Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics in Primary Education

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Contents

Australia: Queensland

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12/13

Primary education in Queensland currently lasts seven years – Years 1 to 7, ages six to 12/13 years (children must be six by 30 June in the year they enrol in Year 1). From 2015, in line with the implementation of the (national) Australian Curriculum, primary education will end after Year 6, at age 11/12 (DETE, 2014c).

Primary education is split into:

- Early years of schooling: Preparatory Year to Year Two (ages five/six to seven/eight).
- Upper primary: Year 3 to Year 7 (Year 6 from 2015) (ages eight/nine to 12/13 [11/12 from 2015]) (DETE, 2014c) (NFER, 2013).

There is a non-compulsory full time Preparatory Year (Prep) of schooling for five-year-olds. Children must be aged five by 30 June in the year they enrol in Prep. There is a 97 per cent participation rate in the Preparatory Year. Parents can delay school entry until the compulsory school age of six years six months, however children must then start in the Preparatory Year (Feeney, 2013).

Kindergarten/Pre-Preparatory Year programmes are available for the year preceding the Preparatory Year i.e. for children aged four by 30 June. These programmes are regulated and funded/subsidised by the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) and are provided by approved community providers (Baxter and Hand, 2013).

Primary schools in Queensland have started to implement the Australian Curriculum F-10 (Foundation/Prep to Year 10) which is replacing the Queensland Curriculum in increments by 2017 (QCAA, 2014). The Foundation Year in the Australian Curriculum equates to the Preparatory Year in Queensland. The Australian Curriculum is being introduced in all Australian states and territories. It includes learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities that together support 21st century learning:

- Learning areas (eight): English; mathematics; science; humanities and social sciences; the arts; technologies; health and physical education; languages (plus work studies in Years 9 and 10 only).
- General capabilities: literacy; numeracy; information and communication technology capability; critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; ethical understanding; and intercultural understanding.

- Cross-curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia; and sustainability (ACARA, 2014a).

In 2014, Queensland schools are following the Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science, and history and are planning for the implementation of geography. Until other curriculum areas are ready for implementation under the Australian Curriculum, schools continue to follow the Queensland Curriculum (for Years 1 to 7) and the Queensland Early Years Curriculum Guidelines in the Preparatory Year (QCAA, 2014).

Year group	Age range	Phase	Curriculum in 2014
Kindergarten/Pre-Preparatory Year programmes	4/5	Non-compulsory	Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines (QSA, 2010)
Preparatory Year in primary school	5/6	Early years of schooling (non-compulsory)	Australian Curriculum F-10 (ACARA, 2014a) Queensland Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (QCAA, 2006)
1	6/7	Early years of schooling (compulsory)	Australian Curriculum F-10 (ACARA, 2014a)
2	7/8	Early years of schooling (compulsory)	Queensland Curriculum (QCAA, 2014)
3	8/9	Upper primary	
4	9/10	Upper primary	
5	10/11	Upper primary	
6	11/12	Upper primary	
7	12/13	Upper primary (first year of secondary from 2015)	

A note about Catholic schools: This description focuses on non-denominational government (state) schools. However private schools are an important feature of the education system in Australia and the majority of these have a religious affiliation. In Queensland, as all Australian states, there is a substantial system of Catholic schools (NFER, 2013). In 2013, 80 per cent of primary schools in Queensland were government schools, 17 per cent private Catholic schools and three per cent other private (independent) schools (Australian Bureau of

Statistics, 2014). Further information about the Catholic schools sector in Queensland is available from the [Queensland Catholic Education Commission](#).

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

| 1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles? | **Kindergarten/Pre-Preparatory Year**
Education about religions and beliefs is not mentioned in the early learning areas of the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines (for four- to five-year-olds), which are identity; connectedness; wellbeing; active learning; and communicating. There is, however, an emphasis on increasing respect for diversity which includes beginning appreciation of various aspects of diversity, including family structures, roles in communities, religions, practices, capabilities, talents and locations, e.g. urban, rural or remote (QSA, 2010).

Preparatory Year of Primary School
Education about religions and beliefs is not included in the early learning areas of the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG) (for five-to six-year-olds), which are social and personal learning; health and physical learning; language learning and communication; early mathematical understandings; and active learning processes. The EYCG do, however, state that they support teachers to integrate learning, teaching and assessment, and to promote continuity in children's learning by illustrating developmentally, socially and culturally responsive learning opportunities that acknowledge equity and diversity (QCAA, 2006). The policy on religious instruction in primary schools (see below) does not apply in the non-compulsory Preparatory Year (DETE, 2014b).

Primary schools (Years 1 to 6/7)
The new, national Australian Curriculum provides some scope for education about religions and beliefs. State legislation in Queensland also allows for religious instruction in primary schools. The information which follows reflects both state legislation and the new national curriculum arrangements.

Education about religions and beliefs (Preparatory Year and primary years)
The new national Australian Curriculum - [Curriculum F-10](#) - which is being implemented across all Australian states and territories includes seven 'general capabilities'. These encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours |

and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. The seven general capabilities are:

- literacy
- numeracy
- information and communications technology (ICT) capability
- critical and creative thinking
- personal and social capability
- ethical understanding
- **intercultural understanding** (ACARA, 2014a).

In addition, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) made the following statement about religion in the Australian Curriculum in August 2014:

> *The Australian Curriculum offers students in all schools – whether faith-based or secular – an opportunity to learn about religions, spirituality and ethical beliefs. In the curriculum, religion is represented as a study 'about religion' rather than study about a particular religious faith. In subjects such as history and civics and citizenship, the focus is on learning about religious identity and diversity, the role and significance of religion in our society, and identifying various religious traditions and key developments in religion.There is coverage of religion both in Australia and in a global context, which provides an opportunity for educators to include a local community perspective with global connections* (ACARA, 2014b).

NB. The hyperlinks in the above quote are as they appear in the statement and link to specific sections of the Australian Curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum is being introduced incrementally. In 2014 Queensland schools are following the Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science, and history.

A major report by the Australian Government on the Australian Curriculum published in October 2014

acknowledged that the place of values and beliefs, especially moral and spiritual values and how religion is dealt with is one of the most contentious issues relating to the Australian Curriculum (Australian Government, 2014). See question 7.

Religious instruction
The state of Queensland allows faith groups to provide religious instruction (RI) in primary schools (Years 1 to 7 – the non-compulsory Preparatory Year is excluded) for those children whose parents want it.

Queensland's policy on religious instruction allows up to one hour per week of instruction, provided by a minister of a religious denomination or society or an accredited representative, for those students enrolled as members of that religious denomination or society. Local faith groups must apply to the principal of the school in which they wish to provide religious instruction to students of their faith. There can also be cooperative arrangements between faith groups, for example the various Christian denominational churches in an area working together (DETE, 2014b).

Religious instruction does not have a curriculum or syllabus provided or approved by the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE). The programme of religious instruction is approved by the local faith group which has applied to the individual school to provide religious instruction in that school. It is specific instruction in the distinct tenets and doctrines of that faith group, designed to develop and support the particular beliefs, values and attitudes of students of that faith group (DETE, 2014a; DETE, 2014b). It appears that faith groups approve existing programmes such as those provided by educational publishers or devise their own.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) has no involvement in the selection of content for RI. The principal in each school is responsible for ensuring that the content of the RI programme does not contravene legislation or departmental policies. The religious instructor is required to follow the advice and directives of the principal while on school premises (DETE, 2014a; DETE, 2014b).

In addition to the hour per week of religious instruction the Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006 states that:

> *The principal of a State primary or State special school may arrange a period of one-half hour a week for religious instruction in selected Bible lessons.*

Bible lessons, if offered, are provided by DETE employees (state primary and special school teachers), not by

the religious community. A programme of selected Bible lessons (recommended texts) is optional for primary schools at the discretion of the principal. A Bible lesson could include the teacher reading one of the recommended texts and possibly giving background to the reading e.g. geographical location, literary style and historical information. The lessons must not include any teaching of distinctive tenets or doctrines of a denomination or society. The decision to provide Bible lessons is made at the local level by the school principal in consultation with the school community. Parents must be informed if Bible lessons occur in school and of their right to request that their child not attend. Bible lessons are not to be offered to students in the Preparatory Year or in secondary schools. Students who are withdrawn from Bible lessons are to receive other instruction in a separate location (DETE, 2014d).

Examples of religious instruction programmes sourced online include:

- CEP Curriculum – produced by an educational publisher. Christian Education Publications (CEP) publishes the CEP Curriculum - a suite of bible-based programmes covering the Kindergarten and primary phase and designed for use in Australia and New Zealand schools. The Connect programme covers the primary phase and seeks to help pupils develop their understanding and knowledge of biblical principles, to build skills which will enhance their overall learning ability and to form an understanding of values and attitudes of faith, culture and the world today. An overview of the syllabus is available.

- Christian Religious Education Program (Sunshine Coast). The Christian Religious Education Program (CREP) is a local programme specifically for schools on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland. The programme provides training for volunteer religious instructors based on a curriculum that is approved by the local ministers fraternal and recommended by the CREP board. Further information on CREP (but not specific details of the curriculum) is available.

2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	**Education about religions and beliefs** The Australian Curriculum for primary level education includes eight learning areas (English; mathematics; science; humanities and social sciences; the arts; technologies; health and physical education; languages); seven general capabilities (literacy; numeracy; information and communication technology capability; critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; ethical understanding; and intercultural understanding); and three cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia; and sustainability) which contribute to and can be developed through each

learning area. The general capability of 'intercultural understanding' provides scope for teaching about religions and beliefs and the introduction to the '[intercultural understanding](#)' strand states:

> *In the Australian Curriculum, students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect* (ACARA, 2014c).

The intercultural understanding learning continuum is organised into three interrelated elements:

- recognising culture and developing respect
- interacting and empathising with others
- reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility.

Intercultural understanding is developed through the learning areas; the F-10 Curriculum gives specific information about how intercultural understanding is developed through English, mathematics, history and science and states that teachers may find further opportunities to incorporate explicit teaching of Intercultural understanding depending on their choice of activities (ACARA, 2014c).

The F-10 Curriculum does not refer explicitly to individual religions and if and when they should be introduced to pupils and, in August 2014, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) issued a statement about religion in the Australian Curriculum:

> *The Australian Curriculum offers students in all schools – whether faith-based or secular – an opportunity to learn about religions, spirituality and ethical beliefs. In the curriculum, religion is represented as a study 'about religion' rather than study about a particular religious faith. In subjects such as history and civics and citizenship, the focus is on learning about religious identity and diversity, the role and significance of religion in our society, and identifying various religious traditions and key developments in religion. There is coverage of religion both in Australia and in a global context, which provides an opportunity for educators to include a local community perspective with global connections*

	(ACARA, 2014b).
	Religious instruction Religious instruction (RI) programmes are provided in Queensland schools to the children of those parents whose want them. Programmes are approved by the faith group (local faith groups apply to the principal of the school) and they provide specific instruction in the distinct tenets and doctrines of that faith group (DETE, 2014a).
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	**Education about religions and beliefs** The three organising elements for intercultural understanding are the same throughout the new national curriculum framework in Australia – the Australian Curriculum F-10 - from the non-compulsory Preparatory Year (or Foundation) through Years 1 to 6 of primary education (and up to Year 10 which is a transition year between junior secondary and senior secondary). A learning continuum sets out the expectations at the end of curriculum level (levels 1-4 cover the primary phase including the Preparatory Year) for each organising element, which are: • recognising culture and developing respect • interacting and empathising with others • reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility (ACARA, 2014c). As one example the table below demonstrates how the expectations for 'developing respect for cultural diversity' build from the start of primary school in the Preparatory or Foundation Year up to Year 6. The example includes links to other parts of the curriculum (these are labelled with their unit number as they appear in the F-10 Curriculum).

	Level 1 Typically by the end of Foundation Year (age 6), students:	Level 2 Typically by the end of Year 2 (age 8), students:	Level 3 Typically by the end of Year 4 (age 10), students:	Level 4 Typically by the end of Year 6 (age 12), students:	
	Discuss ideas about cultural diversity in local contexts

Example

Identifying cultural dimensions in familiar stories and events

English (ACELT1578)

Mathematics (ACMNA001)

History (ACHHK003) | Describe ways that diversity presents opportunities for new experiences and understandings

Example

Describing their participation in a range of cultural events at school or in their local community

English (ACELT1591)

Mathematics (ACMMG041)

History (ACHHK045) | Identify and discuss the significance of a range of cultural events, artefacts or stories recognised in the school, community or nation

Example

Explaining the significance of a range of religious and cultural holidays and celebrations

History (ACHHK063) | Discuss opportunities that cultural diversity offers within Australia and the Asia-Pacific region

Examples

Describing contributions that people from diverse cultural groups make to the community over time

English (ACELT1608)

Mathematics (ACMMG144)

Science (ACSHE099)History (ACHHK116) | |

Abridged from *Intercultural Understanding* (ACARA, 2014c).

Religious instruction

	The teaching of religious instruction is at the discretion of the faith group and the programme they choose to adopt. An example from the [CEP Curriculum](#) (see question 1 above) differentiates between the first six years of primary school and the current final year (for 12- to 13-year-olds):
	Connect is a three-year curriculum, offering four units of ten lessons each year, which students cycle through twice during their primary school years, learning at greater depth as they progress through school.
	Big Questions is a one-year programme designed for students in their last year of (primary) school who are ready to explore some big questions, share their own opinions and investigate the Bible for themselves. The course tackles issues such as: What is God really like? What's gone wrong with the world? Does God really care about me? How will I make choices about my future? What's the purpose of my life?
4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	**Education about religions and beliefs** According to the ACARA statement on religious education (ACARA, 2014b), the Australian Curriculum, which is being implemented incrementally, makes provision for education about religions and beliefs, in particular, through the history and civics and citizenship learning areas. The history learning area is endorsed and currently being implemented in Queensland schools in 2014; the civics and citizenship learning area is awaiting final endorsement. See questions 1, 2 and 3 above for further explanation of how education about religions and beliefs is integrated across the learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities of the new national curriculum in Australia.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	The primary school year in Queensland lasts for 40 weeks. Where primary schools offer religious instruction, this may be offered for up to one hour each week to those pupils whose parents want them to participate. This equates to a maximum of 40 hours over the school year. The principal determines when, that is, on which day of the week this will take place. Legislation also allows principals to arrange a period of one-half hour a week for religious instruction in selected Bible lessons. See question 1 above.
	The following table sets out the recommended time allocations for the listed Australian Curriculum learning areas/subjects over the 40-week school year in primary schools:

	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
English	280	280	280	280	240	240	240
Mathematics	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Science	40	40	40	70	70	70	70
History	20	20	20	40	40	40	40
Total hours per year	520	520	520	590	550	550	550
Health and Physical Education	School-based decision — up to 80 hours						

Abridged from: Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2014) *Time Allocations and Entitlement: Advice on Implementing the Australian Curriculum F (P)-2010* [online].

| 6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs? | There is no opt-out from the learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities of the new national curriculum in Australia.

In terms of religious instruction (RI), it is more the case that parents have to opt in. Comprehensive information on RI and other instruction must be made to parents to assist them to make an informed decision. Schools use the information on student enrolment forms to place students in either religious instruction or 'other instruction' unless parents have provided other written instructions. School principals must arrange for a student who has been withdrawn from all religious instruction by the student's parent to receive other instruction in a separate location during the period arranged for religious instruction (DETE, 2014b).

The Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) does not collect or hold data on the number of parents who opt in/opt out of RI (DETE, 2014a).

Where a school offers Bible lessons, parents must be informed as such and of their right to request that their child not attend. Students who are withdrawn from Bible lessons are to receive other instruction in a separate |

	location (DETE, 2014d).
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	The new national Australian Curriculum began to be introduced in 2011 and is incrementally replacing the Queensland and other state/territory curricula. In 2014 a review was established by the Australian Government to evaluate the development and implementation of the Australian Curriculum to date. The final report of the review was published in October 2014. As a key general observation the report notes the widespread variation in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum across Australia and the difficulties of being sure that the content, as intended, is being delivered in all schools (Australian Government, 2014).
	The report acknowledges that one of the most contentious issues related to the Australian Curriculum is the place of values and beliefs, especially moral and spiritual values and how religion is dealt with. It makes reference to a draft statement by ACARA 'Learning about religions, spiritualities and ethical beliefs in the Australian Curriculum' which was provided to the review. The ACARA statement argues that the Australian Curriculum 'provides opportunities and encourages students to learn about different religions, spiritualities and ethical beliefs …' and that it 'provides a platform for teaching about religions, spiritualities and ethical beliefs in a balanced, informed and impartial manner' and that this content is especially evident in the history and civics and citizenship learning areas. The review also acknowledges that 'the whole question of spiritual values and religion seems to have been regarded as too much of a hot potato' and that ACARA only belatedly developed a statement outlining how the Australian Curriculum deals with religions, spiritualities and ethical beliefs (Australian Government, 2014).
	Amongst its 30 recommendations the review recommends that ACARA revise the Australian Curriculum to place more emphasis on morals, values and spirituality as outlined in the Melbourne Declaration, and to better recognise the contribution of Western civilisation, Australia's Judeo-Christian heritage, the role of economic development and industry and the democratic underpinning of the British system of government to Australia's development (Australian Government, 2014).
	The report also recommends that four of the general capabilities including intercultural understanding and ethical understanding should no longer be treated in a cross-curricular fashion and instead be embedded only in those subjects and areas of learning where relevant, and where they can be dealt with in a comprehensive

and detailed fashion (Australian Government, 2014).

