



Religious Education in the Diocese of Ely

The Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) – a guidance document for all schools

The teaching of Religious Education (RE) is statutory for all schools and is considered a core subject for schools with a religious character. All schools are required to refer to the Locally Agreed Syllabus in different amounts when making decisions about RE curriculum content.

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1) Introduction

A high-quality sequential religious education (RE) programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, to teach a full curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Central to religious education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews fostering respect for others.

(RE Statement of Entitlement 2019)

In order to ensure high quality teaching and learning of RE in our schools, senior leaders and governors should consider the following five elements, as espoused by Richard Kueh, RE Lead for Ofsted.

- 1) Selectivity of the curriculum
- 2) Scholarliness of the curriculum
- 3) Sequencing of the curriculum
- 4) Reflectiveness of the curriculum
- 5) Support for the curriculum

This document has been produced by the Diocese of Ely Education Team, to provide guidance about statutory and non-statutory elements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and to ensure that schools are best placed to provide

2) Relevant documentation

Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland 2018-2023 [Locally Agreed Syllabus](#)

Used by 84/85 schools in the Diocese of Ely

Norfolk 2019 [Locally Agreed Syllabus](#)

Used by one LA VC school in the Diocese of Ely

RE Statement of Entitlement [2019](#)

3) Legal requirements

The provision of Religious Education in state schools is bound by law.

The primary legislation passed with regard to RE between 1944 and 1993 was consolidated by The Education Act (1996) and the School Standards and Framework Act (1998).

Circular 1/94 and the subsequent revision of this guidance in 2010 (Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010) offers an interpretation of the legislation.

This legislation is summarised as follows on page 3 of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland (2018-2023).

What schools must do

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and*
- *prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life and all state schools... must teach religious education... all schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online. 'The national curriculum in England: Framework document', September 2013, p.4*

All maintained schools must follow the legal requirement to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes RE. All maintained schools therefore have a statutory duty to teach RE.

Academies and free schools are contractually required through the terms of their funding agreement to make provision for the teaching of RE.

In brief, legislation requires that:

- *in maintained community, foundation or voluntary schools without a religious character, RE is taught in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus;*
- *the requirements are that a syllabus must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain';*
- *academies and free schools must teach RE within the requirements for a locally agreed syllabus, set out in section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;*
- *for foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, RE must be taught according to the Agreed Syllabus unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school; and*
- *in voluntary aided schools RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed.*

RE must be included in the curriculum for all registered pupils, including all pupils in reception classes and sixth form, but excluding:

- *pupils in nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools;*
- *any person aged nineteen or above for whom further education is being provided at school; and*
- *any person over compulsory school age who is receiving part-time education. Based on NATRE website -National Association of Teachers of Religious Education*

4) Locally Agreed Syllabus and types of school

The Locally Agreed Syllabus for Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland (2018-2023) is universally applicable to all Diocese of Ely schools for both legal and practical reasons.

Referring to the legal statements in the Locally Agreed Syllabus (2018-2023):

Academies

- academies and free schools must teach RE within the requirements for a locally agreed syllabus, set out in section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;

For all Diocese of Ely academies (regardless of designation or MAT grouping), “teaching within the requirements of a Locally Agreed Syllabus” is understood to mean following the statutory requirements of a Locally Agreed Syllabus in the teaching of Religious Education. In the Diocese of Ely, regardless of geographical location all academies follow the Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland LAS (2018-2023) for the purposes of curriculum planning and design.

The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT) includes 10 schools in Norfolk and one school in Suffolk. However, for the purposes of the legal requirement to follow an LAS, DEMAT chooses to teach “within the requirements of” the LAS for Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland (2018-2023). This enables collaboration across all church schools in the Diocese of Ely, permitting universally relevant networking, resource-sharing and training.

Local Authority Voluntary Controlled Schools

- for foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, RE must be taught according to the Agreed Syllabus unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school;

Local Authority Voluntary Controlled schools have a legal requirement to follow the statutory requirements of the LAS of their Local Authority for Religious Education

For the one Diocese of Ely Voluntary Controlled school in Norfolk, the relevant Norfolk LAS (2019-2024) is used. It is important to note that the statutory requirements for the teaching of Religious Education with the Norfolk LAS are covered **in full** by the statutory requirements of the LAS for Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland (2018-2023), as well as by the requirements of the Church of England RE Statement of Entitlement.

Local Authority Voluntary Aided Schools

- in voluntary aided schools RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed.

Every Church school in the Diocese of Ely has a trust deed – a document which outlines the use of the land and buildings for educational purposes. Trust deeds date from as early as the 1800’s and there is a legal requirement for a Voluntary Aided school to refer to the trust deed for guidance on the teaching of Religious Education.

