



National RE Developments

Dr Anne Lumb

Schools Adviser

Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham

National Statement of Entitlement

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Revised National Statement of Entitlement

The national statement of entitlement (NSE) indicates that children and young people in schools, whatever their context, are entitled to an education in religion and worldviews that:

- reflects the changing religious and secular diversity of the UK and the world
- is inclusive of, and relevant to, children and young people, whose worldviews may range across the secular and/or religious
- approaches the subject from the perspective of worldviews (incorporating religious and non-religious worldviews, personal and communal, individual and organised, plural and diverse) to help pupils navigate the diverse, complex world around them, in relation to religion and belief

The place for this education in religion and worldviews is the subject currently called Religious Education in legislation in England.



NOTE that wherever the NSE refers to worldviews, it means religious and non-religious worldviews.

Key:
Content
Engagement
Position

To meet this entitlement, pupils must be taught to understand the nature of worldviews, in relation to religion and belief, including:

CONTENT	
Core statements	Expanded statements
5. Nature/formation/expression What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences	The nature and variety of worldviews, and how people's worldviews are formed through a complex mix of influences and experiences, including (for example) rituals, practices, texts, teachings, stories, inspiring individuals, the creative arts, family, tradition, culture, and everyday experiences and actions. How these may also act as ways of expressing and communicating worldviews.
6. Organised/individual How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews	How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews (e.g. how individual worldviews may be consciously held or tacit; how individual and organised worldviews are dynamic; how individual worldviews may overlap to a greater or lesser extent with organised worldviews)
7. Contexts How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change.	How worldviews have contexts, reflecting their time and place, shaping and being shaped by these, maintaining continuity and also changing; how they are highly diverse and often develop in interaction with each other. (This applies to organised worldviews as well as to individual worldviews.)
8. Meaning and purpose How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience	How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience, such as questions of existence, meaning, purpose, knowledge, truth, identity and diversity. How worldviews may play different roles in providing people with ways of making sense of existence and/or their lives, including space for mystery, ambiguity and paradox.
9. Values, commitments and morality How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life	How worldviews may provide a vision of, and guidance on, how to be a good person and live a good life, and may offer ideas of justice, right and wrong, value, beauty, truth and goodness. How individuals and communities may express their values through their commitments.
10. Influence and power How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies	How worldviews influence people (e.g. providing a 'grand narrative' or story for understanding the world) and influence the exercises of power in societies (e.g. on social norms for communities, or in relation to conflict or peace-making). How society and people can also influence and shape worldviews.
ENGAGEMENT	
Core statements	Expanded statements
11. Ways of knowing The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing.	The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing. Questions and methods should be carefully chosen, recognising that there are different understandings of what knowledge is deemed reliable, valid, credible, truthful etc.
12. Lived experience The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people.	The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people (e.g. religious, non-religious, embodied, diverse, fluid, material, experiential) in relation to local and global contexts, recognising the complex reality of worldviews as they are held, shared and expressed by people in real life.
13. Dialogue/interpretation The field of study of worldviews is to be shown as a dynamic area of debate.	The field of study of worldviews is to be encountered as a dynamic area of dialogue and debate, and one which engages with practices of interpretation and judgement within and between religious and non-religious communities.
POSITION	
Core statements	Expanded statements
14. Personal worldviews: reflexivity Pupils will reflect on and potentially develop their personal worldviews in the light of their study.	Pupils will come to understand their own worldview in greater depth, and how it relates to the worldviews of others, becoming more reflective and reflexive. As they develop this awareness of their positionality in relation to that of others, they will make informed judgements on how (far) this understanding prepares them for life in a diverse world.
15. Personal worldviews: impact Pupils will reflect on how their worldviews affect their learning	Pupils will develop their understanding of how their encounters with the subject content of RE are affected and shaped by their worldviews, whether conscious or not, and that this is also true for everyone else. They will reflect on how (far) their learning may have an impact on their worldview.

