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Consultation Document

Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance

Date of issue: 21 May 2021
Action required: Responses by 16 July 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview

Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance

The Curriculum for Wales Framework was published on 28 January 2020. Before its publication, the Framework was subject to broad and extensive consultation. Feedback received signalled what specific, additional guidance schools and settings would require in order to successfully design and realise their own curriculum. Welsh Government committed to publishing:

- guidance for Religion, Values and Ethics
- guidance for relationships and sexuality education
- guidance on careers and work-related experiences
- guidance to support practitioners working with learners at the beginning of the learning continuum
- a curriculum and assessment framework for funded non-maintained nursery settings to adopt
- guidance on developing a curriculum for those responsible for education other than at school
- guidance on British Sign Language.

This feedback phase welcomes your views on the additional Curriculum for Wales guidance for Religion, Values, and Ethics (RVE).

The draft guidance has been developed by practitioners through a process of co-construction that has been supported by other experts. This feedback phase forms part of the co-construction process. It provides an opportunity for all practitioners and other stakeholders to offer input that will support the further development of the guidance.

This feedback phase will end on 16 July 2021, after which all responses will be considered and analysed independently, as well by practitioners and others in the working groups. The draft guidance will then be refined in response to the feedback and will form part of an update to the Curriculum for Wales Framework in autumn 2021, to be used by schools and settings as a tool for curriculum planning, design and implementation.

All your feedback will be gratefully received.

How to respond

Responses to this consultation should be e-mailed/
posted to the address below to arrive by **16 July** at the
latest.

Further information and related documents

**Large print, Braille and alternative language
versions of this document are available on
request.**

The published Curriculum for Wales guidance is
available at

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

An easy read version is available at

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/a-new-curriculum-in-wales-easy-read/>

A children, young people and families guide is
available at

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/a-new-curriculum-in-wales-a-guide-for-children-young-people-and-families/>

The consultation documents can be accessed from
the Welsh Government's website at

gov.wales/consultations

Contact details

For further information:

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General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

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Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

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- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
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Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

e-mail: Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or
0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance

The following is the draft guidance on which we are inviting feedback.

1. Introduction

RVE will be a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales for all learners from age 3 to 16.

The RVE guidance is statutory and published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act (“the Act”) and is designed to assist those responsible under the Act for designing the RVE syllabus as part of the school curriculum.

Audience

Those persons who must have regard to the guidance when designing a syllabus for RVE are set out below:

- (a) the head teacher of a maintained school or a maintained nursery school
- (b) the governing body of a maintained school or a maintained nursery school
- (c) a provider of funded non-maintained nursery education
- (d) the teacher in charge of a pupil referral unit
- (e) the management committee for a pupil referral unit
- (f) 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)
- (g) a local authority in Wales.

The persons/bodies responsible for designing a settings RVE syllabus and set out above must read and consider the guidance when designing the RVE element of a school’s curriculum pursuant to the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.

This guidance is directed at a local authority when exercising its functions under that section in adopting an agreed syllabus. Local authorities must have regard to this guidance pursuant to section 375A (8) of the Education Act 1996.

This guidance is also directed at Standing Advisory Councils for religious education (SACs) pursuant to section 391 (11) of the Education Act 1996. Therefore, a SAC must have regard to this guidance when exercising its functions advising a local authority on RVE.

The guidance is directed at those responsible for preparing an Agreed Syllabus namely:

- the local authority
- the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)
- the body of persons established by the Welsh Ministers under paragraph 12 of Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 to prepare an Agreed Syllabus when the ASC has been unable to do.

Pursuant to paragraph 14A of Schedule 31 to the 1996 Act those bodies must have regard to this guidance.

In addition, the guidance may also be useful to practitioners, regional consortia, awarding bodies, Estyn, teacher unions, religious organisations, parents and other bodies in Wales with an interest in RVE. These bodies do not have to have regard to the guidance but it may be useful and informative for them to refer to it to better understand the content of a given settings RVE syllabus.

From 2022 religious education will be renamed 'Religion, values and ethics' to more accurately reflect the broad scope of the subject's pluralistic requirement, and position within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience..

Learners will have opportunities to explore all RVE concepts through a variety of lenses and will explore the importance of RVE's relationship with other aspects of life, society and the world. Understanding the concept of religion will enable learners to build a well-rounded understanding of religion, and the significance of the different ways that it is defined.