See Hurst and Murphy (2014) for a general overview of the review's findings and implications.

Additional information
Kevin Donnelly, one of the two curriculum reviewers appointed by the federal education minister, was reported to argue (outside the review) that religion should be taught more effectively and that it does not have enough of a presence in Australia's very secular curriculum. He is quoted as saying: 'I'm not saying we should preach to everyone, but I would argue that the great religions of the world - whether it's Islam, whether it's Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism - they should be taught over the compulsory years of school' (Greene, 2014).

Such concerns are echoed in recent research on religious instruction in Queensland which argues that, in the modern world, children need to learn together about different religions and beliefs (Byrne cited in Hurst, 2014) .

| 8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs? | Guidance to assist teachers in teaching about religions and beliefs – and in particular about teaching the general capability of intercultural understanding - is included in the general guidance provided on the Australian Curriculum F-10 website. In addition, Scootle is an online resource providing digital resources for teachers and students mapped to the Australian Curriculum. There are some resources which relate to religion on this website.

In terms of the teaching of religious instruction (provided by ministers or accredited representatives of faith groups), specific resources may be available for these representatives of the different faiths – see question 3 above. |

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	**Primary/Preparatory Year** Yes, the new Australian Curriculum - Curriculum F-10 - which is being implemented across all Australian states and territories includes seven 'general capabilities' (alongside eight learning areas and three cross-curriculum priorities – see line of inquiry 1 above). The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the 21st century. The seven general capabilities are: • literacy • numeracy • information and communications technology (ICT) capability • critical and creative thinking • personal and social capability • **ethical understanding** • intercultural understanding. Ethical understanding involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others (ACARA, 2014d).
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	The three key components known as 'organising elements' of the ethical understanding general capability are: • understanding ethical concepts and issues • reasoning in decision making and actions • exploring values, rights and responsibilities.

ACARA, 2014d.

| 3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education? | The three organising elements for ethical understanding are the same throughout the Curriculum F-10 from the non-compulsory Preparatory (or Foundation) Year (ages five to six) through Years 1 to 6 of primary education (and up to Year 10 which is a transition year between junior secondary and senior secondary). A learning continuum sets out the expectations at the end of curriculum level (levels 1-4 cover the primary phase including the Preparatory Year) for each organising element -understanding ethical concepts and issues; reasoning in decision making and actions; and exploring values, rights and responsibilities.

As one example, the table below demonstrates how the expectations for 'understanding ethical concepts and issues' build from the start of primary school in the Preparatory or Foundation Year up to Year 6. The example includes links to other parts of the curriculum (these are labelled with their unit name as they appear in the F-10 Curriculum). |

	Level 1 **Typically by the end of Foundation Year (age 6), students:**	Level 2 **Typically by the end of Year 2 (age 8), students:**	Level 3 **Typically by the end of Year 4 (age 10), students:**	Level 4 **Typically by the end of Year 6 (age 12), students:**
	1.1.1.1.1 Recognise ethical concepts: • identify ethical concepts arising in familiar contexts, such as good and bad behaviours • identifying the behaviours of characters in familiar stories	1.1.1.1.2 Recognise ethical concepts: • ethical concepts, such as right and wrong, honesty, fairness and tolerance • describing instances of fair and unfair treatment Science (ACSHE035)	1.1.1.1.3 Recognise ethical concepts: • identify ethical concepts, such as equality, respect and connectedness, and describe some of their attributes • exploring what it means to treat people equally History (ACHHK077)	1.1.1.1.4 Recognise ethical concepts: • examine and explain ethical concepts such as truth and justice that contribute to the achievement of a particular outcome • exploring the difference between an honest mistake and intentional deception
	1.1.1.1.5 Explore ethical concepts in context:	1.1.1.1.6 Explore ethical concepts in context:	1.1.1.1.8 Explore ethical concepts in context:	1.1.1.1.10 Explore ethical concepts in context: • explain what constitutes an

		discuss ethical concepts within a range of familiar contexts	discuss actions taken in a range of contexts that include an	ethically better or worse outcome and how it might be accomplished
	• describe familiar situations that involve ethical concepts • discuss familiar situations that illustrate the concepts of kindness or caring	• discuss story scenarios involving fair and tolerant behaviour English (ACELT1587) 1.1.1.1.7	ethical dimension • explore the responsibilities of witnesses to instances of bullying Science (ACSHE051) 1.1.1.1.9	• explore the consequences for individuals of others' actions, in a range of scenarios Science (ACSHE121)

Abridged from *Ethical Understanding* (ACARA, 2014d).

4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	Yes. Ethical understanding is one of the general capabilities in the new national curriculum in Australia. These general capabilities are addressed explicitly in the content of the learning areas; consequently ethical issues arise across all areas of the curriculum, with each learning area containing a range of content that demands consideration from an ethical perspective.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	As ethical understanding is a general capability integrated across the areas of learning, there are no specific guidelines as to how much time should be allocated to the teaching of ethics in particular. The following table sets out the recommended time allocations for the listed Australian Curriculum learning areas/subjects over the 40-week school year in primary schools:

	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
English	280	280	280	280	240	240	240
Mathematics	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Science	40	40	40	70	70	70	70
History	20	20	20	40	40	40	40
Total hours per year	520	520	520	590	550	550	550
Health and Physical Education	School-based decision — up to 80 hours						

Abridged from: Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2014) *Time Allocations and Entitlement: Advice on Implementing the Australian Curriculum F (P)-2010* [online].

6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	No, ethical understanding is a general capability integrated across the areas of learning.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	See line of inquiry 1, question 7.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	General guidance relating to the new national curriculum is provided on the Australian Curriculum F-10 website. In addition, Scootle is an online resource providing digital resources for teachers and students mapped to the Australian Curriculum.

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Canada: Québec

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

Primary or elementary education starts at age six in Québec. Children aged six must be enrolled in elementary school. Children aged five at the start of the school year (late August/early September) are enrolled if they will turn six before 1 October that year (Québec Government, 2014).

Elementary education consists of six years from age six divided into three cycles of two years:

- Elementary Cycle One (Grades 1-2) (ages six to eight)
- Elementary Cycle Two (Grades 3-4) (ages eight to ten)
- Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5-6) (ages ten to 12).

There is a non-compulsory year of pre-school education or kindergarten for children who reach the age of five on or before 30 September in the year of registration. Although this is non-compulsory the vast majority of children attend (Québec Government, 2014).

The *Québec Education Program: Pre-school and Elementary* (MELS, 2001) is the curriculum framework for the elementary phase and the pre-school year. It comprises cross-curricular competencies, broad themes for learning, a pre-school education programme and programmes of study grouped in five subject areas – languages; mathematics, science and technology; social sciences; arts education; and personal development. However, the religious education content (the Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction Program, the Protestant Moral and Religious Education Program and the Moral Education Program) has been replaced by the Ethics and Religious Culture Program (MELS, 2008) since 2008.

The Government of Québec began to introduce an all-day pre-kindergarten programme for disadvantaged four-year-olds in September 2013. (In its first year, school boards could select one of their schools to offer 18 children places with the intention of increasing the number of places every year for seven years to 8000.) (CTV News, 2013). The *Draft Pre-school Education Program: Full-Day Kindergarten for Four-year-olds from Disadvantaged Areas* (MELS, 2013) is the curriculum framework for this provision.

Year group	Age range	Phase	Curriculum
Full-day Kindergarten	4	Non-compulsory (targeted provision for children in disadvantaged areas)	Draft Pre-school Education Program: Full-Day Kindergarten for Four-year-olds from Disadvantaged Areas (MELS, 2013)
Pre-school education/Kindergarten	5	Non-compulsory (most attend)	Québec Education Program: Pre-school and Elementary (MELS, 2001)
1	6/7	Elementary Cycle One	Québec Education Program: Pre-school and Elementary (MELS, 2001) Ethics and Religious Culture Program (MELS, 2008)
2	7/8	Elementary Cycle One	
3	8/9	Elementary Cycle Two	
4	9/10	Elementary Cycle Two	
5	10/11	Elementary Cycle Three	
6	11/12	Elementary Cycle Three	

Publicly-funded schools in Québec are generally secular, but as in all Canadian provinces, in line with the Constitution Act of 1867, publicly-funded Catholic schools also exist.

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

| 1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles? | **Kindergarten provision for disadvantaged four-year-olds**

No, the *Draft Pre-school Education Program: Full Day Kindergarten for Four-year-olds from Disadvantaged Areas* is the curriculum framework for kindergarten provision for four year-olds in disadvantaged areas, introduced from 2013. There is no specific provision for education about religions and beliefs; provision is based around the development of five areas of competence in the global development of the child: physical and motor development; emotional development; social development; oral language and literacy development; and cognitive development and numeracy (MELS, 2013).

Pre-school education/kindergarten

The curriculum framework for the non-compulsory year of pre-school education/kindergarten for five- to six-year-olds also does not include education about religions and beliefs. The pre-school / kindergarten education programme is built around the following competencies:

• performing sensori motor actions effectively in different contexts
• affirming his/her personality
• interacting harmoniously with others
• communicating using the resources of language
• constructing his/her understanding of the world
• completing an activity or project (MELS, 2001).

Elementary education

In elementary education, however, since 2008 and the introduction of the Ethics and Religious Culture Program (MELS, 2008) for all pupils in elementary and secondary schools in Québec, education about religions and beliefs and education for ethics has been a core part of the curriculum. The figure below shows how the Ethics and Religious Culture Program contributes to the Québec Education Program (QEP). |

Contribution of the Ethics and Religious Culture Program to the Québec Education Program (QEP)
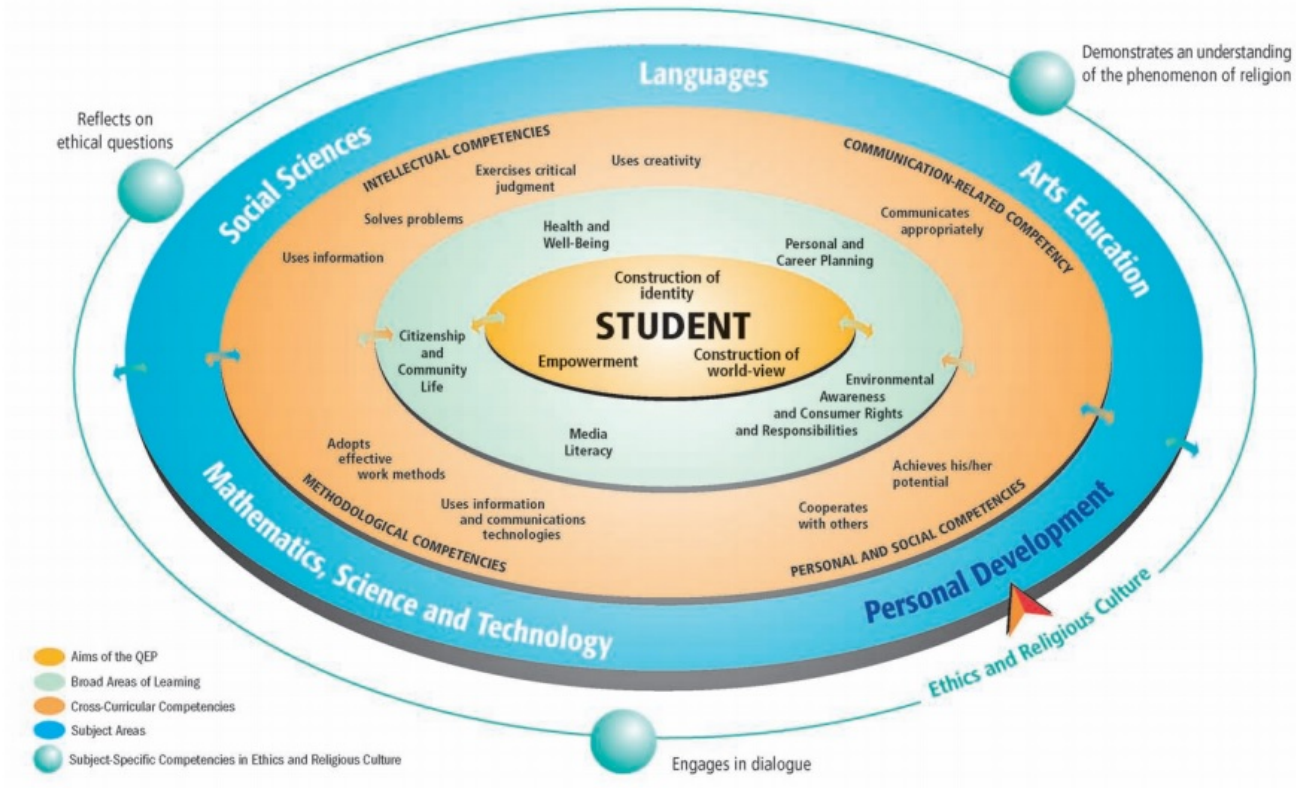
The new programme replaced three programmes (pupils followed one) in the Québec Education Program: the Cath1olic Religious and Moral Instruction Program, the Protestant Moral and Religious Education Program and the Moral Education Program. This change reflects gradual structural change in the education system in Québec from one based on confessional structures and orientations – both Catholic and Protestant – to a non-religious one. Background information on this evolution and background information on the development of the Ethics and

Religious Culture (ERC) Program are available from the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport. Further background is also available in the 2007 report from the Religious Affairs Committee on the, then, draft programme (Comité sur les Affaires Religieuses, 2007).

This statement from the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport summarises the underpinning principle of the Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) Program:

> *Like many democratic societies, Québec society is characterized by growing pluralism. Evident in the diversity of values and beliefs held by individuals and groups, this diversity contributes to shaping Québec culture. An important factor of enrichment, diversity can also be a source of tension. Living together in today's society requires that we collectively learn to build on this diversity. It is therefore important to develop an awareness of this diversity and to reflect upon and take actions that foster community life. The Ethics and Religious Culture program endeavours to contribute to this learning. The program brings together two essentially distinct dimensions, each of which is reflected in diverse forms of expression that are particularly sensitive. Through this, pupils will be encouraged to engage in critical reflection on ethical questions and to understand the phenomenon of religion by practising, in a spirit of openness, dialogue that is oriented toward contributing to community life* (MELS, 2008).

The Ethics and Religious Culture Program aims to allow pupils to:

- acquire or consolidate, if applicable, an understanding of how all individuals are equal in terms of right and dignity
- learn to reflect on issues
- explore, depending on his/her age, different ways in which Québec's religious heritage is present in his/her immediate or broader environment
- learn about elements of other religious traditions present in Québec
- grow and develop in a society in which different values and beliefs co-exist (MELS, 2008).

Specific aims for the religious culture dimension of the ethics and religious culture programme are that pupils will:

- learn about the important place of Catholicism and Protestantism in Québec's religious heritage
- discover the contributions of Judaism and Native spiritualities of this religious heritage
- learn about elements of other religious traditions more recently found in Québec society (MELS, 2008).