Very often, a trust deed will state that a school must teach in accordance with the ‘National Society’. In this case a school defers to the curriculum ratio of 50:50 Christianity : World Religions / non-religious world views.

Occasionally a trust deed will require there to be a majority of Christianity studied in the school. In this case, the Governors of a Voluntary Aided school would make a formal decision upon the ratio of Christianity : World Religions / non-religious world views which falls between 51:49 and 66:34. The rationale behind this strategic curriculum choice must be clearly documented and communicated to the RE Lead in the school. The curriculum must also be assessed regularly for its suitability according to the local context of the school.

The Church of England and the Diocese of Ely promote church schools as places of learning for those of all faiths and none. Hence the Diocese of Ely promotes diversity of learning and encourages VA schools to work as near to a 50:50 ratio as their trust deed permits, thus allowing pupils the opportunities to encounter as many faiths and worldviews as possible.

5) Statutory v non-statutory elements

Statutory elements of the LAS can be found on pages 1-10 of the Locally Agreed Syllabus document.

What to teach (statutory)

All content in the WHAT TO TEACH column is statutory and therefore must be taught.

Each Key Stage builds upon the one before, so by the time pupils reach the end of KS3, they should have had the opportunity to receive a broad, inclusive religious education.

Teachers should consider the religious experience of the pupils in the classroom and the whole school when planning which religions to look at and in which order.

- *Christianity will be studied in all Key Stages.*
- *The choice of which other religion(s) to study in KS1 should be relevant to the experience of the pupils in the class and local demographic. Where Christianity is the only religion present the school will choose the other religion to be studied.*
- *However, by the end of KS2 all major religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism) and a secular world view (humanism) must have been studied.*
- *In KS3, building on KS2, all major religions and a secular world view must have been studied in greater depth.*

It is desirable that all pupils visit a church or other Christian place of worship and the school should make all efforts to plan visits to religious buildings of other faiths. Visitors from different faiths and world views should be encouraged to visit all schools. When neither visits nor visitors are possible then the use of virtual tours and resources are recommended.

(Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough & Rutland LAS 2018-2023 p. 6)

Teaching (EYFS – KS4)

	What to teach	Approach	Entitlement
EYFS	Will follow EYFS framework. Minimum 30hrs teacher-led activities		
KS1	Christianity. Schools should also draw on the background of the pupils to choose one or more other faiths.	Experiential and enquiry approach. Starting with family, neighbourhood and special times. Concentrating on the similarities of religions	Minimum of 36hrs in a school year
KS2	Christianity, five other world religions, humanism and an acknowledgement of other world views.	Experiential and enquiry approach. Moving from the local to the national and international examples of religion. Exploring diversity, similarities and differences within and between religions, humanism and other world views.	Minimum of 45hrs in a school year
KS3	Christianity and five other world religions, humanism and an acknowledgement of other world views and other religions found in the locality.	Experiential and enquiry approach. With doctrinal and philosophical aspects of religion.	Equivalent of 45hrs in a school year
KS4	Students will follow a course which may lead to a public examination in RE or explore (in specific curriculum time) topic based learning relating to local and international issues paying attention to their religious dimensions. Explore the connections between RE and other subject areas.	Experiential and enquiry approach. With doctrinal and philosophical aspects of religion	5% curriculum time

(Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough & Rutland LAS 2018-2023)

Non-statutory elements

The Locally Agreed Syllabus supports schools to make informed choices about how to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The statutory elements set down the numbers of religions which must be studied at each Key Stage as a strategic overview and the type of approach which should be used in order to ensure high quality RE provision.

Non-statutory elements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus include detailed vocabulary lists for each religion at each Key Stage.

Whilst these lists are not compulsory learning lists, they may provide RE Leads and teachers of RE with a core set of concepts, festivals, sacred texts and holy people from which to build upon their own knowledge of each religion being studied. The vocabulary lists and suggested questions may also enable RE Leads and teacher of RE to include additional elements into resources which have been bought in to support with the curriculum planning and delivery of RE.

As the content of the Locally Agreed Syllabus is open, the Diocese of Ely does not prescribe any particular resources for the teaching of RE.

Many schools use the following resources very successfully in the teaching of RE in their schools.

Understanding Christianity
The Emmanuel Project
RE Today resources

The Diocese of Ely provided every school with the Understanding Christianity scheme of work when it was first published and has also granted funding for every school to purchase the Emmanuel Project for the teaching of World Religions and non-religious worldviews if requested.

However, it is important to note that each school is responsible for developing its own RE curriculum according to the unique needs of their school, the talents of staff and the wider context of the school community. Each school must follow the statutory requirements of the locally agreed syllabus but are free to choose appropriate content and assessment methods, which may or may not include elements of the non-statutory guidance offered in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

For further information regarding the content of this guidance, please contact:

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