RVE in the curriculum is not about making learners religious or non-religious; its teaching therefore must promote openness, impartiality and respect for others through an objective, critical and pluralistic approach.

2. RVE and legislation

Curriculum & Assessment (Wales) Act

Locally agreed syllabus

An agreed syllabus specifies what is recommended to be taught in RVE within a local authority and should be reviewed from time to time and in any event, no later than the expiry of five years from when it was last adopted or when it was last agreed the current syllabus would be continued. Each local authority has a legal duty to convene an agreed syllabus conference to review the syllabus and to recommend an appropriate syllabus to the local authority for it to adopt. They will need to ensure that they have regard to the Curriculum for Wales and the RVE supporting guidance when recommending an agreed syllabus for adoption by a local authority.

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

The Act inserts a new Wales only section 375A into the Education Act 1996. Section 375A of the 1996 Act provides that a local authority must adopt an agreed syllabus /syllabi for its area which:

- must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Wales are in the main Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Wales; and
- must also reflect the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions are held in Wales

The Act further provides that the reference to philosophical convictions is to philosophical convictions within the meaning of Article 2 Protocol 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights (“A2P1”).

Meaning of religion:

As noted above The Act requires the Agreed Syllabus element of RVE to be designed to include the mandatory element of Religion, Values and Ethics. What is meant by that is clarified in section 390A of the 1996 Act which refers to religious traditions. In summary what must be included is a range of different religions. The term “religion” in this context is given its conventional or ordinary meaning and as conventionally understood. We regard a religion to have the following characteristics:

- the followers have a belief in a supreme being (the concept of a supreme being includes but is not limited to the longstanding concept of a monotheistic Christian God);
- the followers take part in worship of that supreme being, that is acts or practices in which they give expression to their belief in the supreme being and show reverence for, or veneration of, it; and,
- the organisation advances that religion through its activities.

Meaning of non-religious philosophical convictions:

The Act also requires the Agreed Syllabus element of RVE to also include non-religious philosophical convictions. This relates to the Value and Ethics element in the title to this new subject. As noted above the term philosophical convictions is drawn down from A2 P1.

The Courts have held that when taken on its own, it is not synonymous with the terms “opinions” and “ideas”. It denotes views that attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance (*Valsamis v. Greece*, §§ 25 and 27). The refusal of parents to accept corporal punishment at their child’s school was thus covered by their philosophical convictions.

We refer to “non-religious philosophical convictions” and not “philosophical convictions” as we consider any religious philosophical conviction is simply a religion and that is expressly already covered by The Act¹.

On the other hand the courts have rejected the argument that a pro-hunting beliefs are protected by Article 9 despite people’s strong convictions that they have the right to hunt with hounds as this lack the importance as an aspect of human life and behaviour necessary to render it a philosophical belief that a particular form of leisure activity should be permitted (*R v Countryside Alliance*) V A-G.

The above refers to a number of cases on Article 9 which refers to “religion or beliefs” Article 9 and A2P1 apply to the same range of views/beliefs/convictions. For example paragraph 7 of the European Court of Human Right’s guide on A2P1, states that: “The Convention must be read as a whole and Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 constitutes, at least in its second sentence, the interpretation in relation to Article 9 in matters of education and

¹ The term “non-religious philosophical convictions” is not used in A2P1 but was used in case considering A2P1 (*Lautsi and others v Italy* (App. No. 30814/06) - [2011] ECHR 30814/06). There had been nothing to suggest that the authorities had been intolerant of pupils who believed in other religions, were non-believers or who held non-religious philosophical convictions.

teaching (Folgerø and Others v. Norway [GC], § 84; Lautsi and Others v. Italy [GC], § 59; Osmanoglu and Kocabaş v. Switzerland, §§ 90-93)".

The Act provisions ensure that RVE is mandatory and that all children in all maintained schools and settings have access to pluralistic RVE. There is no right to withdraw from RVE and RVE must be designed having regard to the agreed syllabus and the Welsh Ministers' statutory guidance.

