

The Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022

Appendix 3: Distribution of religious and non-religious teaching across the 24 dispositions

This appendix examines the relative quantities and the distribution of religious and non-religious teaching across the 24 dispositions of the exemplar lesson material. Since the teaching of non-religious worldviews is a new requirement for the 2022 Syllabus, this appendix will provide schools with the evidence that they may require to demonstrate that their teaching and learning within Religious Education conforms to the relevant English laws, current at the time of release.

The following charts show the same data represented in two different ways, firstly across the whole syllabus and then broken down by Key Stage. For each category, an initial graph shows how frequently each religious tradition and non-religious worldview appear as the focus for a lesson across the whole of the lesson exemplar material. Each initial graph is followed by a pie chart which represents this same data as a percentage of the lesson foci for that specific Key Stage or group of Key Stages.

This same representation is then adopted to break down the data Key Stage by Key Stage.

The data draws on the lessons available to all schools in January 2021.

There is a fuller explanation of the origin of the data at the end after the graphs and charts.

Figure 1: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview focus in lessons - all Key Stages

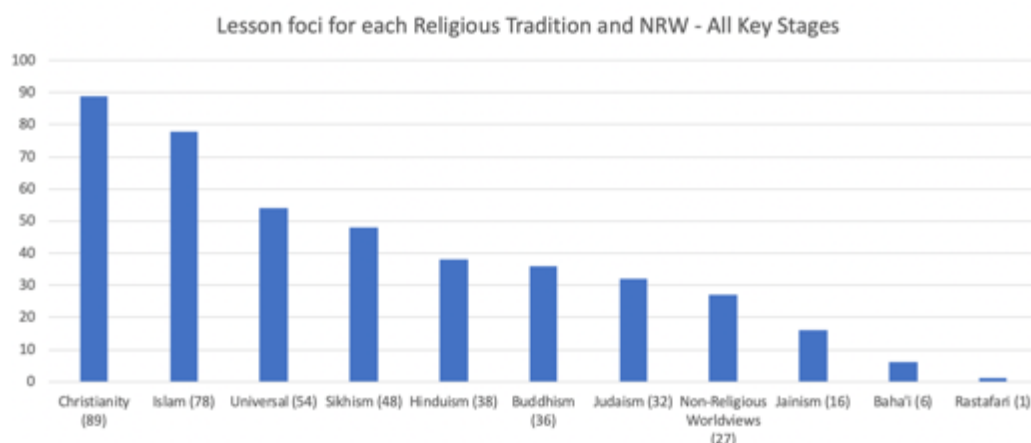


Fig 1 shows how often each religious tradition or a non-religious worldview appears as the focus for a lesson across all key stages. It can be seen that the religious tradition most often featured is Christianity. Non-religious world views appear a similar number of times to some other religious traditions, and more often than others.

Figure 2: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview lesson foci as a percentage - all Key Stages