	The recognition of others and the pursuit of the common good are the two main objectives of the programme. They are interdependent and common to both the ethics and religious culture dimensions of the programme. The Ethics and Religious Culture Program is built around the development of three competencies: • reflects on ethical questions (Competency One) • demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion (Competency Two) • engages in dialogue (Competency Three) (MELS, 2008). The three competencies complement each other and are designed to contribute to the development of each other. For the purposes of this table, Competency Two is considered under 'Education about Religion and Beliefs' (inquiry line 1) and Competencies One and Three under 'Education in Ethics' (inquiry line 2).
2. What strands/ themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	*The* Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) Program *provides for the religious culture dimension as follows:* ***Competency*** *The religious culture dimension of the Ethics and Religious Culture Program is based around the competency* 'Demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion'. This competency has three key features: • explores forms of religious expression: acquires the ability to describe and put into context forms of religious expression by making connections with their tradition of origin • makes connections between forms of religious expression and the social and cultural environment: acquires the ability to situate forms of religious expression in space and time by making connections between certain elements of the social and cultural environment from here and elsewhere in the world • considers different ways of thinking, being and acting: acquires the ability to recognise various ways of thinking, being and acting within one religious tradition, within different religions and within society (MELS, 2008). **Programme content** The Ethics and Religious Culture Program sets out themes, teaching guidelines and related content. The themes relating to religious culture for each cycle are: • Elementary Cycle One (Grades 1-2) (ages six to eight): Family celebrations; Stories that have touched people. • Elementary Cycle Two (Grades 3-4) (ages eight to ten): Religious practices in the community; Forms of

	religious expression in the young person's environment.
	• Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5-6; ages ten to 12): Religions in society and the world; Religious values and norms (MELS, 2008).
	In terms of compulsory content teachers must ensure that:
	• Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism) is covered throughout each year of the two-year cycle. • Judaism and Native spirituality are covered on a number of occasions in each year of the two-year cycle. • Islam is covered on a number of occasions over the course of the two-year cycle. • Buddhism is covered on a number of occasions over the course of the two-year cycle. • Hinduism is covered on a number of occasions over the course of the two-year cycle. • Other religions are covered over the course of the two-year cycle, depending on the reality and the needs of the class. • Cultural expressions and expressions derived from representations of the world and of human beings that reflect the meaning and value of human experience outside of religious beliefs and affiliation are addressed during the two-year cycle (MELS, 2008).
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The *Ethics and Religious Culture Program is designed to promote the progressive development of the same competencies during each cycle, whilst pupils are encouraged to make use of increasingly numerous and complex resources.* The competency 'd*emonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion'* is developed across its three key features (explores forms of religious expression; makes connections between forms of religious expression and the social and cultural environment; and considers different ways of thinking, being and acting) over the three two-year cycles of elementary education. Different themes are covered in each cycle. The information which follows draws together an overview of what is covered in each cycle of elementary education alongside the themes covered and the expectations in terms of end-of-cycle outcomes *(MELS, 2008).* **Elementary Cycle One (Grades 1-2; ages six to eight)** Overview: using simple and familiar situations learn to explore together forms of religious expression related to family celebrations and stories that have touched people, particularly those about religious celebrations and key figures. Themes: Family celebrations; Stories that have touched people.

End-of-cycle outcomes:

- Pupils are able to name different religious celebrations and celebrations or rituals associated with birth.
- Pupils can recognise some forms of religious expression related to a celebration.
- Pupils can understand that there are different ways of celebrating.
- Pupils can associate a celebration with a religious tradition.
- Pupils can relate the celebration to certain short stories and key figures.
- Pupils can associate forms of religious expression with elements in their immediate environment.
- Pupils, through simple situations, can name behaviours that are appropriate with regard to diversity.
- Pupils are able to name what they have learned regarding forms of religious expression.

Elementary Cycle Two (Grades 3-4; ages eight to ten)

Overview: While consolidating previously acquired learning, pupils examine religious practices in the community and forms of religious expression in their environment. In addition, they learn to make connections between forms of religious expression and elements in the social and cultural environment by familiarising themselves with artistic and community works.

Themes: Religious practices in the community; Forms of religious expression in the young person's environment.

End-of-cycle outcomes:

- Pupils are able to deal with a situation involving forms of religious expression.
- Pupils can give a brief description of community celebrations, objects, symbols, places of worship and rites.
- Pupils can understand the meaning of certain forms of religious expression.
- Pupils can identify such forms of expression in their environment and recognise what they have in common and what distinguishes them.
- Pupils can make connections between sacred writings, spiritual guides and their traditions.
- Pupils can make some connections between various forms of religious expression and elements in the social and cultural environment from here and elsewhere in the world.
- Pupils can name various ways of thinking, being or acting, as well as behaviours that are appropriate with regard to diversity.
- Pupils can reflect on their learning and their process.

	Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5-6; ages ten to 12) Overview: using more complex situations, pupils become familiar with the religions present in society and in the world, as well as with religious values and norms. Themes: Religions in society and the world; Religious values and norms. End-of-cycle outcomes: • Pupils are able to describe forms of expression of the main religious traditions by emphasising their places of origin, founding figures and their demographic impact in the world. • Pupils can, through examples, illustrate the norms and values that guide community life that are promoted by these traditions. • Pupils can describe in their own words the significance of food- and clothing-related practices that belong to various traditions. • Pupils can recognise the variety of ways in which time is represented in certain religions. They can associate exemplary individuals with their works. • Pupils can recognise cultural contributions made by religious traditions in the social and cultural environment from here and elsewhere in the world. • Pupils can reflect on their learning and assess the effectiveness of their process (MELS, 2008).

4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	The Ethics and Religious Culture Program states that students can make use of what they have learned in several subjects to increase their understanding of different forms of religious expression, to reinforce their reflection on ethical questions and to engage in dialogue. Pages 299-301 of the programme document set out how the programme links in with other dimensions of the curriculum, including:
	
	• The five 'broad areas of learning'
	   ➢ health and well-being
	   ➢ personal and career planning
	   ➢ environmental awareness and consumer rights and responsibilities
	   ➢ media literacy
	   ➢ citizenship and community life.
	• The nine 'cross-curricular competencies' grouped in four categories:

	➢ intellectual competencies (to use information, to solve problems, to exercise critical judgment, to use creativity)
	➢ methodological competencies (to adopt effective work methods, to use ICT)
	➢ personal and social competencies (to construct his/her identity, to cooperate with others)
	➢ Communication-related competency (to communicate appropriately).
	• Other subject areas
	➢ arts education
	➢ language arts
	➢ personal development (physical education and health)
	➢ social sciences
	➢ mathematics, science and technology (MELS, 2008).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	The Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education sets outs the compulsory subjects taught each year and the suggested number of hours per week for the subject areas language of instruction, mathematics, and physical education and health. A subject time allocation is not suggested for the remaining compulsory subjects including for the Ethics and Religious Culture Program, which suggests this is at local discretion. The regulations further state that the school calendar for pupils must be the equivalent of a maximum of 200 days, at least 180 of which (36 weeks) must be devoted to educational services. In addition, for pupils in elementary school, the school calendar must consist of at least 720 hours devoted to instruction in the compulsory subjects.

Compulsory Subject	Cycle One (Grades 1-2; ages 6-7) weekly	Cycles Two and Three (Grades 3-6; ages 8-11) weekly
Language of instruction	9 hours	7 hours
Mathematics	7 hours	5 hours
Physical education and health	2 hours	2 hours
Total apportioned time	*18 hours*	*14 hours*
Second language (French or English)		

	Arts education (two subjects from drama, visual arts, dance, music)		
	Ethics and religious culture		
	Geography, history, citizenship education (Cycles Two and Three)	n/a	
	Science and technology	n/a	
	Unapportioned time	*7 hours*	*11 hours*
	Total time	**25 hours**	**25 hours**
6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	No, all pupils must follow the Ethics and Religious Culture Program. Canada's Supreme Court rejected appeals from parents in 2012 who wanted to opt their children out of the programme, dismissing their claims that it went against their freedom of religion and violated their constitutional rights (CBC, 2012).		
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	The Ethics and Religious Culture Program was introduced in 2008 and represented considerable reform of the approach to religious education in Québec. There is no information available which suggests that the Ethics and Religious Culture Program is currently under review or that any major reviews or evaluations have been undertaken since implementation.		
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	There is some guidance and some non-compulsory examples for teachers in the themes, teaching guidelines and related content section of the Ethics and Religious Culture Program (MELS, 2008). Learn is a non-profit educational foundation in Québec's English language sector. It offers a selection of resources for teachers related to the Ethics and Religious Culture Program to registered users of the site.		

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	**Kindergarten provision for disadvantaged four-year-olds** The _Draft Pre-school Education Program: Full-day Kindergarten for Four-year-olds from Disadvantaged Areas_ is the curriculum framework for kindergarten provision for four year-olds in disadvantaged areas introduced from 2013. There is no specific provision within this programme for ethics education. The programme is based on the development of five areas of competence in the global development of the child: physical and motor development; emotional development; social development; oral language and literacy development; and cognitive development and numeracy. The emotional development and social development competence areas may, however, include some aspects which relate to the teaching of ethics (MELS, 2013). **Pre-school education/kindergarten** Similarly, the curriculum framework for the non-compulsory year of pre-school education/kindergarten for five-year-olds does not provide explicitly for ethics education. The pre-school education programme is built around the following competencies: • performing sensori motor actions effectively in different contexts • affirming his/her personality • interacting harmoniously with others • communicating using the resources of language • constructing his/her understanding of the world • completing an activity or project (MELS, 2001). The competencies of affirming his/her personality; interacting harmoniously with others; and constructing his/her understanding of the world may be of relevance to the teaching of ethics. Elementary education In elementary education however, the teaching of ethics is covered explicitly through the Ethics and Religious Culture Program which forms part of the compulsory curriculum. See line of inquiry 1, question 1 for a figure showing how this programme contributes to Québec Education Pogramme. It aims to allow pupils to: • acquire or consolidate, if applicable, an understanding of how all individuals are equal in terms of right and

	dignity
	• learn to reflect on issues
	• explore, depending on his/her age, different ways in which Québec's religious heritage is present in his/her immediate or broader environment
	• learn about elements of other religious traditions present in Québec
	• grow and develop in a society in which different values and beliefs co-exist (MELS, 2008).
	The recognition of others and the pursuit of the common good are the two main objectives of the programme. They are interdependent and common to both the ethics and religious culture dimensions of the programme. The Ethics and Religious Culture Program is built around the development of three competencies:
	• reflects on ethical questions (Competency One)
	• demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion (Competency Two)
	• engages in dialogue (Competency Three) (MELS, 2008).
	The three competencies complement each other and are designed to contribute to the development of each other. For the purposes of this table Competency Two is considered under 'Education about Religion and Beliefs' (inquiry line 1) and Competencies One and Three under 'Education in Ethics' (inquiry line 2).
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	*The* Ethics and Religious Culture Program *provides for the ethics dimension as follows:* **Competencies** *The 'r*eflects on ethical questions' *competency is based on three key features:* • The ability to describe a situation and to put it into context in order to identify an ethical question in light of points of view that may be divergent. • The ability to recognise some of the references on which the different points of view are based and search for their role and meaning. • The ability to examine the impact of options or possible actions on oneself, others and the situation, with a view to contributing to community life (MELS, 2008).

The 'engages in dialogue' *competency is based on three key features:*

- The ability to conduct a reflective process in order to organise their thinking.
- The ability to express their point of view, while being attentive to others' views.
- The ability to use relevant resources and appropriate means for developing or examining a point of view (MELS, 2008).

Programme content

The Ethics and Religious Culture Program (MELS, 2008) sets out themes, teaching guidelines and related content for the 'reflects on ethical questions' competency. The themes relating to ethical questions for each cycle are:

- Elementary Cycle One (Grades 1-2) (ages six to eight): The needs of humans and other living beings; Demands associated with the interdependence of humans and other living beings.
- Elementary Cycle Two (Grades 3-4) (ages eight to ten): Interpersonal relationships in groups; Demands of belonging to a group.
- Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5-6 (ages ten to 12): Individuals as members of society; Demands of life in society.

Example (not compulsory) ethical issues are also provided for each cycle:

Elementary Cycle One: Child safety; Consumption of resources at home and in the immediate environment; Solidarity between children from here and elsewhere; Obedience at home and at school: love and punishment; Sharing objects of common use at home and at school; Feelings and emotions in interpersonal relationships: jealousy, anger, affection, friendship, etc.; Treatment of animals in the circus, zoo, etc.; The role of humans toward endangered plant and animal species; The mourning that is experienced following the death of a living being.

Elementary Cycle Two: Fair sharing of tasks versus equal sharing of tasks; Use of the Internet to take one's place in a group; Roles and responsibilities of children in developing countries; Roles and responsibilities of children, historically and in the present, in the city and in the country; How the media portray group life; The meaning of friendship; Truth and lying; Non-conformity and its consequences; Intimidation; Exclusion and its impact on a person; How feelings and emotions are expressed in interpersonal relationships; The distinction

between what constitutes a right and what constitutes a privilege.

Elementary Cycle Three: Respecting children's rights; Men's and women's roles and responsibilities as presented in the media; Men's and women's roles and responsibilities in various cultures; Ideal body image as portrayed in the media; Hyper sexualisation of young girls; Forms of discrimination and prejudice in the environment and in the media; Search for what constitutes a just society; Taxing; Effects of ignorance; Autonomy in adolescence (MELS, 2008).

The Ethics and Religious Culture Program also sets out the programme content for the 'engages in dialogue' competency (see pages 348-350 in the Ethics and Religious Culture Program):

Elementary Cycle One: Draw upon pupils' ability to follow a process and to share their ideas, in order to help them become familiar with conversation, discussion, narration and deliberation. Pupils should respect the conditions that foster dialogue established by the teacher. The subjects treated are concrete and simple, and should allow pupils to explore the realities present in their environment.

Elementary Cycle Two: Draw upon pupils' ability to follow a process and organise their ideas within a conversation, discussion, narration and deliberation, in order to help them become familiar with the interview. Pupils should respect the conditions that foster dialogue suggested by the teacher. The subjects treated are concrete and simple, and should allow pupils to explore the realities present in their environment.

Elementary Cycle Three: Draw upon pupils' ability to provide themselves with a process and organise their ideas within a conversation, discussion, narration, deliberation and interview, in order to help them become familiar with debating. Pupils should contribute to establishing the conditions that foster dialogue. The subjects treated are concrete and often new, and should allow pupils to explore social realities here and elsewhere, from the past and from the present (MELS, 2008).

3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The *Ethics and Religious Culture Program is designed to promote the progressive development of the ethics education competencies* 'reflects on ethical questions' and 'engages in dialogue' *during each two-year cycle of elementary education, whilst pupils are encouraged to make use of increasingly numerous and complex resources.*

1. Reflects on ethical questions

This competency is developed across its three key features (identifies a situation from an ethical point of view; examines several cultural, moral, religious, scientific or social references; and evaluates options or possible actions) over the three two-year cycles of elementary education.

Elementary Cycle One (Grades 1-2; ages six to eight)

Overview: Using simple and familiar situations, pupils in Elementary Cycle One learn to reflect together on ethical questions concerning the needs of living beings, the interdependence that exists between them and the demands of such interdependence.

Themes: The needs of humans and other living beings; Demands associated with the interdependence of humans and other living beings.

End-of-cycle-outcomes:

- Pupils are able to tackle a situation dealing with the needs of humans and other living beings, as well as the demands associated with interdependence.
- Pupils can describe a situation by naming some essential elements.
- Pupils can indicate the responsibilities that human beings have toward other living beings.
- Pupils can express some elements of their reflection on the ethical question raised by the situation by responding to the teacher's questions.
- Pupils can find similarities and differences between their perception and that of their classmates.
- Pupils can name one or two references contained in a point of view.
- Pupils can identify a value named by the teacher and recognise a norm that guides the way human beings act in a given situation.
- Pupils are able to give special weight to an option or an action that favours the well-being of living beings by taking their connections or interdependence into account.
- Pupils can say what they have learned (MELS, 2008).

Elementary Cycle Two (grades 3-4; ages eight to ten)

Overview: In addition to consolidating previously acquired learning, pupils examine the ways in which various

groups respond to human needs. In addition, by exploring the diversity of interpersonal relationships between members of a group, pupils delve further into the roles and responsibilities of each member and the advantages and disadvantages of group life. Moreover, they broaden their understanding of the values and norms related to the demands of group life.

Themes: Interpersonal relationships in groups; Demands of belonging to a group.

End-of-cycle outcomes:

- Pupils are able to tackle a situation dealing with interpersonal relationships and demands associated with group life.
- Pupils can describe a situation by naming the essential elements.
- Pupils can identify the tensions and conflicting values present in different points of view.
- Pupils can attribute points of view to the individuals concerned with regard to the situation.
- Pupils, with the teacher's help, can formulate certain ethical questions raised by the situation and recognise some of the references present in different points of view.
- Pupils can express how these references are important for the individuals concerned.
- Pupils can compare their perception with that of their classmates.
- Pupils can name behaviours or attitudes that contribute to or detract from group life.
- Pupils can recognise their needs and name their responsibilities with regard to others.
- Pupils can consider certain options or possible actions and recognise the impact on themselves and others.
- Pupils are able to give special weight to actions that favour group life in terms of contributing to community life.
- Pupils can establish connections with similar situations.
- Pupils are able to reflect on their learning and their process (MELS, 2008).

Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5-6; ages ten to 12)

Overview: pupils become aware of the challenges that arise in relationships between people who are different from one another. Through more complex situations dealing with certain demands of life in society, pupils reflect on the values, norms and responsibilities that guide interpersonal relationships.

Themes: Individuals as members of society; Demands of life in society.

End-of-cycle outcomes:

- Pupils are able to reflect on topics that deal with the demands of living in society, as well as with the individuals who make up society.
- Pupils can describe the overall situation and draw out different points of view that are present.
- Pupils can identify the tensions or conflicting values that exist between different points of view.
- Pupils can compare different points of view expressed in a situation.
- Pupils can identify ethical questions.
- Pupils can grasp the causes and effects of prejudices and stereotypes that are present in a situation.
- Pupils can show the role and the meaning of some references by using certain points of view.
- Pupils can compare references from here with those from elsewhere and current references with those from the past.

They are also able to imagine various options and favour selves, others and the situation. They are able to justify the options or actions that contribute to community life. They can establish connections with similar contexts. They are able to reflect on new learning they have accomplished, assess the effectiveness of their process and consider possible avenues for improvement (MELS, 2008).

