



NEWTON BLUECOAT CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Religious Education

Progression of Key Learning

Nursery to Year 6 • 2026–27

ENQUIRE • KNOW • CONNECT • REFLECT • RESPOND

“Shine from the inside out”

Purpose

This document makes progression in Religious Education from Nursery to Year 6 explicit. It shows how pupils move from encountering faith through stories, celebrations, people, places and prayer towards increasingly connected knowledge of Christianity and other faith traditions, thoughtful theological and philosophical enquiry, careful comparison, reflection and evidence-informed explanation.

Progression at a glance

EYFS foundation. Children encounter faith through stories, celebrations, people, places, prayer and special times. They develop language for wondering, noticing, talking and responding.

Key Stage 1 foundations. Pupils retell and recognise key stories and practices, use simple religious vocabulary, ask questions, identify how beliefs may matter to believers and notice similarities and differences.

Lower Key Stage 2 development. Pupils describe and explain beliefs and practices in greater detail, make connections between text, belief and action, compare traditions carefully and give reasons for ideas and responses.

Upper Key Stage 2 depth. Pupils explain connections across beliefs, texts and practices, consider diversity within and between faiths, use evidence and vocabulary precisely and engage thoughtfully with theological and philosophical questions.

The RE learning journey

ENQUIRE	KNOW	CONNECT	REFLECT	RESPOND
Ask big questions	Build religious knowledge	Link belief & practice	Consider meaning & significance	Express ideas respectfully

Religious knowledge: stories, beliefs & concepts

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Encounter Christmas, Harvest, 'I am special', Diwali, Friendship and Easter through stories and experiences; begin to recognise that religious stories and celebrations are special to believers.
Reception	Develop knowledge through Harvest, I am Special, Christmas, Diwali, Stories Jesus Heard, Stories Jesus Told and Easter; recognise Jesus, the Bible and key Christian stories in familiar contexts.
Year 1	Know key ideas from Harvest, Christmas, Jesus, Easter, Baptism, Joseph and Creation; begin to explain why Jesus and Bible stories are important to Christians.
Year 2	Know why the Bible is special, why Jesus' birth is good news, why Jesus welcomed everyone, key Easter symbolism and why church and holy buildings matter.
Year 3	Develop knowledge of Harvest, Christmas, Jesus changing lives, the cross, being Called by God and religious rules; connect stories and beliefs with Christian living.
Year 4	Explore David and the Psalms, Jesus as Light of the World, prayer, Easter betrayal/trust, Church and Jesus as Son of God; develop increasingly connected Christian conceptual knowledge.
Year 5	Explore the Bible and sacred texts, Christmas around the world, Jesus as teacher, Easter victory, Old Testament women and Christian hope in loss and death.
Year 6	Develop increasingly connected understanding of pilgrimage, Advent, Eucharist, Ascension, Pentecost, the nature and character of God and how faith affects people's lives.

Text, tradition & evidence

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Listen to and talk about religious stories; handle or observe special objects and images with care; notice repeated characters, places and actions.
Reception	Retell familiar religious stories and identify simple messages; recognise that sacred stories, objects and places are important within faith traditions.
Year 1	Retell key stories accurately and use simple details from Bible stories and religious practices when answering questions.
Year 2	Refer to stories, symbols, holy books and places when explaining simple ideas; recognise the Bible and other holy books as sacred texts for believers.
Year 3	Use details from biblical narratives and examples of lived faith to support explanations; begin to connect a text with belief and action.

Stage	Key learning
Year 4	Explore psalms, biblical teaching, prayer and Easter narratives more closely; use textual or lived examples as evidence when explaining religious ideas.
Year 5	Use sacred texts and stories as evidence when discussing teaching, moral choices, hope and religious practice; recognise that texts may be interpreted and used in different ways.
Year 6	Refer confidently to stories, sacred texts, practices and lived examples when constructing explanations; consider interpretation and use evidence precisely.

Belief, practice & lived religion

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Notice that people celebrate, pray and show belonging in different ways; encounter special people and prayer in Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.
Reception	Recognise worship, prayer, celebrations and special places as ways people express faith; encounter a church and links to Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.
Year 1	Explain simple links between belief and practice through Harvest giving, gift-giving, baptism, birth rites and Creation.
Year 2	Explain how beliefs can be expressed through reading holy books, welcoming others, Easter symbols, holy buildings and church life.
Year 3	Explain how belief may influence thankfulness, discipleship, response to the cross, being called by God and following religious rules.
Year 4	Explain links between belief and values, prayer, forgiveness, worship, church life, Shabbat and understandings of Jesus.
Year 5	Explain how sacred texts, teaching, celebration, moral choices, hope, Purim and end-of-life rituals may shape the lives of believers.
Year 6	Explain how belief shapes pilgrimage, Advent preparation, Eucharist, understandings of God and everyday life; recognise diversity in how faith is lived.