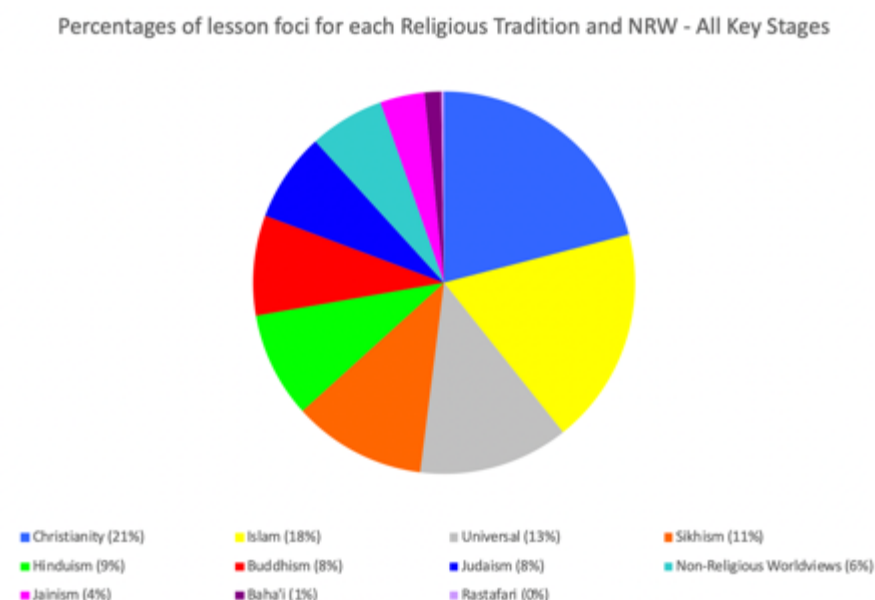


Figure 2 shows the number of lesson foci as a percentage. The highest percentage of lesson foci is attributed to Christianity (21%). Of the 'major world religions' Islam and Sikhism have 18% and 11% correspondingly. Buddhism has 8% of foci and Jainism 4%. Non-Religious Worldviews account for 6% in all Key Stages of the foci and the 'universal' level used more so in the primary planning total 13%.

Figure 3: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview focus in lessons - Key Stage One

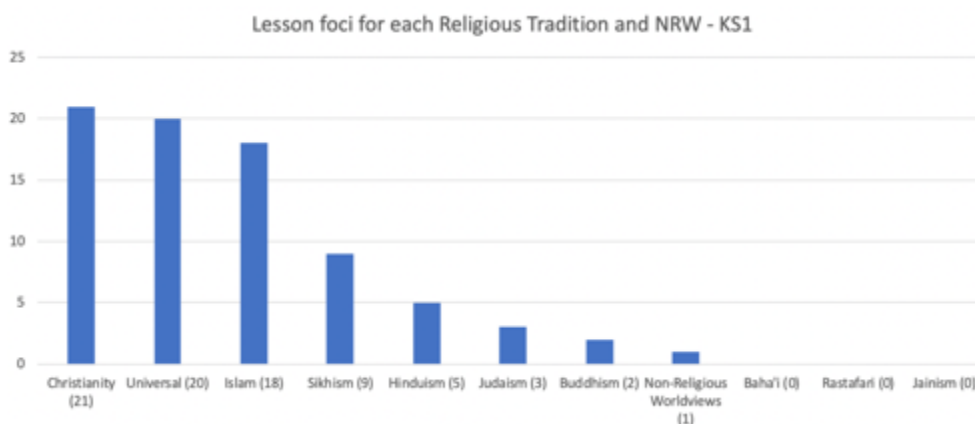


Figure 3 shows the number of lesson foci for each Religious Tradition including Non-Religious Worldviews in Key Stage 1. Overall the largest number of lesson foci is attributed to Christianity (21 foci) with Baha'i, Rastafari and Jainism being the lowest (no foci). Islam has 18 foci and Sikhism 9.

Non-Religious Worldviews has 1 lesson focus in Key Stage 1. Since *Learning from Experience* is one of the learning dimensions in earlier Key Stages, it is of interest to note that the 'Universal' aspect receives 20 foci. This will be different within Key Stage 3 and 4, where this dimension is not the direction of the learning at this stage in a pupil's education. As stated above, at Key Stage 1 pupils were intentionally introduced gradually to a small number of Religious Traditions and a more generic appreciation of Non-Religious Worldviews in order to minimise confusion and enable pupils to consolidate their own tradition as they develop an understanding and appreciation of faith traditions of others.