2. Engages in Dialogue

This *competency is again developed across its key features (organises his/her thinking; develops a point of view; interacts with others)* over the three two-year cycles of elementary education.

Elementary Cycle One (Grades 1-2; ages six to eight)

Overview: Using simple and familiar situations, pupils in Elementary Cycle One learn to practise dialogue within a conversation, discussion, narration and deliberation. They use description and comparison to develop their point of view, and they start to examine judgments of preference and prescription. In addition, they recognise certain processes that are likely to hinder dialogue, such as hasty generalisations and personal attacks.

End-of-cycle-outcomes:

- Pupils are able to follow a process and express their ideas in the context of a narration, conversation, discussion and deliberation.

- Pupils can express their preferences, feelings or ideas about concrete and simple subjects.
- Pupils can recognise the judgments of preference and prescription in a point of view.
- Pupils can examine points of view using suggested paths.
- Pupils respect some of the proposed rules of dialogue.
- Pupils use the teacher's resources and suggestions to develop a relevant point of view.
- Pupils can listen to others' points of view and are able to express whether their own view has been modified or consolidated (MELS, 2008).

Elementary Cycle Two (Grades 3-4; ages eight to ten)

Overview: In Cycle Two, in addition to consolidating previously acquired learning, pupils become familiar with interviews. They add explanation and synthesis to the means they have already used for developing their point of view and they examine judgments of reality. In addition, they recognise certain processes that are likely to hinder dialogue, such as the appeal to the people (*ad populum* argument).

- End-of-cycle outcomes:
- Pupils are able to follow a process and organise their ideas in the context of a narration, conversation, discussion, deliberation and interview.
- Pupils can examine their preferences, perceptions, feelings or ideas regarding concrete and simple subjects.
- Pupils can recognise the judgments of preference, prescription and reality in a point of view.
- Pupils can examine points of view using relevant questions.
- Pupils respect the rules of dialogue (MELS, 2008).

Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5-6; ages ten to 12)

Overview: Lastly, using more complex situations, pupils in Cycle Three become familiar with another form of dialogue: debate. They add justification to the means they already use for developing a point of view and they examine judgments of value. They also learn to detect other obstacles to dialogue, such as the appeal to prejudice, appeal to stereotype and argument from authority.

End-of-cycle outcomes:

- Pupils are able to provide themselves with a process and organise their ideas in the context of a narration, conversation, discussion, deliberation, interview and debate.

	• Pupils can examine their perceptions, feelings, attitudes, ideas or values about concrete and often new subjects. • Pupils can recognise certain stated judgments or processes that hinder the dialogue or that create an obstacle to developing a substantiated point of view. • Pupils can recognise the judgments of preference, prescription, value and reality in a point of view. • Pupils can examine points of view using relevant questions by taking into account the type of judgment in question. • Pupils respect the rules of dialogue and contribute to overcoming obstacles. • Pupils use some resources and vocabulary that are appropriate to the subject of the dialogue in order to develop a point of view that includes several relevant and coherent elements. • Pupils can take into account others' points of view and are able to explain how their own view has been modified or consolidated (MELS, 2008).
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	The Ethics and Religious Culture Program states that students can make use of what they have learned in several subjects to reinforce their reflection on ethical questions and to engage in dialogue. Pages 299-301 of the programme set out how the programme links in with other dimensions of the curriculum. Further information is provided in response to line of inquiry 1, question 4.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	The Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education sets outs the compulsory subjects taught each year and the suggested number of hours per week for the subject areas language of instruction, mathematics, and physical education and health. A subject time allocation is not suggested for the remaining compulsory subjects including for the Ethics and Religious Culture Program, which suggests that this is at local discretion. Further information is provided in response to line of inquiry 1, question 5.
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	No, all pupils must follow the Ethics and Religious Culture Program.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education	The Ethics and Religious Culture Program was introduced in 2008 and represented considerable reform of the approach to religious education in Québec. There is no information available which suggests that the Ethics and

curriculum?	Religious Culture Program is currently under review or that any major reviews or evaluations have been undertaken since implementation.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	There is some guidance and some non-compulsory examples for teachers in the themes, teaching guidelines and related content section of the Ethics and Religious Culture Program (MELS, 2008). Learn Québec is a non-profit educational foundation in the English language sector. Its offers a selection of resources for teachers related to the Ethics and Religious Culture Program to registered users of the site.

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England

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 11

Primary school starts at age four in terms of admitting pupils to the primary school reception class which forms part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Primary education starts in Year 1 at age five and lasts six years divided into two key stages (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

Attendance at primary school is not compulsory until the school term (September, January or April) following a child's fifth birthday. However, admissions authorities must provide for the admission of all children to primary school in the September following their fourth birthday. Most children start in the reception class of primary school at age four and many reach compulsory school age during the reception class, with the youngest children in the cohort reaching compulsory school age at the start of Year 1(European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

Primary schools typically comprise the following year groups and key stages:

Year group	Age range	Phase	Curriculum
Reception class	4/5	Early Years Foundation Stage	Early Years Foundation Stage
1	5/6	Key Stage 1	National Curriculum
2	6/7	Key Stage 1	National Curriculum
3	7/8	Key Stage 2	National Curriculum
4	8/9	Key Stage 2	National Curriculum
5	9/10	Key Stage 2	National Curriculum
6	10/11	Key Stage 2	National Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets out the requirements for learning and development in the early years phase (birth to five years of age). This applies until the end of the reception class in primary school. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes during the Early Years Foundation Stage in early year's settings. All areas of learning and development are interconnected. Three areas are regarded as particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development. Providers must also support children in four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design (DfE, 2014a).

Most primary schools in England are maintained schools (schools funded via the local authority). From Year 1 (age five/six) in maintained primary schools, the statutory curriculum comprises the National Curriculum and religious education. The National Curriculum subjects in primary phase education are the core subjects of mathematics, English, and science, and the foundation subjects of art and design, computing, design and technology, geography, history, music, and physical education. A foreign language is also compulsory from Key Stage 2, age seven (DfE, 2013b).

Approximately one tenth of primary schools in England are academies (including free schools). These are publicly-funded independent schools which do not have to follow the National Curriculum but which must provide a broad and balanced curriculum to include English, mathematics and science. Academies must also teach religious education (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

Religious education must also be taught to children enrolled in reception classes in all primary schools (maintained schools and academies).

Schools also have a statutory duty to promote their pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. Although there is clearly some overlap with religious education, this duty is considered under line of inquiry two.

Beyond statutory requirements, maintained schools and academies are free to teach other subject areas. There is an expectation that this will include personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) (DfE, 2013b). PSHE is also briefly considered also under line of inquiry two.

A note about faith schools (denominational schools)

Faith schools are maintained schools or academies with a religious designation. In England, 37 per cent of primary schools are faith schools. The vast majority of these are Church of England schools (71 per cent), followed by Roman Catholic schools (27 per cent). There are very small numbers of other Christian schools, Jewish schools, Methodist schools, Muslim schools, Sikh schools and other faith schools (DfE, 2014b, Table 7f). Faith schools can choose to only teach about their own religion or devise their own syllabus, but can also follow the locally agreed syllabus for religious education (see line of inquiry 1, question 1).

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	**Early Years Foundation Stage (reception class)**
	Yes. Religious education embracing education about religions and beliefs is statutory for pupils aged four/five registered in reception classes of primary schools. These children are still in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Locally agreed syllabuses (see primary education below) cover the reception class.
	Primary education
	Yes. Religious education is a compulsory subject in all primary schools however it falls outside the National Curriculum. It encompasses education about religions and beliefs.
	It is a statutory requirement for all local authorities (LAs) to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), on which faith groups and teachers are represented, to advise on matters concerning the teaching of religious education (European Commission *et al*., 2014).
	Local authorities (LAs) are also required to adopt a locally-agreed syllabus for religious education (RE), which must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act, 1996) (European Commission *et al*., 2014).
	The Education Act (1944) (GB. Statutes, 1944) requires that an agreed syllabus 'shall not include any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination'. This is understood to mean that an agreed syllabus should not be designed to convert pupils, or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils (Berkshire Local Authorities, 2012).
	The locally agreed syllabus must be followed in maintained schools and academies without a designated religious character. Academies can devise their own syllabus for religious education, but it must be in line with the locally agreed one. Schools/academies designated as having a religious character (faith schools) are free to make their own decisions in preparing their syllabuses.
	Schools without a designated religious character must also include a daily act of broadly Christian collective worship, which typically means a school assembly of a reverential or reflective nature (European Commission

et al., 2014). Schools can apply to their local SACRE to lift this requirement where this is not appropriate to the family backgrounds of pupils at the school (for example where the school's pupils are mostly from a different faith to Christianity). Further information on this and other advice to schools on providing a daily act of collective worship is available in Department for Education guidance (DfE, 1994). Collective worship in faith schools reflects the religious character of that school.

There is also a curriculum framework for religious education produced by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC). The Religious Education Council for England and Wales represents the collective interests of a wide variety of professional associations and faith communities in deepening and strengthening provision for religious education. The framework is non-statutory but has the support of the Council's wide-ranging membership. It was developed as part of a review of religious education carried out by the REC which ran alongside the Government's most recent review of the National Curriculum (see question 7) (REC, 2013a). The framework states that the purpose of religious education is to:

> *contribute dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully. Teaching therefore should equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society with its diverse religions and worldviews. Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ* (REC, 2013a, p.11).

Previously the former Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Department for Education and Skills produced a non-statutory framework for religious education (QCA and DfES, 2004). This has informed locally agreed syllabuses which remain current. Locally agreed syllabuses must be reviewed every five years (DCSF,

	2010). The QCA/DfES non-statutory framework was underpinned by the same overarching principles as the more recent REC curriculum framework, principally that it should develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views; offer
	opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development; enable pupils to flourish within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society; and enable pupils to develop
	respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs
	are different from their own (abridged from QCA and DfES, 2004, p.7).
	There is also non-statutory guidance on religious education produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the predecessor to the current Department for Education. The guidance provides advice to local authorities (including Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education – SACREs) and schools on the place of religious education in the curriculum and the roles of those who have a responsibility for, involvement in, or interest in the subject (DCSF, 2010).
2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	The information which follows is drawn from two sources:
	1. *A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England* (REC, 2013a) – a non-statutory, framework compiled by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales (see question 1 above).
	2. A sample locally agreed syllabus for religious education for 2012-2017 agreed by a consortium of local authorities across the English county of Berkshire (2012)[1]. This pre-dates the curriculum framework mentioned above and draws from the previous non-statutory framework for religious education produced by the former Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Department for Education and Skills (QCA and DfES, 2004).
	Early Years Foundation Stage (reception class)
	1. A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education
	The curriculum framework for religious education states that pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage should

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[1] In the absence of a central list of locally agreed syllabuses Berkshire was selected for expediency: it is the county where NFER is based and where the table author was a school governor. We have no reason to believe this is an atypical sample.

encounter religions and worldviews through special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They should listen to and talk about stories. Pupils should be introduced to subject-specific words and use all their senses to explore beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They should ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences, using their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation of, and wonder at, the world in which they live. The framework sets out how religious education fits into the areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (REC, 2013a).

2. Sample Locally Agreed Syllabus

The sample locally agreed syllabus explains how religious education fits into the following learning and development areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum: personal, social and emotional development; communication and language; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design. It is a requirement of the sample syllabus that, in exploring these areas of learning, children should encounter Christianity and at least one other religion. See pages 15-19 for further information (Berkshire Local Authorities, 2012).

Primary education
1. A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education
The framework is built around three strands: know about and understand; express and communicate; and gain and deploy skills. It aims to ensure that all pupils:

Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that

they can:

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively

- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all

- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives (REC, 2013a).

2. Sample Locally Agreed Syllabus

The locally agreed syllabus is built around learning *about* religion and learning *from* religion. Pupils learn *about* religion by:

- acquiring and developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain

- developing an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

Pupils learn *from* religion by:

- developing a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold beliefs different from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions

- developing the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with

	reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Great Britain
	• enhancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings can relate to them and by responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their understanding and experience
	• reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study (Berkshire Local Authorities, 2012).
	The syllabus is structured around questions based on themes suggested for each key stage in the previous non-statutory national framework for RE (QCA and DfES, 2004). Coverage is summarised in an overview of the questions for Key Stages 1-3 (ages five to 14). These have been grouped around three main strands of learning about religion: Believing, Behaving and Belonging. For each key stage, suggestions for a breakdown of questions, content and examples of attainment expectations are outlined (Berkshire Local Authorities, 2012).
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The information which follows is again drawn from two sources: 1. *A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England* (REC, 2013a) – a non-statutory framework compiled by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales. 2. A sample locally agreed syllabus for religious education for 2012-2017 agreed by a consortium of local authorities across the English county of Berkshire (2012). This pre-dates the curriculum framework for religious education mentioned above and draws from the previous non-statutory framework produced by the former Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Department for Education and Skills (QCA and DfES, 2004). **Early Years Foundation Stage (reception class)** See question 2 above. **Primary education** 1. A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education This non-statutory framework for religious education sets out the following 'requirements' for Key Stage 1 (Years 1-2; ages five to seven) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6; ages seven to 11).

Key Stage 1 (Years 1-2) (ages 5 to 7)	Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6) (ages 7 to 11)
Overview: Pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject-specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas**.**	**Overview:** Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject-specific vocabulary. They should be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, beliefs, values and human life. Pupils should learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.
Know about and understand Pupils should be able to: • recall and name different beliefs and practices, including festivals, worship, rituals and ways of life, in order to find out about the meanings behind them. • retell and suggest meanings to some religious and moral stories, exploring and discussing sacred writings and sources of wisdom and recognising the traditions from which they come	**Know about and understand** Pupils should be able to: • describe and make connections between different features of the religions and worldviews they study, discovering more about celebrations, worship, pilgrimages and the rituals which mark important points in life, in order to reflect on their significance • describe and understand links between stories and other aspects of the communities they are investigating, responding thoughtfully to a

	• recognise some different symbols and actions which express a community's way of life, appreciating some similarities between communities.	range of sources of wisdom and to beliefs and teachings that arise from them in different communities • explore and describe a range of beliefs, symbols and actions so that they can understand different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
	Express and communicate Pupils should be able to: • ask and respond to questions about what individuals and communities do, and why, so that they can identify what difference belonging to a community might make • observe and recount different ways of expressing identity and belonging, responding sensitively for themselves • notice and respond sensitively to some similarities between different religions and worldviews.	**Express and communicate** Pupils should be able to: • observe and understand varied examples of religions and worldviews so that they can explain, with reasons, their meanings and significance to individuals and communities • understand the challenges of commitment to a community of faith or belief, suggesting why belonging to a community may be valuable, both in the diverse communities being studied and in their own lives • observe and consider different dimensions of religion, so that they can explore and show understanding of similarities and differences within and between different religions and worldviews.
	Gain and deploy skills Pupils should be able to: • explore questions about belonging, meaning and truth so that they can	**Gain and deploy skills** Pupils should be able to: • discuss and present thoughtfully their own and others' views on challenging questions about

express their own ideas and opinions in response using words, music, art or poetry	belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, applying ideas of their own in different forms including e.g. reasoning, music, art and poetry
• find out about and respond with ideas to examples of co-operation between people who are different	• consider and apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities can live together for the wellbeing of all, responding thoughtfully to ideas about community, values and respect
• find out about questions of right and wrong and begin to express their ideas and opinions in response.	• discuss and apply their own and others' ideas about ethical questions, including ideas about what is right and wrong and what is just and fair, and express their own ideas clearly in response.

Examples and notes for each 'requirement' are set out in the framework (REC, 2013a).

2 Sample Locally Agreed Syllabus

In the sample locally agreed syllabus, the religions engaged with differ across the primary school key stages. Christianity is included as a core area of study at each key stage. At Key Stage 1 (ages five to seven) Judaism is included as another religion, with the possibility of including additional religions and, at Key Stage 2 (ages seven to 11), the syllabus covers Christianity and at least Hinduism and Sikhism as other religions. Note: Islam and Buddhism are covered in the first phase of secondary education; Key Stage 3 (ages 11 to 14).

Pupils throughout primary education engage with questions grouped around the three themes of Believing, Behaving, and Belonging. These develop across the primary school key stages as follows:

Themes	Key Stage 1 (Years 1-2) (ages 5 to 7)	Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6) (ages 7 to 11)
Believing	• Who do I believe I am?	• Do religious people lead better lives?

		• Is God important to everyone? • Does the world belong to God? • What can I learn from stories from religious traditions?	• Do sacred texts have to be 'true' to help people understand their religion? • Should religious people be sad when someone dies?
	Behaving	• Should people follow religious leaders and teachings? • Should people take care of the world?	• Is religion the most important influence and inspiration in everyone's life? • Do all religious beliefs influence people to behave well towards others? • Does living out parents' religious beliefs/traditions e.g. Kashrut or Ramadan take away someone's freedom or add to his/her sense of identity? • Is it possible to hold religious beliefs without trying to make the world a better place?
	Belonging	• Does it feel special to belong? • Are religious celebrations important to people? • Are symbols better than words at expressing religious beliefs?	• Does participating in worship help people to feel closer to God or their faith community? • How well do funeral and mourning rituals tell you about what a religion believes about what happens after death? • Can the arts help communicate

	religious beliefs?