Christianity: concepts & connections

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Begin to encounter God, Jesus, Christmas, Easter, prayer, friendship and thankfulness in age-appropriate contexts.

Stage	Key learning
Reception	Revisit God, Jesus, Christmas and Easter; encounter Jesus' stories and Christian special places and times.
Year 1	Develop simple understanding of Creation, Jesus, incarnation/Christmas, Easter, baptism, Bible heroes and Christian response to others.
Year 2	Develop understanding of Bible, incarnation, Gospel welcome, salvation/Easter and Church; connect Christian belief with worship and belonging.
Year 3	Connect God, Jesus, discipleship, salvation/cross, people called by God and Christian action; revisit concepts with greater depth.
Year 4	Develop understanding of God through psalms, incarnation as Light of the World, prayer, forgiveness, Church and Jesus as Son of God.
Year 5	Deepen understanding of Bible, incarnation across cultures, Gospel teaching, salvation/resurrection, people of God and Christian hope.
Year 6	Connect God, incarnation/Advent, Church/Eucharist, Ascension, Pentecost, pilgrimage, faith and mission; draw together core concepts across prior learning.

World faiths, worldviews & comparison

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Encounter Diwali and special people/prayer from Islam, Judaism and Hinduism; learn that families and communities may believe and celebrate differently.
Reception	Encounter Diwali and special places/times with links to Islam, Judaism and Hinduism; notice simple similarities and differences respectfully.
Year 1	Encounter Sukkot, birth rites in Islam/Hinduism and Creation links to Hinduism/Islam; identify simple similarities and differences without assuming they are the same.
Year 2	Compare the Bible with holy books in Islam/Judaism and explore why holy buildings are important to people of faith.
Year 3	Encounter Sukkot and compare ideas about rules in Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism; explain simple similarities and important differences.
Year 4	Encounter Hanukkah, prayer across world faiths, places of worship and Shabbat; compare carefully and recognise that practices differ within and between traditions.
Year 5	Encounter sacred texts in Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism, Christmas across the world, Purim and end-of-life rituals; recognise diversity of practice and interpretation.
Year 6	Compare pilgrimage in Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism and beliefs about God across faiths; consider both similarities and significant differences and avoid over-generalisation.

Theological & philosophical enquiry

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Wonder about special people, stories, celebrations and experiences; ask simple 'why' and 'I wonder' questions.
Reception	Ask questions about Jesus, God, special places and celebrations; talk about possible answers using familiar experiences and stories.
Year 1	Ask meaningful questions such as why baptism is special or what makes Jesus special; offer simple reasons for ideas.
Year 2	Explore questions about why books, buildings, symbols and people matter; recognise that people may give different answers.
Year 3	Explore questions about how Jesus changes lives, the meaning of the cross, calling and rules; give reasons and consider more than one response.
Year 4	Explore questions about values, prayer, betrayal, trust, forgiveness and Jesus' identity; distinguish a religious response from a personal response.
Year 5	Engage with questions about teaching, victory, moral choice, death and hope; consider different answers and use evidence to support reasoning.
Year 6	Engage thoughtfully with questions about God, pilgrimage, sacrament, faith and life; weigh different possible responses and support conclusions with religious evidence.

Reflection, identity & respectful dialogue

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Talk about what is special to them; listen to others and begin to recognise that people have different experiences and beliefs.
Reception	Express simple thoughts and feelings about stories and celebrations; listen to different ideas and respond respectfully.
Year 1	Express personal ideas without assuming everyone agrees; listen to others and use respectful language when discussing belief.
Year 2	Reflect on belonging, welcome, symbols and special places; compare views sensitively and recognise that belief matters differently to different people.
Year 3	Reflect on thankfulness, change, sadness/joy, calling and rules; listen carefully and give reasons for personal responses.

Stage	Key learning
Year 4	Reflect on values, light, prayer, trust, forgiveness and belonging; disagree appropriately and recognise diversity within communities.
Year 5	Reflect sensitively on moral choice, loss, death, hope and belief; distinguish personal reflection from what a religious tradition teaches.
Year 6	Express thoughtful, nuanced responses to questions of identity, belief, God, journey and faith; listen respectfully, challenge ideas appropriately and recognise diversity within and between worldviews.