Figure 4: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview lesson foci as a percentage - Key Stage One

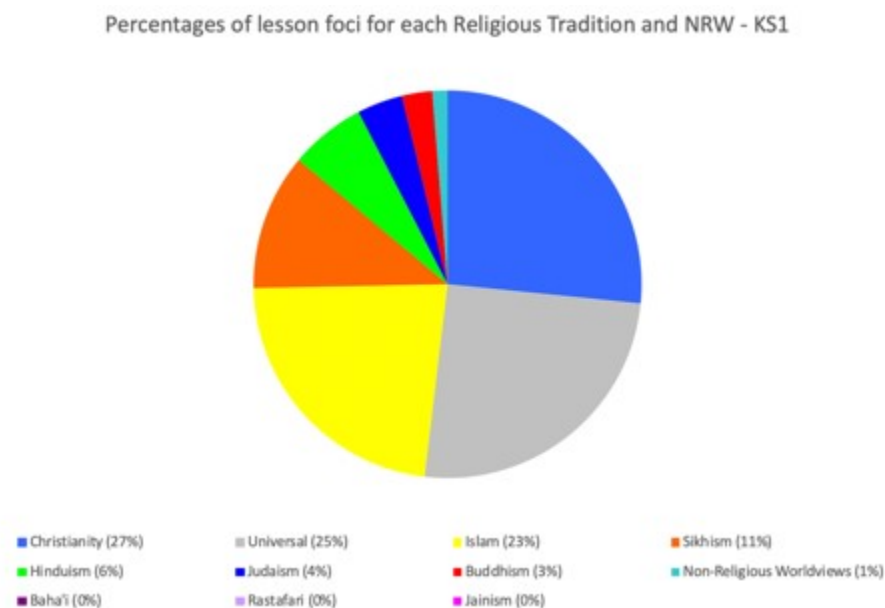


Figure 4 shows the number of lesson foci as a percentage. The largest percentage of lesson foci is ascribed to Christianity (27%). Of the 'major world religions' Islam and Hinduism have 23% and 6% correspondingly. Specific Non-Religious Worldviews account for 1% of the foci and the broader 'universal' foci used in the primary planning total 25%.

Figure 5: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview focus in lessons - Key Stage Two

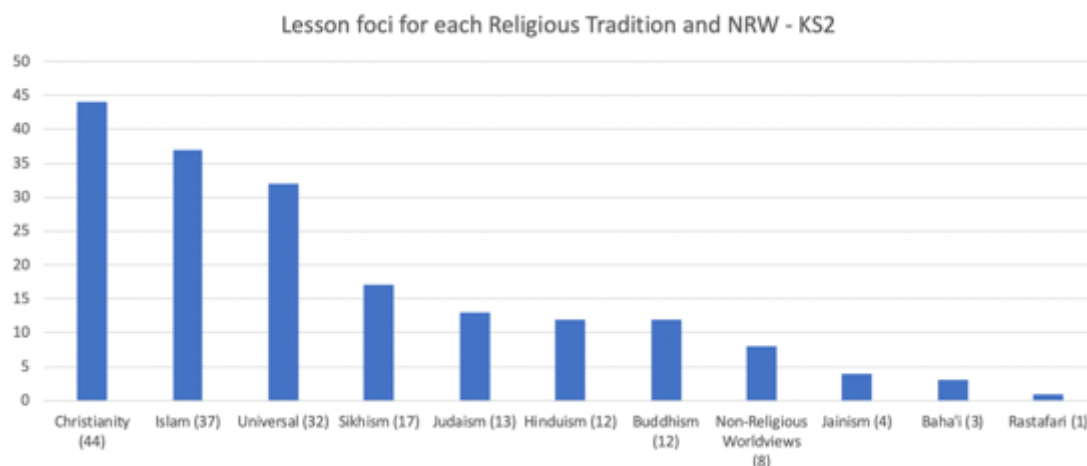


Figure 5 shows the number of lesson foci for each Religious Tradition including specific Non-Religious Worldviews in Key Stage 2. Overall the largest number of lesson foci is attributed to Christianity (44 foci), with Islam being the second largest with 37 foci, closely followed by the universal foci count of 32. Rastafari being the lowest (1 number of foci), whilst Judaism (13 foci), Hinduism (12 foci) and Buddhism (12 foci) have a similar number of foci.

