypes	Show diverse perspectives; avoid generalisations
Misunderstanding neutrality	Value pupils' personal faith experiences; scaffold discussion of beliefs
Teachers lack confidence	Provide RE + SEN differentiation training; plan scaffolding with support staff
Inconsistent knowledge	Use small groups, paired work, first-hand experiences, clear scaffolding
Limited independence	Plan gradual release from adult support; clear instructions and steps
Discussion & communication challenges	Use alternative communication, clear language, paired/small group discussion
Complex concepts hard to access	Break tasks into manageable chunks; provide visual and simplified supports
Preparing for diverse society	Include multiple religions/worldviews; focus on shared human experiences