All pupils are entitled to receive an education in religion and worldviews in every year up to, and including, year 11. Post-16 students, including those in Further Education, should have the opportunity to study religion and worldviews during their post-16 course of study.

Teaching must promote openness, respect for others, objectivity, scholarly accuracy and critical enquiry.

In line with the DfE Teachers' Standards, pupils are therefore entitled to be taught by teachers who:

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant curriculum area
- foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject
- can address misconceptions and misunderstandings and handle controversial issues
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the study of religion and worldviews
- promote the value of scholarship

For all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in religion and worldviews, the subject must be given adequate time and resources commensurate with the place of the subject (RE) as a core component of the curriculum.

Schools are required to publish information about their RE curriculum on their website. Schools should include a detailed statement about how they meet the NSE and ensure that every pupil has access to it through the curriculum, lessons and wider experiences they provide.

This national statement of entitlement provides a shared vision for the subject that will be interpreted for, and applied in, a variety of different contexts by syllabus writers and curriculum designers.

<https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/draft-handbook-for-the-religion-and-worldviews-in-the-classroom/>

Thinking it through

The NSE presents a realm of religion and worldviews to explore (content strand, NSE a-f).



As with any exploration, you need to prepare; you need to choose the right tools for the job and a suitable route (engagement strand, NSE g-i).



But your exploration is always going to be undertaken from your own perspective – i.e., from within your own worldview (perspective strand, NSE j-k). Awareness of how this affects your exploration, and how your journey affects your own worldview, is an integral part of the exploration, and something to draw attention to throughout the journey – not just something to reflect upon when you get back home.



NOTE that wherever the NSE refers to worldviews, it means religious and non-religious worldviews.



Developing pupils' personal worldviews

The development of pupils' personal worldviews is integral to an academic worldviews approach.

It involves:

- enabling pupils to reflect on and articulate their worldviews and the sources of these, so that they can engage in well-informed dialogue in relation to religion and worldviews (while recognising they might also do this in relation to English literature, geography, science or PE, for example)
- drawing pupils' attention to their worldviews and bringing them into well-informed dialogue with the worldviews of others
- developing their reflexivity – their reflection on and self-awareness about the learning process
- using this reflexivity to understand and explain how their personal worldviews both affect their encounter and engagement with the content of religion and worldviews, and also how these encounters may influence their worldviews
- recognising and reflecting on how other people are also influenced by their personal worldviews in how they respond to religion and worldviews
- developing their understanding of the role of interpretation in their own knowledge growth.

Developing pupils' personal worldviews may include the following:

- the ability to apply disciplinary, dialogical and hermeneutical skills
- the acquisition and creation of personal knowledge, arising through the interpretative action of engaging with the content of religion and worldviews
- the development of academic virtues, such as curiosity, intellectual humility, willingness to learn from others, and careful listening before coming to judgement.

Note that the subject will provide experiences, opportunities and encounters with diverse people and content exemplifying something of the richness of worldviews, wisdom, lived religion/nonreligion, artistic expression, human creativity and ingenuity, culture, philosophy, ethics, etc.

The encounter with the rich diversity of human experience gives pupils space and tools for reflecting on their own worldviews, and to recognise how their worldview affects their interpretation of, and engagement with, the world. Pupils can reflect on how this applies to everyone else too, and what that might mean for listening to, and living with, others.

Not all effects and impacts of this on pupils can be known or examined, and for some school contexts (such as those with a religious foundation) syllabus writers may look to identify aspects of moral and spiritual development more closely.

10.1 How to develop pupils' personal worldviews

It is important to note that the *position* strand of the NSE (statements j-k) indicates that pupils are always encountering the content and processes of the subject from the position of their own worldview. This means that developing personal worldviews is not simply a matter of getting to the end of a unit of work and reflecting on their own ideas (see illustration on p. 21). Instead, pupils should have their attention drawn to their position in relation to their studies at different times within a unit of work. There is not a set requirement for this – and it should not become a tick-boxing exercise. Depending on the content, it might be appropriate to reflect on pupils' worldviews at the beginning, middle and end of a unit, asking pupils whether and/or how their ideas are changing or have changed.