Figure 6: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview lesson foci as a percentage - Key Stage Two

Figure 6 shows the number of lesson foci as a percentage. The highest percentage of lesson foci is planned for Christianity (24%). Of the 'major world religions' Islam and Sikhism are 20% and 9% correspondingly. Non-Religious Worldviews account for 4% of the foci and the 'universal' foci total 17%. These figures represent the teaching of a variety of different religious traditions and Non-Religious Worldviews at Key Stage 2, whilst retaining the emphasis on the universal understanding of the dispositions.

Percentages of lesson foci for each Religious Tradition and NRW - KS2

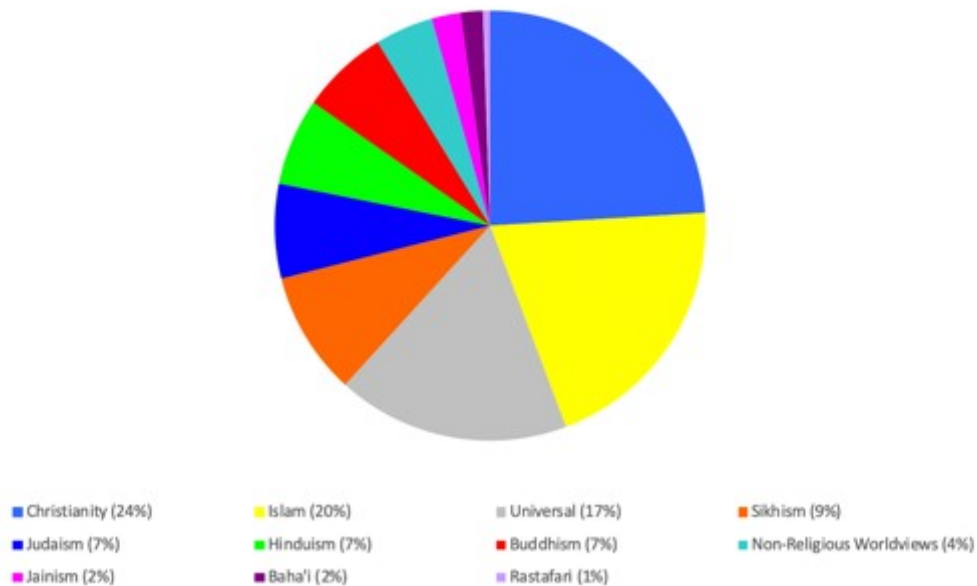


Figure 7: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview focus in lessons - Key Stage 3 and 4

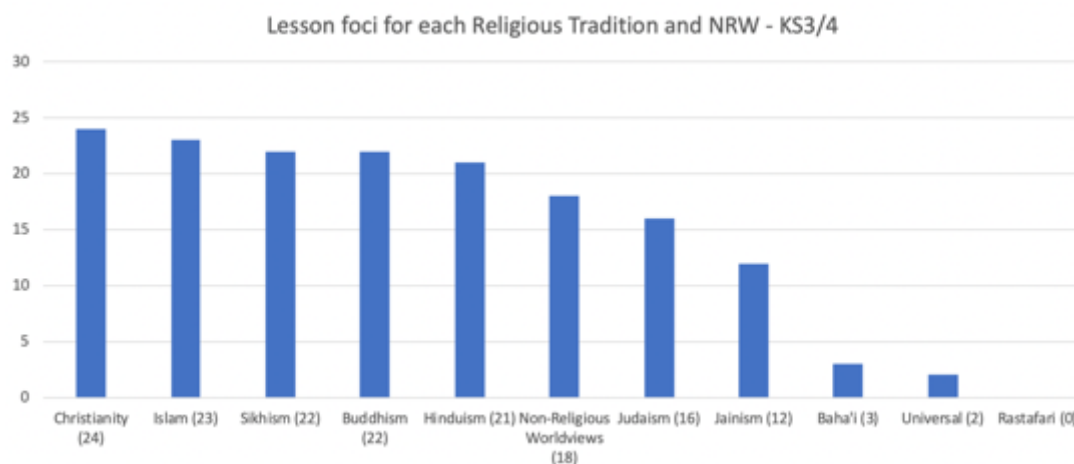


Figure 7 shows the number of lesson foci for each Religious Tradition including Non-Religious Worldviews in Key Stages 3 and 4. Overall the largest number of lesson foci is attributed to Christianity (24 foci). Islam (23 foci), Sikhism (22 foci), Buddhism (22 foci) and Hinduism (21 foci) have similar distributions. Judaism has 16 lesson foci. These figures come as no surprise with the lessons being planned to also accommodate the teaching of a number of major religious traditions at GCSE.