Vocabulary & religious literacy

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Use words such as special, Christmas, Easter, Harvest, prayer, friend and celebration in meaningful contexts.
Reception	Use God, Jesus, Bible, church, Christian, prayer, worship, Christmas, Easter, special, holy, faith and festival with growing confidence.
Year 1	Use baptism, creation, Sukkot and core Christian vocabulary alongside words for belief, worship and celebration.
Year 2	Use holy book, symbol, synagogue, mosque, church, worship and other unit vocabulary accurately in simple explanations.
Year 3	Use psalm, disciple, belief, commitment, sacred, rules, Sukkot and relevant faith names/vocabulary with increasing accuracy.
Year 4	Use forgiveness, betrayal, Son of God, Shabbat, Hanukkah, ritual, community, belief and worship precisely in discussion and writing.
Year 5	Use sacred text, interpretation, hope, bereavement, Purim, resurrection, salvation and relevant world-faith vocabulary accurately.
Year 6	Use Eucharist, pilgrimage, covenant, incarnation, Ascension, Pentecost, denomination, worldview, interpretation and other upper-KS2 vocabulary confidently and precisely.

Year-by-year RE journey

Nursery: Autumn: Christmas • Harvest • I am special • Diwali | Spring: Friendship • Easter | Summer: Special People – Islam • Prayer – Islam, Judaism and Hinduism

Reception: Autumn: Harvest • I am Special • Christmas • Diwali | Spring: Stories Jesus Heard • Stories Jesus Told • Easter | Summer: Special Places, including a church visit and links to Islam, Judaism and Hinduism • Special Times

Year 1: Harvest + Sukkot • Christmas: Why do we give and receive gifts? • Jesus: What made Jesus special? • Easter: What is the most important part of the story? • Baptism + Islam/Hinduism birth rites • Joseph • Creation + Hinduism/Islam

Year 2: The Bible + holy books in Islam/Judaism • Birth of Jesus as good news • Jesus welcoming everyone • Easter symbols • Holy buildings • The Church

Year 3: Harvest + Sukkot • Christmas and the presence of Jesus • Jesus changing lives • Easter: sadness or joy? • Called by God • Religious rules in Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism

Year 4: David and the Psalms • Light of the World + Hanukkah • Prayer across faiths • Easter: betrayal or trust? + forgiveness • Are all churches the same? • Jesus as Son of God + Shabbat

Year 5: The Bible + sacred texts in Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism • Christmas around the world • Jesus as a great teacher • Easter as victory • Old Testament women + Purim • Loss, death and Christian hope + end-of-life rituals

Year 6: Life as a journey and pilgrimage + Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism • Advent • Eucharist • Ascension and Pentecost • Nature and character of God + beliefs about God across faiths • People of Faith

End-of-phase expectations

By the end of Nursery: Children encounter religious stories, celebrations, people and prayer; use simple language to talk about what they notice and wonder; and recognise that people may have different beliefs and special times.

By the end of Reception: Children retell familiar religious stories, recognise important people, places and celebrations, talk about similarities and differences and express simple ideas and questions respectfully.

By the end of Key Stage 1: Pupils retell and recognise key stories and practices, use simple religious vocabulary, ask questions, identify how beliefs may matter to believers and notice similarities and differences between traditions.

By the end of Lower Key Stage 2: Pupils describe and explain beliefs and practices with greater detail, connect text, belief and action, compare traditions carefully and give reasons for ideas, interpretations and responses.

By the end of Key Stage 2: Pupils explain connections across beliefs, texts and practices, consider diversity within and between faiths, use evidence and vocabulary precisely, engage thoughtfully with theological and philosophical questions and communicate respectful, evidence-informed conclusions.

Thinking theologically, philosophically and humanly

- What does this story, teaching or belief say about God, people, the world or salvation?
- How is this understood within a faith tradition?
- How does belief shape worship, prayer, celebration, ethical choices, community life and action?

- What do sacred stories and texts communicate, and how are they interpreted and used?
- What big question are we exploring, and what different answers might be given?
- What reasons or evidence support these different responses?
- How is faith lived by real people and communities?
- What is similar and what is different — and why does that distinction matter?
- What do I think, wonder or value, and how can I express this without assuming everyone believes the same thing?
- How can I talk about religion and worldviews with accuracy, curiosity and respect?