Strategies for this include:



FREE-LISTING ^[14]

This is an ethnographic method that collects data that shows salience of terms; for example, asking pupils or interviewees to list the first words that come to mind when they think about the term 'religion' or 'non-religion' or 'God' or 'truth'; then gathering the lists and analysing for salience – that is, for rank and frequency. This can indicate personal worldview perspectives before studying religion, non-religion, God, truth etc.



MIXING DESK ANALOGY ^[15]

This involves drawing up a diagram showing that elements of a person's worldview will have different relevance or importance in different contexts, such as when facing challenges, or at different times in life; see p. 37 for an example of a mixing desk applied to planning.



SNOWFLAKE ^[16]

This is a diagram that allows pupils to respond to different statements, according to how far they agree or disagree; this visual presentation allows them to see immediately where they agree or disagree with another pupil's responses. Pupils discuss similarities and differences and present their reasons for their responses, applying their learning. The statements can indicate aspects of a pupil's worldview and be revisited at different stages of a unit or units of work to note any changes and continuities.



EXPRESSING IDEAS

Pupils might be asked to respond to stimulus material in different ways, expressing ideas through art, poetry, reflective writing, or even through taking action. These can indicate the nature and impact of pupils' personal worldview, with opportunities to revisit and reflect at different points later in the unit of work or a subsequent one.

One research project on metacognition and worldviews from Exeter University has developed a Worldview Question Framework (see Larkin et al^[17]). This works as a place for personal reflection for pupils on their own worldview. Pupils respond to a variety of questions on themes including personal identity, ultimate and existential questions, ontological and epistemological questions (i.e. about the nature of existence and of knowledge). Pupils respond to questions in the light of their learning, and reflect on how their answers might change as they learn more. The research project highlights opportunities for development of this approach.

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Applying disciplinary methods

The NSE requires that content should be approached in a variety of ways, including applying different 'ways of knowing' (cf. OFSTED). This allows for the application of methods, for example those from theology, philosophy and from within the academic study of religion. Such disciplinary areas are valuable in helping pupils to understand how the study of religion and worldviews can be undertaken in different ways.

For younger age groups, drawing on a variety of methods is sufficient, noting with pupils that different methods handle content in different ways and should be evaluated appropriately. The use of methods and disciplines helps pupils to learn how, for example:

- you can ask different questions about the same content
- answering these questions will require different kinds of methods
- the findings might be interpreted appropriately in different ways
- evaluation of the findings will require a set of tools appropriate to the methods and disciplines
- all the above are affected by the context of the learner/researcher and their personal worldview.

As pupils make progress through the school, they should be taught how disciplines construct different types of knowledge. This means that there are particular assumptions behind the various disciplines, and different types of question being addressed within them.

To apply a worldviews approach is not a matter simply of selecting a method: good curriculum planning entails being clear about the type of knowledge that is being constructed within any given module or unit. For example, the theistic assumptions of theology and the naturalistic assumptions of sociology and anthropology affect how scholars practise the discipline, as well as the relationship of the knowledge created in these disciplines to the worldviews of the adherents within traditions.

Within a worldviews approach, pupils should, for example:

- be helped to recognise the different authoritative weight of a 'sacred' text for adherents in that tradition, and for those outside the tradition for whom it is not 'sacred', and some implications from this
- explore how and why such texts are interpreted and applied differently, looking at a range of perspectives and contexts
- examine how a worldviews approach questions some categories within 'religion', such as, for example, how far a focus on texts is appropriate in different traditions
- learn to recognise that a single voice from a tradition will not be representative, and consider whether and how a tradition could be represented
- learn that any adherent's perspective will indicate a relationship between 'orthodox' or mainstream teachings and individual practice; for example, a theologian's perspective will differ from a sociologist's and from a layperson's
- consider whose voices are chosen within lessons, why, and what implications there may be
- have opportunities to test whether, for example, survey data is reliable, such as by investigating the questions asked, the sample size and range, who was asking whom and why, and how the data was presented.