Figure 8: Chart showing Religious Tradition and Non-Religious Worldview lesson foci as a percentage - Key Stage 3 and 4

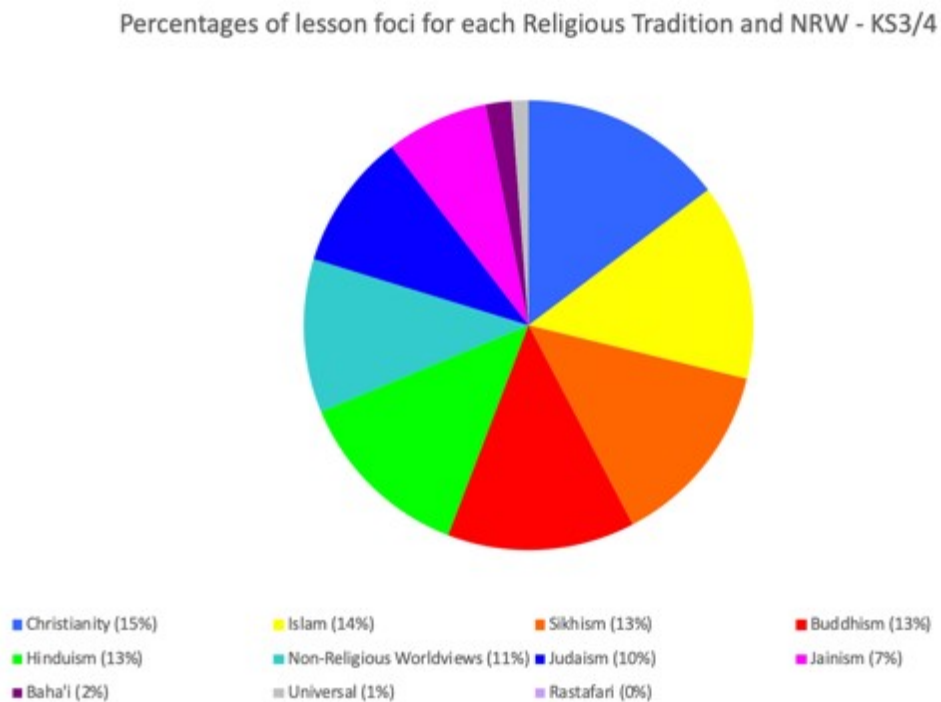


Figure 8 shows the number of lesson foci as a percentage. The religious tradition receiving highest percentage of lesson foci is Christianity (15%). Of the 'major world religions' Islam is planned for 14%, Sikhism: 13%; Buddhism: 13%; Hinduism: 13%; and Judaism: 10% correspondingly. Non-Religious Worldviews account for 11% of the foci and 'universal' totalling 1%. At Key Stage 3 and 4 there is the change in emphasis from that of earlier Key Stages, in line with the Learning Dimensions. At these Key Stages less attention given to the universal aspects of the dispositions (these have been covered 3 times in a pupils' education at Key Stage 1 and 2) to more direction on specific Non-Religious Worldviews both within their own right and as representing the *Learning to Discern* dimension within the syllabus.

Background to the data.

As we have recognised throughout the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus, the dispositional approach is different to other systematic and thematic approaches to Religious Education in other locally agreed syllabuses. At the heart of the Birmingham approach is the opportunity for pupils to learn about themselves through the cultivation of dispositions through learning about beliefs; perhaps their own, perhaps other than their own, whether religious or not.