Community schools and foundation and voluntary schools without a religious character

In the case of community schools and foundation and voluntary schools without a religious character, The Act requires the provision in the curriculum for teaching and learning encompassing RVE to have been designed having regard to the agreed syllabus. (The "agreed syllabus" in the context of the Schedule is the RVE syllabus adopted by the local authority under section 375A of the 1996 Act for use in schools maintained by the authority.) The Act requires this RVE provision to be implemented for all pupils.

Foundation and voluntary controlled schools that have a religious character

In the case of foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, The Act requires the provision in the curriculum for teaching and learning encompassing RVE to have been designed having regard to the agreed syllabus.

However, in the case of these schools, there is an additional requirement. This additional requirement applies only if the provision that has been designed having regard to the agreed syllabus does not accord with the school's trust deed, or the tenets of its religion or religious denomination.

The first step in determining whether this additional requirement applies will be to consider whether the provision designed having regard to the agreed syllabus accords with any provision in the school's trust deed that relates to teaching and learning in respect of RVE. If there is not any provision in the trust deed that relates to teaching and learning in respect of RVE, the next step will be to consider whether the provision accords with the tenets of the religion or denomination specified in relation to the school by an order under section 68A of the 1998 Act. Only if the provision does not accord with the trust deed or the relevant tenets will the additional requirement apply. If this additional requirement applies, the school's curriculum must also include provision for RVE that does accord with the school's trust deed, or the tenets of its religion or religious denomination.

The Act requires the teaching and learning secured for pupils to be designed having regard to the agreed syllabus. But there is an exception to this general requirement which enables a pupil's parents to request that their child be provided, instead, with the additional provision that accords with the school's trust deed, or the tenets of its religion or denomination. If a request of this type is made, it must be complied with.

Voluntary aided schools that have a religious character

In the case of voluntary aided schools with a religious character, The Act requires the curriculum to make provision for teaching and learning in respect of RVE that accords with the school's trust deed or the tenets of its religion or denomination.

Again, there is an additional requirement. For schools of this type, the additional requirement applies only if the provision that has been designed (i.e., which accords with the trust deed or tenets of the school's religion or denomination) does not accord with the agreed syllabus. In this case, the school's curriculum must also include provision for RVE that has been designed having regard to the agreed syllabus.

The Act requires the teaching and learning secured for pupils to be that for which provision accords with the school's trust deed or its religion or denomination.

But again there is an exception to this general requirement which enables a pupil's parents to request that their child be provided, instead, with the additional provision designed having regard to the agreed syllabus). If a request of this type is made, it must be complied with.

Changes to the constitution of Agreed Syllabus Conference and SACREs

The Act provides for the appointment of persons who represent holders of non-religious philosophical beliefs in the same way as they permit the appointment of persons who represent holders of religious beliefs.

It is a matter for the Local Authority to decide on the appointment of appropriate persons. The final decision on an appointment is dependent on the relevant local authority's determination that such a representative would help ensure the relevant traditions of the area are appropriately reflected. SACREs will be re-named Standing Advisory Councils for RVE (SACs).

The local authority must take all reasonable steps to secure that the membership of the group is numerically proportionate to the strength of each religion, denomination, or conviction in its local area (see new subsection (6A) and (6B) if section 390 inserted by paragraph 9(8) if the Schedule. Separate statutory guidance will be provided in respect of the constitution of SACREs (SACs).

RVE Post 16

This is no longer mandatory by virtue of The Act provisions. Pursuant to section 61 of The Act all learners over the age of 16 will now be able to opt into RVE, where previously there was a requirement for all learners in sixth form to study religious education. If a learner chooses to opt into RVE then the school or college must provide RVE which is objective, critical and pluralistic. This approach is consistent with the principle that learners of sufficient maturity should be able to make decisions that relate to their own learning.

Where a learner request RVE pursuant to section 61 the RVE must be designed so that it:

- must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Wales are in the main Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Wales; and
- must also reflect the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions are held in Wales

The Act further provides that the reference to philosophical convictions is to philosophical convictions within the meaning of Article 2 Protocol 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights ("A2P1").

Please see paragraphs above for an explanation of what is meant by religions, religious traditions and non-religious philosophical convictions.

Section 61 of The Act does not prevent a school from imposing a requirement that all pupils in its sixth form undertake compulsory RVE classes; nor does it prevent a school that adopts this approach from providing compulsory sixth form RVE that accords with the school's trust deeds, or the tenets of its religion, or religious denomination ("denominational RVE"). The content of such denominational RVE remains a matter for the school.