See **Making good progress II, Appendix 1, p. 44, for suggested ways of making progress in disciplinary knowledge.**

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How to use the NSE to develop a syllabus

A syllabus construction process requires a philosophy before it requires a checklist process or set of planning steps. The NSE shapes the philosophy, setting out the nature of the engagement between pupils and the content in an education in religion and worldviews.

This section includes some provisional steps for planning, some principles to bear in mind, and a set of questions to be able to answer after planning. Note that the primary purpose of this guidance within the draft Handbook is for the framework development teams. The guidance will be revised in the light of the experience of developing frameworks and published in the final Handbook at the end of the project in 2024.

15.1 Steps for devising your syllabus

- 1 Whether starting a syllabus from scratch, or building on one already in place, **start with the NSE.**
- 2 You might want to put it in the centre of a large piece of paper/interactive whiteboard screen.
- 3 It would be useful to annotate the NSE to show some connections that you see across statements and strands. Note how some statements can be broken down into smaller parts. Note how some might be used to add a dimension to another (e.g. NSE b could add a dimension of comparison between organised and individual worldviews to another statement).
- 4 Your annotations could include examples of content/concepts from religious and non-religious worldviews that you might use to enable pupils to grasp the statements – to understand how worldviews work.
- 5 As you annotate, you might use concentric circles around the NSE – indicating your initial thoughts about how to go deeper into a statement/strand, giving a sense of progression across the age range, and allowing pupils to revisit content. It is important to reflect on local contexts: where do these offer rich opportunities for exploring elements of the NSE?
- 6 Note the gaps – what areas are left out, or are covered in less detail? Might this be because they are not part of your current RE practice, or maybe cover an unfamiliar area of subject knowledge? How might you address those?
- 7 It would be helpful to break down the content component of your annotated overview into segments (four or five, perhaps). These could be vertical segments – showing a way that understanding of an NSE statement or statements might be developed as pupils move up through the school. This is to ensure that earlier learning prepares for later learning, and later learning builds on earlier learning. It is also to create a structure for the syllabus, to enable breadth and balance.
- 8 Some segments may work across all age groups, and some may be more suited to older pupils: consider where these segments might be phased in as pupils move through the school.
- 9 You could devise exemplar questions that could be used for different age groups to unlock the content – or adapt examples from your current syllabus. Note that a worldviews approach will shape questions differently to a world religions approach: don't just assume questions can transfer straight from one to the other.
- 10 Reflect on the balance of the *engagement* strand statements from the NSE across your questions. How well do your questions indicate the kind of methods (disciplines with older pupils) that are needed to find out suitable answers?
- 11 It is important to draft a key stage outline or long-term plan, populated by your example questions. Check for clarity in terms of how the plan deepens pupils' engagement with the strands of the NSE, via your chosen segments, balanced across the school year and across age groups.
- 12 You might like to test your syllabus design by choosing a sample of key questions from different phases and drafting some units of work to see how the questions open up the strands of content, engagement and perspectives. Consider a range of case studies that give pupils an insight into the way worldviews work in different contexts.