Pupils' answers to these questions should draw on the following areas of study:

- Christianity
- Judaism (Key Stage 1) and Hinduism and Sikhism (Key Stage 2)
- other religions as appropriate
- A secular world view, where appropriate.

(Berkshire Local Authorities, 2012)

4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	The Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England (REC, 2013a) and locally agreed syllabuses provide for the teaching of religious education as a distinct subject, but ultimately it is up to schools to decide how to make provision for religious education in their curriculum.
	Schools also have statutory responsibility for the spiritual, cultural, moral and social development of pupils across the curriculum. See line of inquiry 2.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the amount of time to be spent on each curriculum subject cannot be prescribed; this is a matter for individual schools. Previously, the Department for Education provided guidance on minimum weekly hours for which pupils should be taught but this was withdrawn in 2012. The only requirement which remains is for schools to be open for 380 half day sessions a year (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).
	As a guideline, the sample locally agreed syllabus drawn from above suggests a time allocation of 36 hours per year for the teaching of religious education at Key Stage 1 (ages five to seven) and 45 hours per year at Key Stage 2 (ages seven to 11) (Berkshire Local Authorities, 2012).
6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about	Yes, there is an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs. Parents can withdraw their children for all or part of the lessons (DCSF 2010).

religions and beliefs?	The Government's non-statutory guidance on religious education states that schools should ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from religious education (RE) are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs. They should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship (DCSF, 2010).
	Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected and, where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching (DCSF, 2010).
	The sample agreed syllabus for Berkshire local authorities provides an interesting point:
	The right of parents to withdraw their children from religious instruction on conscience grounds was included in the Education Act of 1944. All subsequent legislation has retained the clause that allows parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE. It also protects teachers' right to withdraw from teaching the subject. Since 1944 the nature of RE has changed significantly from the nurture of children in a faith tradition to an open and educational enquiry. It is hoped that parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the nature and areas of learning found in this syllabus and that, as a consequence, few will feel the need to withdraw either their children or themselves from the subject (Berkshire Local Authorities 2012).

	There are no statistics available on the pupils withdrawn from religious education.
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	The National Curriculum was last reviewed in a process which began in 2011 and resulted in a revised National Curriculum coming into force in September 2014. See the National Curriculum review website.

Religious education, whilst part of the statutory curriculum, falls outside the National Curriculum and its review processes. However, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales undertook a review of religious education alongside the Government's review of the National Curriculum, publishing its report in October 2013 (REC, 2013b). The outcome of the review was a new, non-statutory National Curriculum framework for RE to complement the new National Curriculum programmes of study. Local authorities and their Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) can consult this new framework.

Under the Education Act 1996 there is a statutory requirement for local authorities to review the locally agreed syllabus for religious education every five years (DCSF, 2010).

Several other key reports on religious education have been published in 2013 and 2014 and provide useful insights into current issues in primary schools:

- Ofsted, the schools inspectorate, undertakes subject and thematic surveys alongside its main inspection programme of schools. The last subject survey for religious education, *Religious Education: Realising the Potential* was published in October 2013. The key findings relating to primary schools were that:

- Achievement and teaching in RE in the 90 primary schools visited were less than good in six in 10 schools.

- The teaching of RE in primary schools was not good enough because of weaknesses in teachers' understanding of the subject, a lack of emphasis on subject knowledge, poor and fragmented curriculum planning, very weak assessment, ineffective monitoring and teachers' limited access to effective training.

- The way in which RE was provided in many of the primary schools visited had the effect of isolating the |

subject from the rest of the curriculum. It led to low-level learning and missed opportunities to support pupils' learning more widely, for example, in literacy.

- Assessment in RE remained a major weakness in the schools visited. It was inadequate in a fifth of the secondary schools and a third of the primary schools. Many teachers were confused about how to judge how well pupils were doing in RE.

- Access to high-quality RE training for teachers was poor. Training had a positive impact on improving provision in only a third of the schools visited; its impact was poor in a further third. Many of the schools surveyed said that support from their local authority and SACRE had diminished.

- Leadership and management of RE were good or better in half the schools visited; however, weaknesses were widespread in monitoring provision for RE and in planning to tackle the areas identified for improvement (Ofsted, 2013).

- The All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education published a report in 2013. RE: The Truth Unmasked: the Supply of and Support for Religious Education Teachers was a report of an inquiry by the group which found that:

- In over half of the 300 primary schools participating in the inquiry, some or all pupils were taught RE by someone other than their class teacher. In a quarter of these schools RE was taught by teaching assistants.

- About a half of primary teachers and trainee teachers lack confidence in teaching religious education.

- About a half of subject leaders in primary schools lack the expertise or experience to undertake their role effectively.

- There is a wide variation in the extent of initial teacher training in RE and too many trainee teachers have little effective preparation for teaching the subject.

- In nearly 40 per cent of schools RE teachers have inadequate access to continuing professional development (All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education, 2013).

	- In 2014, the Church of England Archbishops' Council Education Division published Making a Difference? A Review of Religious Education in Church of England Schools. Key findings of this review included: - There was too much variability in the quality of religious education between and within primary schools visited. Religious education was not good enough in 60 per cent of schools. - A key weakness was the superficial nature of the pupils' learning. - There was confusion between the subject of religious education and the wider Christian ethos of the school (Church of England Archbishops' Council Education Division, 2014). Note: The Department for Education, with the support of the major churches and faith groups, has recently announced the content requirements of the new General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in religious studies. The new GCSE will be broader than the existing programme, requiring students to study at least two religions during the first half of the two-year course. This is intended to help prepare students for life in modern Britain through developing an awareness of fundamental British values such as respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and of none. The new programme will not affect the emphasis faith (denominational) schools can place on individual teachings but is intended to increase students' awareness of other faiths (DfE, 2014c).
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	At local authority level, the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) may produce support materials for teachers in respect of their locally agreed syllabus for religious education. As an example, a programme of support for teachers and advice on how to use the RE syllabus is available from Wokingham local authority. The Religious Education Council for England and Wales provides links to projects and resources for teachers of religious education.

| 1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?? | **Early Years Foundation Stage**
Yes. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a learning and development area for personal, emotional and social development which involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities (DfE, 2014a).

Spiritual, moral, cultural and social development
At primary level, the state provides for ethics education through the legal requirement for schools to promote their pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The Education Act 2002 requires maintained schools to provide a 'a balanced and broadly based curriculum' which:

• promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
• prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

Primary schools which are academies or free schools also have obligations for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (DfE, 2013a).

Schools meet these requirements through the whole school curriculum comprising the statutory National Curriculum (in maintained schools), religious education (statutory) and the rest of the curriculum devised by the school. |

The School Inspection Framework which covers all publicly-funded schools also requires inspectors to consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school (Ofsted, 2014a and b).

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is defined by Ofsted as follows.

The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values

- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them

- use of imagination and creativity in their learning

- willingness to reflect on their experiences.

The moral development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong, readily apply this understanding in their own lives and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England

- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions

- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues, and being able to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

The social development of pupils is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds

- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively

- acceptance of, and engagement with, the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in, and contribute positively to, life in modern Britain.

The cultural development of pupils is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others

- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain

- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain

- willingness to participate in, and respond positively to, artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities

- interest in exploring, improving understanding of, and showing respect for different faiths and

	cultural diversity, and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities (Ofsted, 2014a and b).
	Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education In addition, although personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is a non-statutory subject, the National Curriculum states that all schools should teach PSHE, drawing on good practice. Schools have the flexibility to tailor their local PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils, but are expected to use the programme to equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions. Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE, 2013c) states that schools should use PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content already outlined in the National Curriculum, the basic school curriculum and in statutory guidance on drug education, financial education, sex and relationship education and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	There is no specific programme for ethics education – it is up to schools to devise a whole curriculum which addresses the requirement to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social (SMSC) development and which includes personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) (see above). This sample SMSC policy from a London primary school (chosen at random from a number publicly available on the Internet) demonstrates how one school is translating the requirement into their school life and curriculum (Mottingham Primary School, 2014). This school's PSHE and Citizenship Policy is also available online (Mottingham Primary School, 2013). [If required contextual information on Mottingham school is available from Ofsted – the schools inspectorate.]

3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	There is no specific programme for ethics education – it is up to schools to devise a whole curriculum which addresses the requirement to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development and which includes personal, social, health and economic education.
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	There is no specific programme for ethics education – it is up to schools to devise a whole curriculum which addresses the requirement to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development and which includes personal, social, health and economic education.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	No. Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the amount of time to be spent on each subject cannot be prescribed. The allocation of time for each subject is a matter for individual schools. Previously, the Department for Education provided guidance on overall minimum weekly hours for which pupils should be taught, but these were withdrawn in 2012. The only requirement which remains is for schools to be open for 380 half day sessions a year (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	No.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	There is no specific review process for ethics education.
8. Are resources or support material provided to	The Department for Education does not provide specific support materials beyond the statutory programmes of study for National Curriculum subjects. The Government believes that teachers are

teachers for the teaching of ethics?	best placed to understand the needs of their pupils and do not need additional central prescription (DFE, 2013c). Teachers draw on a wide range of resources to assist in their lesson planning. This is the responsibility of the individual school and teacher. For example they may draw on the knowledge and expertise of organisations such as the PSHE Association for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

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Finland

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

'Basic education' is compulsory for children between seven and 16 years of age in Finland, so lasts nine years. It is integrated within a single structure comprising primary and lower secondary level education and is preceded by pre-primary education.

Pre-primary

Pre-primary education is provided free of charge for children in the year preceding the start of their compulsory education (aged six to seven years). Pre-primary education is organised in day-care centres (79 per cent of pre-primary education) or in schools connected to basic education (21 per cent). Attending pre-primary education is voluntary, but around 98 per cent of all six-year-old children participate (European Commission *et al*., 2014). The core curriculum governing pre-primary education is the same regardless of the setting. The general purpose of pre-primary education is to promote children's growth into 'humane individuals and ethically responsible members of society by guiding them towards responsible action and compliance with generally accepted rules and towards appreciation for other people'. The objectives of pre-primary education include that:

- Children's positive self-concept will strengthen and their learning-to-learn skills will develop.

- Children will adopt basic skills, knowledge and capabilities from different areas of learning in accordance with their age and abilities.

- Children will learn how to reflect on what is right and wrong.

- Children will learn to understand equality and to accept the diversity of people (FNBE, 2010).

The National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education (FNBE, 2010) is structured around subjects, but these subjects are delivered in an integrated way. The subject areas are:

- language and interaction

- mathematics

- ethics and religion

- nature and the environment

- health

- physical and motor development

- art and culture.

Provision is based on a local curriculum drawn up within this framework.

Children may also attend an early childhood education and care (ECEC) setting prior to the pre-primary year. The content of all ECEC is guided by the National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC (2003) (STAKES, 2004), drawn up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and provision is based on a local curriculum specified within the framework of the National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education (FNBE, 2010). The general educational goals in ECEC are:

- promotion of personal well-being

- reinforcement of considerate behaviour and actions towards others

- gradual build-up of autonomy (FNBE, 2010).

The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC (STAKES, 2004) also set out six content orientations which align with, and are built on in, the National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education. These are:

- mathematical orientation

- natural science orientation

- historical-societal orientation

- aesthetic orientation

- ethical orientation (focus is on values and norms - 'right and wrong, good and bad, truth and lies')

- **religious philosophical orientation** ('insights are gained into the customs of various religions and beliefs close to the child') (FNBE, 2010).

The concept of orientation underlines that the intention is not for children to study the content of different subjects but to start to acquire tools and capabilities by means of which they are gradually able to increase their ability to examine, understand and experience a wide range of phenomena in the world around them (STAKES, 2004).

There is intended to be continuity between the ECEC content orientations and the core subject fields of the pre-school curriculum.

Primary

Compulsory basic education is divided into Grades/Year groups, with Grades 1–5 covering the age range seven to 12. Other than the Grades/Year groups, there are no distinct named stages in basic education. However, in the presentation of the programmes of study for the different subjects, Grades 1 and 2, and Grades 3 to 5 (aged seven to nine and nine to 12, respectively) are grouped together (FNBE, 2004).

The National Core Curriculum for Compulsory Education is determined by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE). It includes curricular objectives and core content. The subjects included in the National Core Curriculum, not all of which are taught from Year/Grade 1, but which have all been introduced by Grade 5, are:

- mother tongue and literature (Finnish or Swedish)

- the other national language (Swedish or Finnish)

- foreign languages

- environmental studies (combining biology, geography, physics, chemistry and health education)

- **religion or ethics**

- history

- mathematics
- physical education
- music
- visual arts
- crafts (FNBE, 2004).

There are also local municipal curricula, the principles of which are based on the National Core Curriculum. Additionally, individual schools may have their own specific curriculum based on the National Core Curriculum and the local municipal curriculum. **The National Core Curriculum is currently being reviewed and local, revised core curricula for basic education will be introduced in 2016.**

Year group	Age range	Phase	Curriculum
Day-care centre/school provision	4-7	Pre-primary	National Curriculum Guidelines for ECEC National Core Curriculum for Pre-Primary Education
Grade 1	7-8	No specific name, but programmes of study grouped together	National Core Curriculum for Basic Education
Grade 2	8-9		National Core Curriculum for Basic Education
Grade 3	9-10	No specific name, but programmes of study grouped together	National Core Curriculum for Basic education
Grade 4	10-11		National Core Curriculum for Basic Education
Grade 5	11-12		National Core Curriculum for Basic Education

While religious education is largely faith-based, schools and churches are separate and sacramental preparation does not take place during school time. In the compulsory basic school, pupils belonging to a religious community receive religious education and the non-affiliated are taught ethics.

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes. Education about religions and beliefs is included within the overall provision of religious education.

Freedom of religion and conscience is a right guaranteed by Section 11 of the Constitution. The increased immigration of non-Lutheran people in the late 20th century has led to religions other than Lutheran being included in the curriculum. About 77 per cent of Finns belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and some 1.1 per cent to the Orthodox Church of Finland. Other registered religious communities, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Evangelical Free Church of Finland, the Catholic Church in Finland and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Finland, account for 1.5 per cent of Finns ([Ministry of Education and Culture](#)).

Pre-primary

Pre-primary education (for children aged six to seven) also includes religious education (RE) and, as an alternative, education in ethics. Depending on the choices made by their parents or guardians, children participate in either religious education, in ethical education, or receive alternative instruction. The objective of religious education is to provide an opportunity to deal with issues related to religion and to allow children to learn about religious festivals and why and how they are celebrated. A further objective is to provide children with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the core content of their own religion (FNBE, 2010).

Primary

'Religion or ethics' is one of the compulsory core subject areas in basic education (ages seven-15/16). The system is based on the principle of positive freedom where all pupils are entitled to free religious instruction in the religion of their – or their parents'/guardians' – choice. Instruction in religion is arranged in accordance with the religion of the majority of the pupils. Pupils not belonging to this religious community are entitled to instruction in their own religion if their parents/guardians wish, and if there are three or more pupils of the same religion to form a group. Religious instruction includes content based on the respective traditions but does not include elements of religious practice (Kotiranta, n.d.). If instruction in a pupil's own religion is not available, the pupil is taught ethics at the request of his or her parent/carer, providing there are at least three pupils to form a group. Non-affiliated pupils |

(pupils of no specific faith) are taught ethics.

The National Board of Education devises the religious education (RE) core curriculum and schools devise their own programmes based on this. In RE, the religious and ethical dimensions of life are looked at both in terms of the pupil's own development and as a broader social phenomenon. Instruction in religion emphasises the pupil's own religious knowledge and readiness to encounter other religions and views, especially spiritual traditions that exert influence in Finnish society. Religious education offers basic knowledge, skills, and experiences for building an identity and a worldview. In primary education the objectives of RE are to:

- familiarise the pupil with his or her own religion (religious instruction)

- familiarise the pupil with the Finnish spiritual tradition

- **introduce the pupil to other religions (**education about religions and beliefs, ERB)

- help the pupil to understand the cultural and human significance of religions (ERB)

- educate the pupil in ethical living and help him or her understand the ethical dimension of religion (FNBE, 2004).

There are separate curricula for the 11 registered minority religious denominations, in addition to the main two, those of the Lutheran and Orthodox churches.