Education delivered 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' section of this guidance 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, children 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.

3. How RVE Supports the Four Purposes

At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales are the four purposes, which 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. <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/>

These 4 purposes are set out in section 2(2) of The Act.

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 philosophy 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 worldviews 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 well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy.

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. Opportunities are provided for spiritual development in the statements of what matters for the Humanities Area and RVE has many valuable and distinctive contributions to make.

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 or 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.

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 worldviews impact on the lives of individuals, the local community and wider society.

Connections to the wider or 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 toward 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.

Creativity and going beyond the everyday

Learners can:

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

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 in everyday life within their local, national and global communities.

5. Designing Your Curriculum

Each school will need to decide its own approach to curriculum design in the Humanities Area and to how RVE best works within it. For example, curriculum design can be integrated, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or disciplinary. This approach should be evaluated regularly in line with the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance.

Before any detailed planning can begin, it is essential for practitioners to have first considered the statements of what matters in the Humanities Area, which contribute to learners realising the four purposes of the curriculum. <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/statements-of-what-matters/>

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 school curriculum design.

School curriculum design 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 worldviews;
- 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 worldviews 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.

This guidance considers and identifies some relevant lenses through which to view RVE concepts. These lenses lend themselves to the statements of what matters and are also relevant to other Areas of Learning and Experience. The lenses are interconnected and are not intended to be units or topics. They are provided to help schools and settings understand some significant aspects of RVE and to help them identify opportunities for RVE within the statements of what matters to support school curriculum design.

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.

[Learner progression](#) is an important driver for designing your curriculum.

This is reflected in the statements of what matters and their related descriptions of learning for this Area. The [descriptions of learning for the Humanities](#) will 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 lens is provided. All of the statements of what matters in this Area are evident across the learning journeys. These learning journeys illustrate how a learner may develop their understanding of concepts in RVE through various lenses, and may be useful when designing your curriculum, alongside the descriptions of learning for the Humanities. These examples 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.

Example Learning Journey 1: Search for meaning and purpose

The learning journey for this lens has drawn mainly upon 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 of learning and experience that can also be explored through this 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 (e.g. Who am I? 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 debated and evaluated as learners engage more deeply with a range of challenging questions on these issues (e.g. 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 among 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

The learning journey for this lens has mainly drawn upon 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 of learning and experience that can also be explored through this 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 and non-religious responses, as well as 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 (e.g. 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 or 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

The learning journey for this lens has drawn mainly upon 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 of learning and experience that can also be explored through this 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. 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 religions 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

The learning journey for this lens has mainly drawn upon drawn upon 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 of learning and experience that can also be explored through this 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 and different from others. Further along their learning journey, they discuss what can form identity (e.g. relationships, lifestyles, beliefs, 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 and different to 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 wellbeing.

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 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

The learning journey for this lens has mainly drawn upon 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 of learning and experience that can also be explored through this 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 (e.g. leaders, relationships, texts, codes of behaviour, 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 that exist between and across sources of authority (including their own). 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 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 non-religious 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 (e.g. challenge, consensus, reconciliation).

Example Learning Journey 6: Relationships and responsibility

The learning journey for this lens has mainly drawn upon 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 of learning and experience that can also be explored through this 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 towards 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, moral), 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 different and similar to 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 wellbeing of others and 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 may look like and their contributions to wellbeing, 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

The learning journey for this lens has mainly drawn upon 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 of learning and experience that can also be explored through this 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. They 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 they are similar 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 (e.g. 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.

Enriching learner experience in RVE

Whichever approach is taken to curriculum design, 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 enjoy and remember
- 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, or 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, including those who experience lived religion and worldviews
- ask big questions relating to higher powers/ultimate reality, the world, the meaning and purpose of life and of their own experiences
- engage with religious and non-religious sources e.g. religious leaders, people of faith and belief, philosophers, places of worship, artefacts, sacred texts and philosophical writings.

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.

Key links with other Areas

Curriculum design in schools and settings should explore clear links and interdependencies between RVE and the other areas of learning and experience as part of a holistic curriculum. <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/designing-your-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.

Checklist 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?
- 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 lenses through which to view RVE concepts to support curriculum design?
- Have you considered progression in RVE, using the 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 experience 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?