15.2 Principles to bear in mind when developing a syllabus

Using the NSE

- The NSE maps out the knowledge and understanding of how worldviews work in human life that students need to gain if they are both to know how to study this academic subject and to understand the relationship between religion and worldviews.
- The NSE is intended to function “less as a perimeter that restricts, but ‘an aperture: a space through which the world can be seen’.”^[10]
- The NSE provides a structure and criteria for content selection, to avoid content overload.
- The NSE is not a list, nor is it a checklist. The statements relate to each other, and the boundaries are not fixed.
- The worldviews approach is not about studying a list of religious and non-religious worldviews in separate containers. The focus is on the human experience of interacting with the religious and non-religious domain.
- Syllabuses and schools should not simply assume that they are already doing a religion and worldviews approach as set out in this draft Handbook. Many teachers have been examining diversity and applying different disciplines. However, in a religion and worldviews *curriculum*, the focus is on the development and construction of pupils’ personal knowledge, through facilitating their interaction with the content as set out in the NSE, while seeking to understand the worldviews of others.
- A syllabus should make judgements about the balance between the different elements of the NSE, according to the context. All units need to include something from each of the three elements of the NSE (content, engagement, position), balanced appropriately.
- The NSE statements are not intended to be covered separately by unit/term. The bigger picture needs to emerge across topics and across school phases, so that the curriculum develops for pupils aged 4–19.
- The different statements can be broken down and units can focus on a part. For example, NSE d could be broken down to ask ontological questions about existence or origins, such as:

Is there a God or a higher being, force or power? Is this life it, or is there life after death? What exists and what does not exist? What is real and unreal?

Similarly, a unit could use NSE d and focus on epistemological questions of knowledge and truth, addressing questions such as:

What is true and false? What is fact and fiction? How do you know? What source(s) do you use to decide? What is knowledge? What is belief? What is opinion? What is faith?

Organising syllabus/curriculum content

- Systematic study of an organised worldview (a religion, for example) can be undertaken, but constructed in such a way as to illustrate and explore the elements of the NSE.
- Organised worldviews can be examined through case studies, which illuminate the elements of the NSE as well as the worldview itself. Such case studies should ideally be microcosms, where focusing on the particular reveals key characteristics or qualities of the wider worldview.^[11]
- A syllabus should support teachers to select engaging material that is appropriate to the pupils in their own RE classrooms. This should make good use of creative expressions, lived experience and material religion as well as texts and teachings.
- As they make progress in the subject, it is helpful to build pupils’ expertise in a variety of disciplines (NSE g), but it is not necessary to place equal emphasis on each. (See Making good progress model II, Appendix 1, p. 44.)

Questions and contexts

- Enquiry questions are powerful ways to drive the use of the approach. Setting rich questions is one way of addressing the challenge of content overload – the questions can identify a route through the content, and different kinds of questions indicate the best methods and/or disciplines, and appropriate evaluative processes.
- Contexts can influence choices of questions. These might include how a question will contribute to future learning. This might be preparing pupils to be able to welcome some visitors or to go on some visits; or to give them a nuanced awareness of diversity in a particular worldview in preparation for GCSE, along with the critical skills to handle varied questions.
- The local context can help to shape or give a flavour to a syllabus. For example, the diversity of Tower Hamlets, within the wider diversity of London. Compare that with Norfolk and the East of England, where census data identifies Norwich as the most non-religious city, and history indicates East Anglia as a place of occasional rebellion, with notable challengers of the status quo (see, for example, 1075 and 1549 CE). And Cornwall/Kernow, with its Celtic Christian influence, Cornish language (Kernewek) and a local desire for political independence. This means that context is not just about relative size of different religions/worldviews but about the pulse of the local community.
- Comparison with national and global contexts is also important. The largely secular environment of Britain and Western Europe is not typical in global terms.
- Note how the syllabus writer or curriculum developer’s own worldview will influence the choices made. It is important to ensure that you are as aware of your own position as you are expecting your pupils to be! Be reflexive about your choices. You might ask questions such as: Are you developing a curriculum in your own image? Have you overemphasised critical or uncritical perspectives? Are all your questions or case studies from your comfort zone, or are you stretching and challenging your own perspectives? Are there spaces for scholars from within and outside different worldviews? Are your sociologists or theologians or philosophers all white European men? If so, make some changes!
- Note also how a teacher’s worldview will influence their choices, including choice of questions, examples and case studies used, resources selected, use of language in the classroom, and responses to pupils. It is important to raise teachers’ awareness of this as part of training and implementation of the new syllabus/framework.