Lutheran religion

During the first five years of elementary school (ages seven to 12), the core purpose of instruction is to offer materials for the construction of the pupil's worldview. Religious education introduces pupils to the surrounding religious world through information and personal experiences. It familiarises pupils with the Bible and encourages them to exercise responsibility and ethical judgement. Pupils:

- learn confidence in life and themselves, learn to meet the future courageously, understand the sacred dimension, and see the influence of religion in their own personal lives and the lives of others

	• get an introduction to the New Testament and the life and teaching of Jesus
	• get an introduction to the Old Testament's main narratives
	• understand the connection between the church year and the course of Jesus' life
	• get an introduction to the Lutheran Church and Lutheran congregational activity
	• get an introduction to other Christian churches and the environment of religious and non-religious views
	• learn to ponder ethical questions, share their feelings and experiences, and apply Christian ethics (FNBE, 2004).
	Orthodox religion
	During the first five years of elementary education, the core purpose of instruction in the Orthodox religion is to provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and experience to enable them to form their own worldviews and to grow into ethically responsible individuals. Pupils:
	• strengthen their Orthodox identity and understand the sacred dimension of life
	• familiarise themselves with liturgical life, church art, the Orthodox church year, the lives of saints, the basic concepts of the Orthodox Christian orientation, and the activity of their own parish
	• get an introduction to the basic questions of dogma
	• familiarise themselves with Bible stories and their message, and learn to ponder questions that arise from the Bible and their own lives
	• get an introduction to other Christian churches and the environment of religious and non-religious philosophies (FNBE, 2004).
2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions	In the National Core Curriculum, the main themes in Lutheran RE are:
	• trust and security

and beliefs?	• a valuable and unique life (which includes tolerance and a preliminary introduction to the churches, religions and minorities connected with pupils' lives) • biblical stories and teachings • promoting ethical values through education (which includes questions of living together and justice) • Lutheran church life • the religious world surrounding the pupils (which includes religions and churches encountered by pupils in Finland and elsewhere and common and divergent features of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). The main themes in Orthodox RE are: • the church year and saints • being a church member (which includes other churches and religions in the immediate environment; the religiosity encountered by pupils in Finland and elsewhere in the world; and common and divergent features of Judaism, Christianity and Islam) • the Bible as a holy book • liturgical life • dogma and promoting ethical values through education (FNBE, 2004).
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The content areas in religious education are the same throughout the first five Grades of compulsory basic education, which cover the age group seven–12, but children are taught in accordance with their age and abilities (FNBE, 2004). The National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education provides only the most general framework for content, within which there is local flexibility over specific provision. While in primary education there is coverage of other religions and churches from Grade 1 (age seven), when pupils are aged six–seven, the pre-primary curriculum states only that pupils should 'familiarise themselves with the core contents of their *own* religion' (FNBE, 2010).
4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the	Yes. Although religious education and ethics forms a separate subject area in the National Core Curriculum, the principle of making connections between areas and teaching in an integrated way underpins the curriculum. The National Core Curriculum also includes the cross-curricular themes of: growth as a person; cultural identity

curriculum?	and internationalism; media skills and communication; citizenship and entrepreneurship; environmental responsibility; safety and traffic; and technology and the individual. Schools have flexibility as to how they use individual subjects to support the themes or how they integrate the themes into subjects.
	In addition, in history in Grade 5 (ages 11–12), instruction on 'The Middle Ages' includes looking at 'the impacts of religion on human life' (FNBE, 2004).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	Yes. In compulsory basic education, there is a minimum number of lesson hours for core subjects, defined by the Government, over the 38-week school year. For religion/ethics, at least six annual weekly lessons (=228 lessons of one hour in length) must be taught during Grades 1-5 (so between 45 and 46 hours each year). Over this five-year period, however, there is local discretion over the precise allocation of hours.

Distribution of lesson hours

Grades	1 – 2	3 – 5	6 - 9	Total
Mother tongue and literature	14	14	14	42
Mathematics	6	12	14	32
Grades	**1 – 2**	**3 – 6**	**7 - 9**	
A language 1)	------	8	8	16
B language 2)	------	------	6	6
Grades	**1 – 4**	**5 – 6**	**7 - 9**	
Biology and geography	9*	3	7	31
Physics and chemistry		2	7	
Health education			3	
History and civics	------	3	7	10
Grades	**1 – 5**	**6 – 9**		

Religion/Ethics	6	5		11
Grades	**1 – 4**		**5 - 9**	
Music	4 -		3 -	56
Arts	4 -	=26 30=	4 -	
Craft	4 -		7 -	
Physical education	8 -		10 -	
Grades	**1 – 6**	**7 – 9**		
Home economics	------	3		3
Student counselling	------	2		2
Elective subjects	------	(13)		13

1) Language begun in Grades 1-6

2) Language begun in Grades 7-9

* In Grades 1–4, biology, geography, physics and chemistry, as well as health education, are integrated into a subject known as environment and nature studies.

--- = Subject is not taught in the Grades unless otherwise stated in the curriculum.

( ) = Taught as an elective subject.

European Commission *et al.,* 2014.

6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	Religion or ethics are mandatory subjects in the curriculum. If instruction in a pupil's own faith is available, there is no right to opt out from it. However, unaffiliated pupils (pupils of no faith) may choose ethics as an alternative. There is no opt-out from both subjects.

7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	The Finnish National Board of Education draws up, approves and reviews the National Core Curriculum and religious education may be reviewed as part of that process. The current curriculum for compulsory basic education came into effect in 2004 and is undergoing review. A revised curriculum will be introduced in 2016. In the preparatory process of amending the Freedom of Religion Act, which took place in 2003, the nature of religious education was discussed. One of the main questions asked was whether religious education should be denominational, or objective and factually oriented with respect to different religions and churches. The term 'denominational' was replaced in the Act by the term 'according to one's own religion'. There were no other substantive changes (Kallioniemi, n.d.).
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	The Finnish National Board of Education provides a series of textbooks about Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam, as well as a textbook on secular ethics. It also maintains a website of digital teaching resources, edu.fi (in Finnish only). It is intended to embed support materials for teachers in the new core curriculum (the National Core Curriculum is currently being reviewed and local revised core curricula for basic education will be introduced in 2016).

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes. Those pupils who are not members of any congregation or religious group are given instruction in secular ethics where different worldviews and ethics are studied. It is also one of the objectives of religious education to 'educate the pupil in ethical living and help them understand the ethical dimension of religion' (FNBE,2004).
	Pre-primary
	General ethical education in pre-primary education is included in all activities and is common to the whole group. Ethical education starts with the development of self-esteem and expands to embrace interpersonal social skills and to the living environment beyond. Ethical education is integrated into different situations in pre-primary education and it is dealt with in discussions with children or by means of role-play, thus developing children's ethical thinking. The objective of education in secular ethics is to develop abilities to deal with issues of conviction related to human relationships, cultural identity, relationships between people and nature and to the community. Instruction deals with tolerance and moderation, justice and fairness, courage and one's own identity, as well as benevolence and care. Education in cultural philosophy is also provided for all children. The objective of education in cultural philosophy is the development of philosophical thinking. This involves offering children opportunities to be heard on the philosophical questions of life, and to accumulate general philosophical learning through familiarisation with the conventions of their own worldview and with those of other cultures and convictions represented in the child group. It also involves the opportunity to learn to know and appreciate the cultural and natural heritage of their own local area (FNBE, 2010).
	Primary
	In Grades 1-5 of compulsory basic education (for seven- to 12-year-olds), ethics is multidisciplinary, including as starting points, philosophy, the social sciences and cultural studies. It aims to enable pupils to grow into independent, tolerant, responsible and judicious members of their society. Instruction in ethics supports growth into full, democratic citizenship, which, in a globalising and swiftly changing society, requires an ability to think and act ethically and to acquire broad related knowledge and skills. Instruction in ethics is guided by a sense of

	pupils' opportunities to grow into 'free, equal and critical creators of a good life' (FNBE, 2004).
	The objectives of ethics are to further pupils' efforts to:
	• look for and develop their identities and philosophies of life, and to learn to perceive wholes, learn to encounter uncertainty, and develop their skills in expressing themselves
	• develop their critical faculties and their capabilities for ethical action, learn to notice the ethical dimensions of the situations they encounter from day to day, and utilise both skills in ethical thought and philosophical judgment
	• gain an introduction to the principles of human rights, tolerance, justice, and sustainable development, and learn to assume responsibiility for themselves, other people, the community, and nature
	• gain an introduction to the cultures and personal worldviews in their immediate environment (FNBE, 2004).
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	In the National Core Curriculum, the main themes of ethics are:
	• human relations and moral growth
	• self-knowledge and cultural identity (which includes different ways of living, multiculturalism, and tolerance; Finnish culture, Finnish cultural minorities, and the world's cultural heritage; and philosophy of life, religious belief, presumption, knowledge and understanding, various philosphies of life and worldviews)
	• the community and human rights (which includes the rights of children, rights and obligations, and human rights; equality, peace, democracy, and the world of the future; and foundations of ethics, moral justification of actions, purpose and consequences of actions, children's own ethical problems and their solutions)
	• the individual and the world (FNBE, 2004).
3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and)	The content areas in ethics are the same throughout the five Grades of primary education which cover the age group seven–12, but children are taught in accordance with their age and abilities. The National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education (FNBE, 2010) provides only the most general framework for content,

primary education?	within which there is local flexibility over specific provision.
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	Yes. Although ethics and religion forms a separate subject area in the National Core Curriculum, the principle of making connections between areas and teaching in an integrated way underpins the curriculum.
	The National Core Curriculum also includes the cross-curricular themes of growth as a person; cultural identity and internationalism; media skills and communication; citizenship and entrepreneurship; environmental responsibility; safety and traffic; and technology and the individual. Schools have flexibility as to how they use individual subjects to support these themes or as to how they integrate the themes into subjects.
	'Growth as a person', which encompasses all instruction, is particularly relevant to ethics education. It includes as an objective the 'development of a sense of community based on equality and tolerance'. Pupils learn to 'evaluate the ethics of their actions and to recognise right and wrong'. The core contents of the theme include:
	• ethical observation and interpretation of ethical phenomena
	• consideration for other people; rights, obligations and responsibilities within a group and various ways of cooperation.
	'Cultural identity and internationalism' has the goal of developing capabilities for cross-cultural interaction and internationalism. Pupils get an introduction to other cultures and philospohies of life and acquire capabilities for functioning in a multicultural community and in international cooperation. The core contents of the theme include:
	• other cultures and multiculturalism
	• human rights and prerequisites for trust, mutual respect and successful cooperation among human groups
	• internationalism in different spheres of life and skills for functioning in international interaction.
	Environmental and natural studies in Grades 1-4 (ages seven to 11) also includes the objective that pupils will learn to develop '[...] respect for themselves as individuals, respect for others...'.
	In addition, history in Grade 5 (ages 11–12) includes, under the topic of 'The Middle Ages', 'the unequal social

	status of people', whilst geography in Grade 5 'must create a foundation for intercultural tolerance and internationalism' (FNBE, 2004).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	Yes. In compulsory basic education, there is a minimum number of lesson hours for core subjects, defined by the Government, over the 38-week school year. For religion/ethics, at least six annual weekly lessons (=228 lessons of one hour in length) must be taught during Grades 1-5 (so between 45 and 46 hours each year). Over this five-year period, however, there is local discretion over the precise allocation of hours.

Distribution of lesson hours

Grades	1 – 2	3 – 5	6 - 9	Total
Mother tongue and literature	14	14	14	42
Mathematics	6	12	14	32
Grades	**1 – 2**	**3 – 6**	**7 - 9**	
A language 1)	------	8	8	16
B language 2)	------	------	6	6
Grades	**1 – 4**	**5 – 6**	**7 - 9**	
Biology and geography	9*	3	7	31
Physics and chemistry		2	7	
Health education			3	
History and civics	------	3	7	10
Grades	**1 – 5**	**6 – 9**		
Religion/Ethics	**6**	**5**		**11**
Grades	**1 – 4**		**5 - 9**	

		4 -		3 -	56
	Music	4 -		3 -	56
	Arts	4 -	=26 30=	4 -	
	Craft	4 -		7 -	
	Physical education	8 -		10 -	
	Grades	**1 – 6**	**7 – 9**		
	Home economics	------	3		3
	Student counselling	------	2		2
	Elective subjects	------	(13)		13

1) Language begun in Grades 1-6

2) Language begun in Grades 7-9

* In Grades 1–4, biology, geography, physics and chemistry, as well as health education, are integrated into a subject known as environment and nature studies.

--- = Subject is not taught in the Grades unless otherwise stated in the curriculum.

( ) = Taught as an elective subject.

European Commission *et al.,* 2014.

6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	Those pupils being provided with religious education do not have to study ethics. Religion or ethics are mandatory subjects in the curriculum, so there is no right to opt out of ethics for pupils not receiving religious education.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	The Finnish National Board of Education draws up, approves and reviews the National Core Curriculum and ethics education may be reviewed as part of that process. The current curriculum for compulsory basic education came into effect in 2004 and is undergoing review. A revised curriculum will be introduced in 2016.

8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	The Finnish National Board of Education maintains a website of teaching resources, edu.fi (in Finnish only). It is intended to embed support materials for teachers in the new core curriculum (the National Core Curriculum is currently being reviewed and local revised core curricula for basic education will be introduced in 2016).

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France

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

Primary education in France lasts for five years. Children start primary school (*école élémentaire*) in the September of the calendar year when they become six and leave at age 11 (NFER, 2013).

Optional pre-primary education is provided in *écoles maternelles* (nursery schools) for children from three to six years of age. Two-year-olds can be admitted if places are available. Almost all children attend nursery school from the age of three. *Ecoles maternelles* are an integral part of the French education system and are under the aegis of the Department of National Education, which draws up educational programmes and is responsible for the training and recruitment of teachers (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).

Primary school education comprises five years divided into two cycles:

- The basic learning cycle, which comprises the first three years of primary school (*cours préparatoire, cours élémentaire 1* and *cours élémentaire 2*), for children aged six to nine years.

- The consolidation cycle, which covers the remaining two years of primary school (in the classes known as *cours moyen 1* and *cours moyen 2*) and the first year of lower secondary education (known as the *sixième*), for children aged nine to 12 years.

Pre-primary education is known as the first learning cycle and is generally divided by age into three sections:

- The *petite section maternelle* catering for children from two (but more normally three) to four years old.

- The *moyenne section maternelle*, for children aged four to five years.

- The *grande section maternelle* for children of five to six years of age (MEN, 2013a).

The fundamental requirement of the French Republic and the main objective of the primary school is to give children the keys to knowledge and teach them how to integrate into the society in which they are growing up. Other aims include:

- ensuring children master basic literacy and numeracy skills and social civic skills

- providing equality of opportunity to all and ensuring successful integration into French society

- accompanying each and every pupil by helping them overcome any difficulties they might encounter

- enabling all students to express their excellence to the full (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).

The national curriculum for primary education (MEN, 2008) defines the knowledge and skills to be acquired at the different stages. The curriculum includes: French, mathematics, science and technology, history/geography, civic and moral education, modern foreign languages, physical education and sport, ICT, and art (which includes music) (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

Children below the age of six in pre-school/nursery provision follow the pre-primary section of the 2008 national curriculum. Learning for this age group is based around the following 'curricular' areas:

- learning language and discovering writing

- becoming ready for school (becoming a student)

- acting and expressing themselves with their body

- discovering the world

- perceiving, feeling, imagining, creating (European Commission *et al*., 2014).

In addition to the national curriculum, the 'Common Base of Knowledge and Skills' (*socle commun*) *sets* out the knowledge and skills that each pupil should master by the end of compulsory education. These are the skills that are considered necessary to have successfully completed education, to continue training, to build one's personal and professional life and to ensure success in society (MEN, 2006). Legislation passed in July 2013 provides for

the Common Base of Knowledge and Skills to be redefined. It is being renamed the 'Common Core of Knowledge, Skills and Culture' and the Government is currently consulting on the revisions to it. These revisions may have implications for the curriculum as described in the remainder of this document.

Year	Age	Cycle	Known as	Provided in	Curriculum
	2/3-4	First learning cycle	*Petite section maternelle* (small section)	Nursery school (*école maternelle*) or other early childhood setting	National curriculum for primary education
	4-5	First learning cycle	*Moyenne section maternelle* (middle section)	Nursery school (*école maternelle*) or other early childhood setting	National curriculum for primary education
	5-6	First learning cycle	*Grande section* materelle (big section)	Nursery school (*école maternelle*) or other early childhood setting	National curriculum for primary education
1	6-7	Basic learning cycle	*Cours préparatoire* (*CP*)	Primary school (*école élémentaire*)	National curriculum for primary education
2	7-8	Basic learning cycle	*Cours élémentaire 1* (*CE1*)	Primary school (*école élémentaire*)	National curriculum for primary education
3	8-9	Basic learning cycle	*Cours élémentaire 2* (*CE2*)	Primary school (*école élémentaire*)	National curriculum for primary education
4	9-10	Consolidation cycle	*Cours moyen 1* (*CM1*)	Primary school (*école élémentaire*)	National curriculum for primary education
5	10-11	Consolidation cycle	*Cours moyen 2* (*CM2*)	Primary school (*école élémentaire*)	National curriculum for primary education
	11-12	Consolidation cycle	*Cours moyen 3* (*CM3*)	Lower secondary school (*collège*)	National curriculum for primary education

The principle of secularism is a key pillar of the French state. Respect for the beliefs of pupils and their parents means an absence of religious education, as such, in the curriculum, with a view to preventing attempts to recruit/convert students to a particular religion.[2] There are also no publicly-funded state schools with a religious

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[2] This principle of religious freedom led to the introduction of one school day off every week (normally Wednesday) to allow for religious teaching outside school. This has recently changed, however and, since the beginning of the 2014 academic year, the school week is organised over nine half-day sessions amounting to 24 hours each week and generally including teaching on a Wednesday morning.

character, although there are private faith schools. Most of these (more than 90 per cent) have signed a contract with the state. In return for following national education programmes and objectives, most of their expenditure is met by the state. Such schools must, however, accept children of all faiths and respect their freedom of conscience. There is a further group of private schools, educating about 0.3 per cent of all students, which receives no state funding and is not bound by the national programmes or objectives. These are generally of a religious character (Islamic, Catholic, Protestant, Sikh or Jewish) (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).