The dispositions, encapsulating shared human values, enable engagement with human concerns by encountering religious and non-religious standpoints. Such engagement is not compartmentalised into religious topics perhaps as more traditional syllabuses do by blocks of teaching about a specific religion; “In Year 3 we look at Islam”, or by topics such as worship or buildings. Instead, in starting from where each particular pupil is, whether religious or not, the syllabus promotes inclusion and learning by first discovering what pupils understand about the disposition from their personal experiences. We refer to this as a dimension of learning, in this case ‘Learning from Experience’. This way of exploring the disposition is particularly inclusive as the full range of perspectives represented in the classroom can be harnessed. ‘Learning from Experience’ addresses the concern that pupils from a ‘Nones’ background may find it difficult to access religious content or established non-religious worldview content since they may not perceive the relevance of it to their own lives. Some may have a personal ideology to which they adhere and on which they will want to reflect, but all will have relevant experiences against which to examine their thinking. Learning from Experience is therefore a powerful and universal foundation from which to move on to explore the content led aspects of the disposition. In this manner, the syllabus can be seen as implementing the advice in the DFE Non-Statutory Guidance (2010, p. 23) that ‘subject matter should facilitate integration and promotion of shared values’.

However, it is essential to have a strong bridge between ‘Learning from Experience’ and the teaching and learning about particular religious traditions and non-religious worldviews. To this end, each disposition has a ‘content overview’, referencing the religious traditions and non-religious worldviews throughout each key stage. The ‘Content Overviews’ anchor the acquisition of knowledge, which gets broader and deeper through studying more faiths and non-religious worldviews as pupils get older. This also corresponds with advice to Agreed Syllabus Conferences in the Non-Statutory Guidance (2010, p. 23) ‘[n]ot all religions need to be studied at the same depth or in each key stage, but that all that are studied should be studied in a way that is coherent and promotes progression’.

It is vital for schools to be able to demonstrate their coverage of both the religious traditions and non-religious worldviews. By following the content overviews, we are confident that teachers will be guiding learning to be within the law and that they will be able to evidence that they have made adequate provision for religious traditions and non-religious worldview teaching within Religious Education within the Agreed Syllabus. To assist in providing such evidence, the following data has been taken from the content overviews for each disposition.

In primary lessons, the dispositions are introduced in a spiral curriculum approach with each disposition featuring once at each Phase: Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2a (Years 3 and 4) and Key Stage 2b (Years 5 and 6). A module of (typically) three lessons has been planned for each age phase for each disposition. As described above, the first lesson in a module draws upon the pupils’ experiences, it is not overtly tied to any single religious tradition. This pertains to the learning dimension *Learning from Experience* where pupils and teachers draw from their own experience and their family background (whether religious or not) to understand what the disposition means to them in a ‘universal’, wider sense. Almost always, lessons with a ‘universal’ focus will acknowledge, or even centre upon, a secular perspective of the subject matter, although not necessarily one that can be attributed to one specific worldview or philosophy. This counts as one lesson focus for the universal category. The count of lesson foci continues through the lesson series planned for different Religious Traditions and Non-Religious Worldviews. Occasionally at Key Stage 2, a number of traditions are used over a series of two or three lessons. In this case each of the Religious Traditions are counted as a ‘focus’ within this lesson series.

At a secondary level (Key Stage 3 and 4) the lessons are planned in units of six lessons. Many of the lessons centre around one or two Religious Traditions (these are therefore counted as one or two foci). Religious Traditions are counted by the number of times that they appear in a unit of work. Lessons are planned for use with Key Stage 3 or 4 to accommodate a school's or academies introduction of GCSE specifications (some schools do this in Year 9 – Key Stage 3). The lessons have been designed to support the teaching of the Agreed Syllabus *and* to be adapted when following a direct GCSE specification.

References

Department for Children, Schools and Families, (2010) *Religious Education in English Schools:*

Non-statutory Guidance 2010, www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications, (Accessed: 3.2.17).

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