15.2 Principles to bear in mind when developing a syllabus

Using the NSE

- The NSE maps out the knowledge and understanding of how worldviews work in human life that students need to gain if they are both to know how to study this academic subject and to understand the relationship between religion and worldviews.
- The NSE is intended to function “less as a perimeter that restricts, but ‘an aperture: a space through which the world can be seen’.”^[10]
- The NSE provides a structure and criteria for content selection, to avoid content overload.
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Organising syllabus/curriculum content

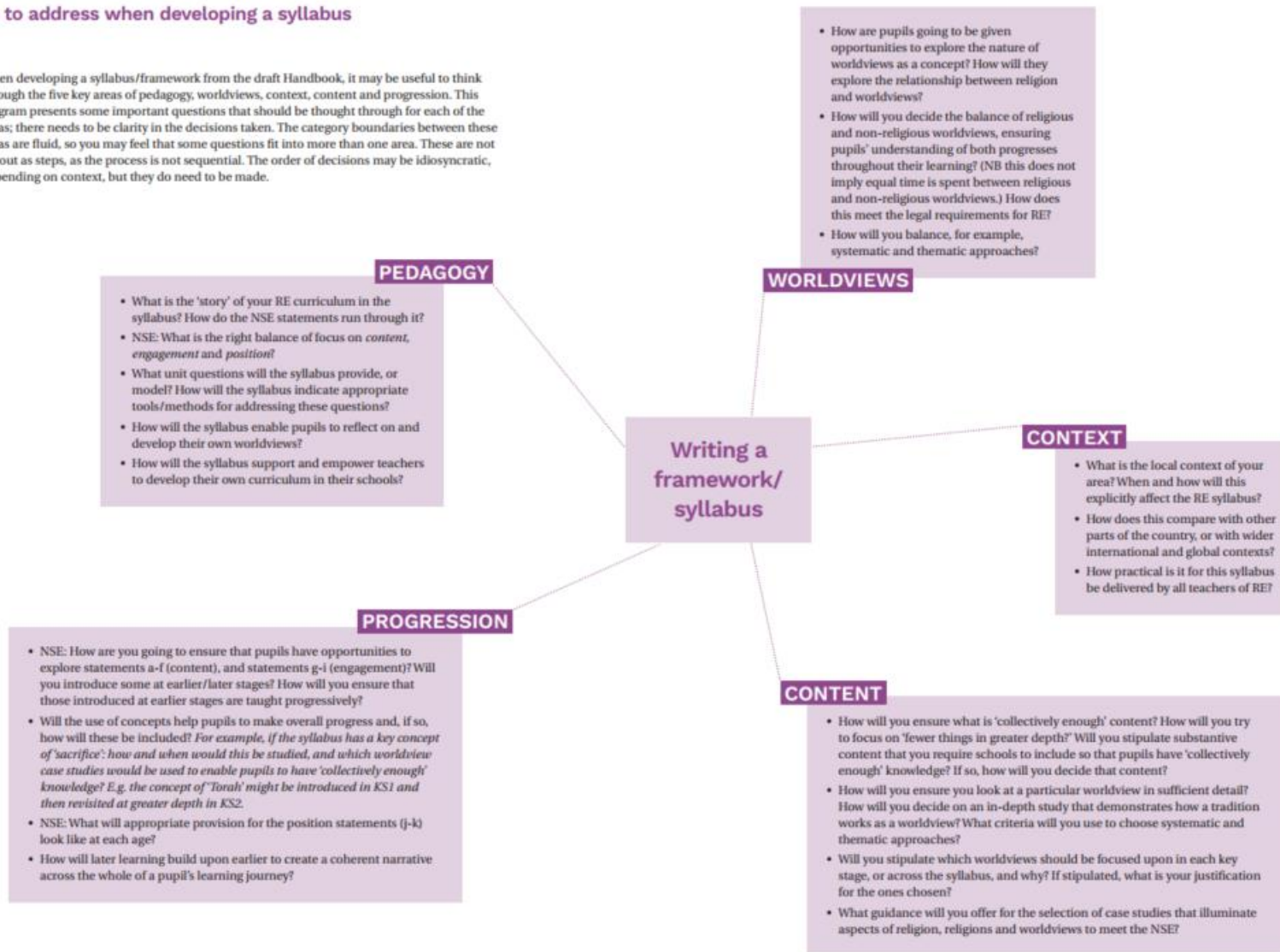
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- Contexts can influence choices of questions. These might include how a question will contribute to future learning. This might be preparing pupils to be able to welcome some visitors or to go on some visits; or to give them a nuanced awareness of diversity in a particular worldview in preparation for GCSE, along with the critical skills to handle varied questions.
- The local context can help to shape or give a flavour to a syllabus. For example, the diversity of Tower Hamlets, within the wider diversity of London. Compare that with Norfolk and the East of England, where census data identifies Norwich as the most non-religious city, and history indicates East Anglia as a place of occasional rebellion, with notable challengers of the status quo (see, for example, 1075 and 1549 CE). And Cornwall/Kernow, with its Celtic Christian influence, Cornish language (Kernewek) and a local desire for political independence. This means that context is not just about relative size of different religions/worldviews but about the pulse of the local community.
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- Note also how a teacher’s worldview will influence their choices, including choice of questions, examples and case studies used, resources selected, use of language in the classroom, and responses to pupils. It is important to raise teachers’ awareness of this as part of training and implementation of the new syllabus/framework.