In September 2013, the French Government published a 'secularism charter' which sets out the meaning and key points of the secularism-at-school principle in 15 articles. The aim is to provide support to the whole of the educational community (inspectors, school heads, teachers and other staff) in teaching pupils about the positive value of secularism – which guarantees both individual freedoms and the common values of society. The secularism charter must be displayed in all schools 'in a way that is visible to everyone'. Its 15 points are:

1. France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It ensures the equality of all citizens before the law, across its territory. It respects all beliefs.

2. The secular Republic organises the separation of religions and the State. The State is neutral as far as religious or spiritual beliefs are concerned. There is no State religion.

3. Secularism guarantees freedom of conscience for everyone. Everyone is free to choose whether or not they believe. It allows for everyone to express their beliefs freely, while respecting other people's beliefs and subject to maintaining law and order.,

4. Secularism enables citizenship to be exercised by combining individual freedom with universal equality and fraternity in a concern for the general interest.

5. The Republic ensures that each of these principles is followed in schools.

6. Secularism at school provides pupils with the conditions for shaping their personality, exercising their free will and learning about citizenship. It protects them from any proselytism and pressure that might prevent them from making their own choices.

7. Secularism ensures that pupils can access a common, shared culture.

8. Secularism enables pupils to exercise their freedom of expression as long as this does not encroach upon the smooth running of the school, respect of the French Republic's values or the pluralism of beliefs.

9. Secularism requires that all forms of violence and discrimination be rejected, guarantees equality between girls and boys and is based on a culture of respect and understanding of other people.

10. All members of education staff are responsible for teaching pupils about the meaning and value of secularism, as well as the other fundamental principles of the Republic. They ensure that these are applied in the school context. They must bring this charter to the attention of pupils' parents.

11. Staff have a duty to be strictly neutral: they must not manifest their political or religious beliefs while carrying out their professional activities.

12. Teaching is secular. In order to guarantee the most objective outlook possible for pupils on the world's diverse visions and on the breadth and depth of knowledge, no subject is theoretically excluded from scientific and educational questioning. No pupil may cite a religious or political belief to challenge a teacher's right to broach an issue on the curriculum.

13. No one may refuse to follow the rules applicable in French schools on the grounds of their religious affiliation.

14. In public schools, the behavioural rules in the different areas, stated in the school rules, are respectful of secularism. It is prohibited for pupils to wear symbols or clothing that ostensibly point to a religious affiliation.

15. Through their remarks and activities, pupils help to make secularism part of day-to-day life in their school (MEN, 2013b).

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes. Despite the fact that secularism is a key pillar of life and education in France, children do learn key facts about religions during primary education (European Commission *et al.*, 2014). The Common Base of Knowledge and Skills (currently under review) sets out the knowledge and skills that each pupil is expected to master by the end of compulsory education. These are the knowledge and skills considered necessary to have successfully completed education, to be able to continue training, to build one's personal and professional life and to contribute successfully to society. There are seven major skills: • mastery of the French language • practice of a modern foreign language • the main components of mathematics and scientific and technological culture • mastery of information and communication technologies • humanist culture • social and civic skills • autonomy and initiative (MEN, 2006). Education about religions and beliefs (ERB) is covered by the 'humanist culture' area, in which children are expected to learn about a sense of continuity and change, and about a sense of identity and 'otherness'. The ERB-related elements, which focus on factual learning, are that pupils must: • have historical references to the different periods of the history of mankind which help situate them in relation to each other by connecting facts, whether political, economic, social, cultural, religious, scientific and technical or literary and artistic • be prepared to share a European culture through knowledge of the main texts of Antiquity (the Iliad and the Odyssey, stories of the founding of Rome, the Bible)

	understand the unity and complexity of the world by a primary approach to the diversity of civilisations, societies, religions (history and contemporary spheres of dissemination) and religion in France, Europe and throughout the world through the study of founding texts (notably extracts from the Bible and the Koran) using a secular approach respecting consciences and convictions (MEN, 2006).
2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	Teaching relating to education about religions and beliefs in the basic learning cycle (the first three years of primary education, pupils aged six to nine years) mostly takes place within the subject of civic and moral education in the primary curriculum – and so is mostly related to ethics (see line of inquiry 2 below). Pupils in the consolidation cycle (the last two years of primary education and the first year of lower secondary education, aged nine to 12) learn facts about religions and beliefs in the primary curriculum subject areas of history/geography and civic and moral education (MEN, 2008). See question 3 for more details.
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The primary curriculum sets out the following strands relating to education about religions and beliefs that students must follow:
	• During the first year of the consolidation cycle (in the *cours moyen*), aged nine to 10 years of age, and in the subject of history, pupils learn about aspects of religion across different periods. This includes religious art; religious buildings and the power they manifest; trade in the Mediterranean and how this introduced another civilisation and its religion – Islam; the Crusades; and the sixteenth century break in religious unity and subsequent religious strife in France.
	• In the second year of the consolidation cycle (aged ten to 11), historical studies concentrate on more modern times (the 19th and 20th centuries) and the only ERB-related fact that children learn relates to the separation of Church and State in the foundation of the Republic in the 19th century (MEN, 2008).
	Teaching about Judaism begins in the first year of lower secondary education (pupils aged 11-12) and more detailed teaching about Islam (in addition to that introduced in the *cours moyen* and mentioned above) takes place in the second year of lower secondary education (MEN, 2014).

4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	Yes. Education about religions and beliefs is integrated across the curriculum. It is taught as part of humanist culture (under the 'Common Base of Knowledge and Skills') and under the subject areas, 'discovery of the world' 'history/geography' and 'civic and moral education' (see question 3 above, question 5 below, and line of inquiry 2 below).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	Yes, there are guidelines regarding how much time should be allocated to the different subject areas in primary education. There are no time allocations for pre-school education. The primary guidelines vary by learning cycle (the basic learning cycle for pupils aged six to nine years, and the consolidation cycle for nine- to 12-year-olds). Education about religions and beliefs is covered in the subject field of humanist culture ('discovery of the world' in the basic learning cycle and 'history/geography' and 'civic and moral education' in the consolidation cycle). Details of annual and weekly time allocations are provided in Tables 1 and 2 (European Commission *et al*., 2014).

Table 1	The three-year basic learning cycle (*cours préparatoire*, *cours élémentaire 1* and *cours élémentaire* 2, pupils aged six to nine)	
Subject fields	**Annual teaching hours**	**Weekly teaching hours**
French	360 hours	10 hours
Maths	180 hours	5 hours
Physical and sports education	108 hours	9 hours
Modern language	54 hours	
Art and history of art	81 hours	
Discovery of the world	**81 hours**	
TOTAL	864 hours	24 hours

Table 2	The three- year consolidation cycle (*cours moyen 1* and *cours moyen 2* (in primary education, pupils aged nine to 11) and the first year of lower secondary education (*sixième*) (pupils aged 11-12)	
Subject fields	**Annual teaching hours**	**Weekly teaching hours**
French	288 hours	8 hours
Maths	180 hours	5 hours
Physical and sports education	108 hours	11 hours
Modern language	54 hours	
Experimental science and technology	78 hours	
Humanist culture - art and history of art - history-geography and civic and moral education	78 hours **78 hours**	
TOTAL	864 hours	24 hours

6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	There is separation of Church and state in France. Children in primary education learn facts about religions and beliefs in the humanist culture area of study but there is no religious education as such. Consequently, there is no opt-out.
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	There is no systematic review of the curriculum in France. Reviews of the curriculum are generally ad hoc in response to emerging issues. The decision to review the curriculum is taken by the Minister of Education in line with other current reforms in education or a need to review and update curriculum content (Sargent *et al.,* 2010). Legislation passed in July 2013 provides for the 'Common Base of Knowledge and Skills' to be reviewed and

	redefined. It is being renamed the 'Common Core of Knowledge, Skills and Culture' and the Government is currently consulting on the revisions to it. These revisions may have implications for the curriculum as described in this document. Further information is available from the Ministry website.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	Edu-scol, the national portal for education professionals provides some resources for the teaching of facts about religions and beliefs. Supervised by the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, the Canopy network publishes educational resources (mobile, digital, printed, TV) designed to meet the needs of the educational community. Some of these resources relate to history/geography and civic and moral education. The European Institute of Religious Studies (IESR) also provides a resource bank.

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

| 1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles? | Yes. In the 'Common Base of Knowledge and Skills' (currently under review), the social and civic skills area sets out the civic values, knowledge, practices and behaviours children will need for effective and constructive participation in social and professional life, preparing them to exercise their freedom while being fully informed of the rights of others, and to reject violence (MEN, 2006).

Pupils are expected to learn to distinguish between universal principles (human rights), rules of the state of law (the Law) and cultural customs (civility). This subject area is also intended to help pupils develop a sense of belonging to their country and the European Union, and to respect diversity of choice of each person and their personal options (MEN, 2006). |
|---|---|
| 2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education? | Ethics education in the primary phase is delivered through the civic and moral education area of the curriculum. Civics contributes to the formation of citizens by ensuring that children understand the texts (laws/regulations), symbols and institutions of France, whereas moral education is concerned with the development of children's individual freedoms and their relationships with others (MEN, 2008).

The circular on moral education in primary school sets out the objectives of this area of study. It helps all pupils to develop and strengthen their moral conscience in practical situations and with reference to common 'honest man' values, establishing a set of principles, maxims and rules that guide and should guide the actions of all. Table 3 sets out the four key themes for moral education: |

Table 3	
An introduction to the concepts of morality:	good and bad right and wrong punishment and reparation respect for rules courage loyalty candour work individual merit

	Self-respect	dignity self-awareness hygiene the right to privacy self-image self-protection
	Social life and respect for people	rights and duties individual freedom and its limits equality (of the sexes, of all human beings) politeness fraternity solidarity cooperation respect honesty vis-à-vis others justice tolerance self-control (to be master of one's words and deeds) the safety of others
	Respect for property	respect the property of others respect for the public good (MEN, 2011).

The programme of study for moral and civic education is under review and a revised version is expected to be released for consultation in the 2014/15 academic year. Further information is available on the consultation pages of the Ministry website.

3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The aims of moral education change as children grow older. In the basic learning cycle (the first three years of primary education, ages six to nine), children learn the rules of politeness, cooperation and respect. In the consolidation cycle (ages nine to 12), these change to ensuring that children grow in autonomy and responsibility. By age 11/12, children are expected to have: • discovered the principles of the moral code/ethics

	• understood the notion of rights and duties in the school and wider world
	• know how to apply the rules (MEN, 2008).
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	Yes. Ethical education is integrated across the curriculum. It is taught as part of humanist culture (under the 'Common Base of Knowledge and Skills') and under the subject areas, 'discovery of the world' 'history/geography' and 'civic and moral education' (see question 3 above, question 5 below, and line of inquiry 2 below).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	Yes. See line of inquiry 1 above. Ethical education is covered in the subject field of humanist culture ('discovery of the world' in the basic learning cycle and 'history/geography' and 'civic and moral education' in the consolidation cycle).
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	There is no opt-out from ethics education (taught as civic and moral education) for children in French primary schools.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	There is no systematic review of the curriculum. Reviews of the curriculum are generally ad hoc in response to emerging issues. The decision to review the curriculum is taken by the Minister of Education in line with other current reforms in education or a need to review and update curriculum content (Sargent *et al., 2010*). Legislation passed in July 2013 provides for the 'Common Base of Knowledge and Skills' to be reviewed and redefined. It is being renamed the 'Common Core of Knowledge, Skills and Culture' and the Government is currently consulting on the revisions to it. These revisions may have implications for the curriculum as described in this document. Further information is available from the Ministry website.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	Yes. Edu-scol, the national portal for education professionals provides some resources. Supervised by the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, the Canopy network also publishes educational resources (mobile, digital, printed, TV), to meet the needs of the educational community. The network provides some resources relating to the subjects in the 'humanist culture' topic area (e.g. history/geography and civic and moral education).

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Ireland

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

There are eight years in primary school education – junior infants to sixth class, children aged four to 12 years (NFER, 2013).

Although the compulsory school starting age in Ireland is six, just under half of all four-year-olds and almost all five-year-olds are in primary school before the age of six (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2013).

In addition, since January 2010, all children aged between three years two months and four years seven months on 1 September of the year that they can start school, have been entitled to a free pre-school year that can be delivered in centre- or home-based settings (European Commission *et al.*, 2014). While participation is voluntary, 67,000 or 94 per cent of eligible children were enrolled in pre-school services for the 2011/12 school year (DES, n.d.).

There are four, two-year stages/phases during primary education which reflect the four stages of curriculum content of the primary curriculum (1999) (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2013).

The early childhood education phase in Ireland lasts for six years for children from birth to age six and *Aistear,* the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is for all children in this age range. That said, to support continuity and progression in children's learning, *Aistear* has implicit and explicit links with the primary curriculum as, in reality, the majority of five-year-olds and about half of four-year-olds attend primary school. (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, n.d.b).

Aistear uses four interconnected themes to describe the content of children's learning and development – well-being; identity and belonging; communication; and exploring and thinking, while the Primary School Curriculum (1999) is presented in seven curriculum areas. These are language; mathematics; social, environmental and scientific education (SESE); arts education; physical education (PE); social, personal and health education (SPHE); and religious education (RE), comprising 12 subjects (*Gaeilge* (Irish), English, mathematics, history, geography, science, visual arts, music, drama, PE, SPHE and RE).

Year	Age	Phase	Curriculum
Junior infants	4-5	Infant classes	Aistear/Primary curriculum
Senior infants	5-6	Infant classes	Aistear/Primary curriculum
First class	6-7	First and second classes	Primary curriculum
Second class	7-8	First and second classes	Primary curriculum
Third class	8-9	Third and fourth classes	Primary curriculum
Fourth class	9-10	Third and fourth classes	Primary curriculum
Fifth class	10-11	Fifth and sixth classes	Primary curriculum
Sixth class	11-12	Fifth and sixth classes	Primary curriculum

The vast majority of primary schools in Ireland are denominationally owned and controlled and this situation is recognised in the Constitution of Ireland and the Education Act 1998. However, in the last 30 years, there has been significant growth in the number of multi-denominational schools that have been established at primary level (European Commission *et al.*, 2014). The 1965 Rules for National Schools refer to religious instruction as 'by far the most important part of the school curriculum', and also reference 'a religious spirit informing and vivifying the whole work of the school' (DES, 2014).

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	**Early Years** No. *Aistear*, the early childhood curriculum framework presents children's learning and development using four themes (well-being; identity and belonging; communicating; exploring and thinking) (NCCA, n.d.a). Education about religions and beliefs is not specifically mentioned but is reflected in the aims and learning goals for two of the themes. • Well-being • Aim 3: Children will be creative and spiritual Understand that others may have beliefs and values different to their own. • Identity and belonging • Aim 2: Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended Be able to share personal experiences about their own families and cultures, and come to know that there is a diversity of family structures, cultures and backgrounds Understand and take part in routines, customs, festivals, and celebrations. • Aim 3: Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and a regard for the identity, rights and view of others Be aware of and respect others' needs, rights, feelings, culture, language, background, and religious beliefs (NCCA, n.d.a). **Primary** No. The 1999 Primary School Curriculum makes provision for religious education but does not provide education about religions and beliefs (ERB). A new curriculum for education about religions and beliefs (ERB) and ethics is currently being developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The ERB and ethics curriculum will support rather than supplant any of the denominational patron's programmes (see below). The development of such a curriculum was recommended by the report of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector (Coolahan *et al.,* 2012). Religious education is one of the seven subject areas upon which the primary curriculum is based. The place

of religious education is underlined in the overarching and specific aims of the primary curriculum. This sets out three main aims which are to:

- enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual

- enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others and so contribute to the good of society

- prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning (NCCA, 1999).

The achievement of these aims entails the acquisition of a wide range of knowledge and the development of a variety of concepts, skills and attitudes appropriate to children of different ages and stages of development in the primary school. These may be elaborated in a number of specific curriculum aims:

- to enable children to develop spiritual, moral and religious values

- to enable children to develop a respect for cultural difference, an appreciation of civic responsibility and an understanding of the social dimension of life, past and present

- to enable children to develop skills and understanding in order to study their world and its inhabitants and appreciate the interrelationships between them (NCCA, 1999).