15.3 Questions to address when developing a syllabus

When developing a syllabus/framework from the draft Handbook, it may be useful to think through the five key areas of pedagogy, worldviews, context, content and progression. This diagram presents some important questions that should be thought through for each of the areas; there needs to be clarity in the decisions taken. The category boundaries between these areas are fluid, so you may feel that some questions fit into more than one area. These are not set out as steps, as the process is not sequential. The order of decisions may be idiosyncratic, depending on context, but they do need to be made.



The purpose of RE

A working definition

Helping children and young people hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief

- *The primary purpose of RE is religious literacy*



Theology

This is about living.

It explores the diverse ways in which people practise their beliefs. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

Human and Social Sciences

Religious literacy through a balanced RE curriculum

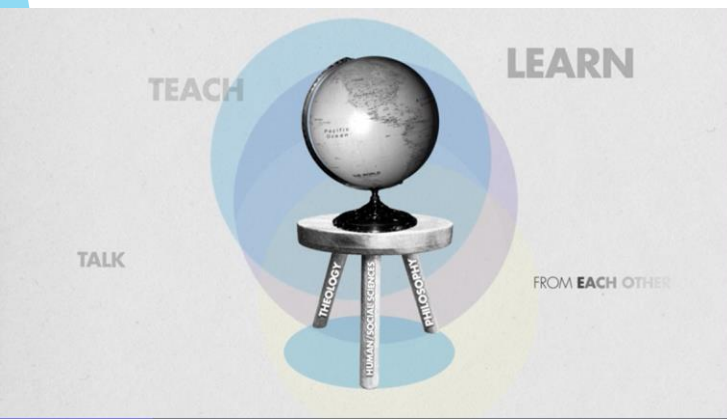
This is about believing.

It looks at where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

Philosophy

It is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NTW2bsFTLY>



What is a worldview?

Hard to define.

Everybody has one.

May be
'religious' or
'non-religious'.

Diversity within
worldviews.

How would you
define your
worldview?

How might this
impact your
approach to
teaching?



**'Nobody stands nowhere'
video:**

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/comment/2021/05/12/worldviews-film>

Taking a worldviews approach to teaching primary RE

From teaching world religions to teaching worldviews: Looking for the stories

May 2nd 2023

<https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/primaryeducationnetwork/>

“Everyone loves a good story, from the youngest to the oldest. Story is the way we communicate, explore and discover meaning and purpose in our lives. Through story we connect with others and make sense of ourselves.”

Anne Lumb