In achieving these specific aims, the curriculum identifies further, more detailed objectives. They delineate particular skills, aspects of knowledge and facets of development that are relevant to children's educational needs. The general objectives articulate learning outcomes and learning experiences that will facilitate the attainment of the aims of the curriculum. As regards religious education, these are to:

- develop a positive awareness of self, a sensitivity towards other people and a respect for the rights, views and feelings of others

- acquire sensitivity to the spiritual dimension of life

- develop a knowledge and understanding of his or her own religious traditions and beliefs, with respect for the religious traditions and beliefs of others (NCCA, 1999).

In the development of the primary curriculum (1999), a number of considerations were taken into account. Two of these considerations, in particular, relate to religious education. They are the spiritual dimension and

pluralism. The curriculum says the following about the spiritual dimension:

The curriculum takes cognisance of the affective, aesthetic, spiritual, moral and religious dimensions of the child's experience and development. For most people in Ireland, the totality of the human condition cannot be understood or explained merely in terms of physical and social experience. This conviction comes from a shared perception that intimates a more profound explanation of being, from an awareness of the finiteness of life and from the sublime fulfilment that human existence sometimes affords. The spiritual dimension of life expresses itself in a search for truth and in the quest for a transcendent element within human experience. The importance that the curriculum attributes to the child's spiritual development is expressed through the breadth of learning experiences the curriculum offers, through the inclusion of religious education as one of the areas of the curriculum, and through the child's engagement with the aesthetic and affective domains of learning (NCCA, 1999).

And about pluralism, it says:

The curriculum has a particular responsibility in promoting tolerance and respect for diversity in both the school and the community. Children come from a diversity of cultural, religious, social, environmental and ethnic backgrounds, and these engender their own beliefs, values, and aspirations. The curriculum acknowledges the centrality of the Christian heritage and tradition in the Irish experience and the Christian identity shared by the majority of Irish people. It equally recognises the diversity of beliefs, values and aspirations of all religious and cultural groups in society (NCCA, 1999).

The religious education provided in Irish primary schools is predominantly denominational in nature as it is provided by the patron of the school, 95 per cent of which are denominational (Coolahan *et al*., 2012). The current religious programmes, in both Catholic and Protestant schools, are broad-based religious education programmes. Though still denominational in character, many such schools are increasingly becoming more multi-faith and multi-cultural, reflecting the diversity within today's society (INTO, 2003).

2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	**Primary education** Since the Department of Education and Science, in the context of the Education Act (1998), recognises the rights of the different school patrons to design curricula in religious education at primary level and to supervise their teaching and implementation, a curricular programme for religious education is not included in

the primary curriculum (NCCA, 1999).

The different denominational patrons in Ireland have produced programmes of religious education for primary education. These include 'Alive-O', 'Follow-Me', 'Learn Together', and 'Goodness Me, Goodness You'.

Alive-O is the approved national programme for Catholic primary education. It aims to 'help children to relate their discovery of themselves, other people and the world to God who is the creator of all things, the source of all life, who loves and cares for each of them and is always with them' (Diocese of Limerick, 2014). As outlined in the teacher's manual, Alive-O aims to deliver catechesis through the following six areas:

- promoting knowledge of the faith - as highlighted at the beginning of each weekly lesson

- liturgical education - expands knowledge and understanding of the sacraments in an age-appropriate way

- moral formation - developing a moral conscience whilst being mindful of and sensitive to the individual situations of children attending the school

- teaching to pray - this is given a central role in the programme and allows children to experience vocal, meditative and contemplative prayer

- education for community life - exploration of family, class, school, parish and neighbourhood life and reaching out to others

- missionary initiation - spreading the Good News through the sacraments and the teachings of the bible (St Bridgid's Primary School, n.d.).

As part of Alive-O, teaching about other Christian denominations is introduced in the third term of sixth class (pupils aged 11 to 12 years). Islam is taught in third class (eight- to nine-year-olds).

The Alive-O programme is not available in full electronically but details are available from the Archdiocese of Dublin website.

Follow-Me, was developed by the Church of Ireland Education Board, with the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Education. It aims to enable children to:

- develop a knowledge and understanding of beliefs, worship and witness of the Christian faith, and in

particular of the Church of Ireland and other principal reformed traditions

- explore the biblical witness to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit

- develop their own religious beliefs, values and practices through a process of personal search and discovery

- develop an awareness of and a sensitivity towards those of other faiths and none.

The curriculum is presented in six strands:

- celebrations, festivals, ceremonies and customs

- sacred writings, stories and key figures

- beliefs

- sacred places, worship and symbols

- moral values and attitudes

- personal search (Board of Education, Church of Ireland, 2014a and b).

'Other faiths' is included as a separate strand for pupils in the third to sixth classes (eight- to 12-year-olds). The curriculum does not assume that other faiths will be covered in the same detail or under the same headings as Christianity. It is hoped, however, that children will become aware of and sensitive to the beliefs and practices of those of other or no faith(s) who may be part of their school or local communities. This is then dealt with in greater detail in post-primary school (age 12+) through the Junior Certificate Programme.

Details of the Follow-Me programme are available online.

Learn Together is the ethical education curriculum taught in place of religious instruction in Educate Together schools. There are four strands in Learn Together:

- Moral and spiritual - which aims to help develop in children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of right and wrong and a heightened awareness of social, ethical and moral standards through reflecting on the meaning and purposes of life.

	• Equality and justice - which aims to develop in children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of issues relating to human rights, equality, culture and diversity, social justice and social inclusiveness and to empower them to make a difference.

• Belief systems - which aims to develop in children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of the teachings of religious and non-theistic belief systems and how these systems relate to our shared human experience.

• Ethics and the environment - which aims to develop in children a knowledge, appreciation and respect for their environment and to empower them to take an active role in its stewardship.

In addition to the Learn Together programme, Educate Together school boards also facilitate the organisation of voluntary faith formation classes outside school hours. These classes are organised with the assistance of the relevant religious authorities..

Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY!) is a multi-belief programme for children of all faiths (religions) and none. It is taught in community national schools (CNSs) and is being developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and CNSs. The programme explores the child's life, his/her relationship with others and with the wider world. It seeks to foster conversation between these aspects and the child's specific faith or belief community. It also encourages conversation between faiths and beliefs. Lessons focus on topics including, for example, family, traditions, friendship, food and growing up. Through these topics, commonalities and insights are explored in an experientially rich manner. For three weeks every year children have the opportunity to learn about and have their specific faiths, non-faiths and traditions explored in a differentiated manner alongside their peers. For the rest of the year children explore common themes with their classmates (Scoil Chormaic Community National School, 2014). Further information on the [programme](#) is available online. |
| 3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education? | **Primary education**

The curricular programmes for religious education created by the different denominational patrons present their content in a manner suited to the age and stage of development of those for whom they are intended.

'Alive-O', for example, introduces teaching about other Christian denominations in the third term of sixth class |

	(pupils aged 11 to 12 years). Islam is taught in third class (eight- to nine-year-olds).
	In 'Follow Me', the curriculum programme is presented at four levels which outline the content that can be covered at each stage of the child's time at school. The programme designed for each level is flexible so that it can be implemented according to the needs of each school and each individual child. The curriculum is drawn up in a spiral manner, that is, similar content is revisited at each level. The methodologies employed and the quantity and type of information given at each level reflects the development of the child and matches his or her needs at that time. 'Other faiths' is included as a separate strand for pupils in the third to sixth classes (eight- to 12-year-olds) (Board of Education, Church of Ireland, 2014a).
	In Educate Together schools, under the 'Learn Together' programme, one of the strands present throughout the eight years of primary education is 'belief systems'. The general aim of this strand is to develop in children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of the teachings of religious and non-theistic belief systems and how these systems relate to our shared human experience. The emphasis is placed on an exploration of the infinite variety and richness of humankind through nurturing a respect for a person's right to hold and practice individual belief systems and through creating spaces where values can be articulated and critically examined. The other three strands are moral and spiritual, equality and justice, and ethics and the environment (Educate Together, 2014).

4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	**Early Years**
	Education about religions and beliefs is not a discrete area of *Aistear*, the early years curriculum framework. However, some aspects of religious education are integrated within two of *Aistear's* four themes for children's learning and development:
	• Well-being
	
	• Aim 3: Children will be creative and spiritual
	
	  Understand that others may have beliefs and values different to their own.
	
	• Identity and belonging
	• Aim 2: Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended
	
	  Be able to share personal experiences about their own families and cultures, and come to know that there is a

diversity of family structures, cultures and backgrounds
Understand and take part in routines, customs, festivals, and celebrations.

- Aim 3: Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and a regard for the identity, rights and view of others

  Be aware of and respect others' needs, rights, feelings, culture, language, background, and religious beliefs (NCCA, n.d.a).

Primary education

Although education about religions and beliefs is not included in the primary curriculum (1999), as the Department of Education and Science recognises the rights of the different denominational patrons to design and develop curricula in religious instruction and religious education at primary level and to supervise their teaching and implementation, these programmes may be designed so that this religious education can be integrated across the curriculum. (NCCA, 1999).

'Follow Me', for example, the programme developed by the Church of Ireland Education Board with the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Education, is constructed using the same framework of strand units found throughout the rest of the curriculum. This structure facilitates the integration of religious instruction and religious education with the rest of the curriculum; connections can be made with other curriculum areas which can give religious education a place in the life of the school beyond the time allocated to it each day (Board of Education, Church of Ireland, 2014).

In addition, there is scope within the primary curriculum for the integration of education about religions and beliefs, particularly within history and geography.

5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	**Early years** No. *Aistear* does not provide any guidelines on time allocation (NCCA, n.d.a). **Primary education** Yes. To assist teachers and schools in planning the implementation of the curriculum, a time framework is suggested that allocates a minimum time to each of the curriculum areas. The framework allows half an hour each day for religious education. As the period of secular instruction for children in infant classes (aged four to six years) may be shorter than that provided for older children, the suggested time framework is not directly

applicable, as it is for other class groups.

The table below shows how the 1999 primary curriculum allocated time to denominational religious education alongside the other curriculum subjects (NCCA, 1999). However, since January 2012, all primary schools have been required to increase the time spent on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy has been increased by 60 minutes and mathematics by 70 minutes. Schools have generally made provision for these arrangements through a combination of approaches, such as integrating literacy and numeracy with other curriculum areas; using some or all of discretionary curriculum time (two hours) for literacy and numeracy activities; or re-allocating time spent on other subjects in the curriculum to the development of literacy and numeracy (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

It is important to note that the two hours 30 minutes allocated to the programme for religious education may include teaching of education about religions and beliefs, but the specific amount of ERB currently taught will vary from programme to programme, depending on the school patron.

	Full day		Short day (infant classes, four- to six-year-olds)	
Curriculum areas	One week		One week	
Secular instruction				
Language	Hours	Minutes	Hours	Minutes
L^1 (English)	4	00	3	00
L^2 (Irish)	3	30	2	30
Mathematics	3	00	2	15
Social, environmental and scientific education (SESE)	3	00	2	15
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)	0	30	0	30
Physical education	1	00	1	00
Arts education	3	00	2	30
Discretionary curriculum time	2	00	1	00
Total secular instruction	20	00	15	00
Religious education (typically)	2	30	2	30
Assembly time	1	40	1	40

Roll call	0	50	0	50
Breaks	0	50	0	50
Recreation typically)	2	30	2	30
Total	28	20	23	20

(European Commission *et al.,* 2014, 2014a)

6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	**Primary education** Yes. Parents have the right to opt their child(ren) out of religious education as set out in Article 44 of the Irish Constitution (Ireland. Statutes, 1937). The school must ensure that appropriate provision is made for opted-out children whilst this class takes place. In recent years, concerns have been expressed about how some schools cater for children whose parents do not want them to take part in religious education. Some people have suggested that schools could change the school timetable to have religious education provided at the start or end of the school day to make it easier for children who do not take part in religion class (DES, 2013). No information about the cultural/religious background, number and percentage of pupils who opt out is available. (In addition, Section 30 (2)(e) of the Education Act 1998 permits the opt-out of a child from any subject that is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the child.)
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	No formal review process exists. However, the denominational patrons responsible for religious education may revise their own programme and some have done so recently: • A new curriculum for Catholic schools has been developed and is currently awaiting approval from the Vatican. • Church of Ireland schools reviewed their programme in 2010; there are currently no plans for the next revision cycle. • Educate Together schools' Learn Together programme was published in 2004 and there are no current plans to review the programme. • Community national schools are currently developing their multi-belief programme on a partnership basis with their schools; this involves reviewing developed material in the programme.

	A new curriculum for education about religion and beliefs (ERB) is in development and is being designed to support rather than supplant any of the patron's programmes.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	Yes. The relevant denominational patrons provide resources for the teaching of their curricular programmes for religious education. Resources are available online: • Alive-O • Follow Me • Learn Together • Goodness Me, Goodness You!

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	There is no specific mention of ethics education in the primary curriculum or in *Aistear*, the Early Years Curriculum Framework. However, the concept of ethics/ethical behaviour is explicit in the aims and principles of the curriculum for both phases of education. For example, the second general aim of the primary curriculum is 'to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society'. This aim goes on to discuss developing 'children spiritually and morally and to foster in each child an ethical sense that will enable him or her to acquire values on which to base choices and form attitudes' (NCCA, 1999).

Ethical education is also addressed by the curriculum for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and the curriculum for Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) during primary education. SPHE aims to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child, and to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. SESE provides opportunities for children to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural human, social and cultural dimensions of the local and wider environments, to learn and practise a wide range of skills, and to acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes (NCCA, 1999a and 1999b).

In addition, guidelines on intercultural education in the primary school were developed by NCCA in 2005. They support the primary school curriculum (1999) and identify the ways in which intercultural education permeates that curriculum. The aim of these guidelines is to contribute to the development of Ireland as an intercultural society based on a shared sense that language, culture and ethnic diversity is valuable. They aim to contribute to the development of a shared ability and sense of responsibility to protect for each other the right to be different and to live free from discrimination (NCCA, 2005a). |
| 2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education? | Ethics is not a discrete area of the primary curriculum, however some aspects of ethics are included in the curricula for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE).

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of children to help them to create and maintain supportive relationships |

and become active and responsible citizens in society. The aims of the subject are to:

- promote the personal development and well-being of the child

- foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being

- promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects

- enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future

- develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life

- enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world (NCCA, 1999a).

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) provides opportunities for children to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural human, social and cultural dimensions of the local and wider environments; to learn and practise a wide range of skills; and to acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes. SESE takes place within and contributes to many areas of the curriculum. Within the primary curriculum, SESE is presented in three subject headings, history, geography and science. The aims of SESE, which have an ethical element, are to:

- enable the child to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes so as to develop an informed and critical understanding of social, environmental and scientific issues

- reinforce and stimulate curiosity and imagination about local and wider environments

- enable the child to play responsible roles as an individual, a family member and a member of local, regional, national, European and global communities

- foster an understanding of, and concern for, the total interdependence of all humans, all living things and the Earth on which they live

	• foster a sense of responsibility for the long-term care of the environment and a commitment to promote the sustainable use of the Earth's resources through his/her personal lifestyle and participation in collective environmental decision-making
	• cultivate humane and responsible attitudes and an appreciation of the world in accordance with beliefs and values (NCCA, 1999b).
3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	A number of features are incorporated in the SESE (geography, history and science) curriculum documents (which each feature some aspects of ethics education) to ensure that teaching is appropriate to age. The documents recommend, for example, that SESE is best approached in a holistic manner with younger children as this respects the wholeness of their view of the world. Accordingly, a considerable degree of overlap and similarity has been embodied within the content suggested in the strands and strand units of the three curriculum statements (SESE geography, SESE history and SESE science) for the infant and junior classes (children aged four to six years) (NCCA, 1999b).
	The SESE curricula (for geography, history and science) also recognise that, as children grow older they begin to recognise that there are different ways or modes of looking at the world and of organising human knowledge. As a result, teaching strategies may vary to include a holistic approach, some cross-curricular integration and a subject-centred focus. Possible cross-curricular links and integrated studies are noted within the content of the curricular statements for third to sixth classes (children aged eight to 12) (NCCA, 1999b).
	The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is spiral in nature. It is delineated at four levels (infant classes for four- to six-year-olds; first and second classes for six- to eight-year-olds; third and fourth classes for eight- to ten-year-olds; and fifth and sixth classes for ten- to 12-year-olds) and is divided into three strands: 'Myself', 'Myself and Others', and 'Myself and the Wider World'. The strand units are consistent throughout all the class levels, reflecting the spiral nature of the curriculum. As children grow and mature, the content is revisited in more detail, enhancing the skills, attitudes and understanding already developed and providing increasing opportunities for reflection and application. However, while the content is presented in a manner that is considered appropriate to the child's age and stage of development, flexibility is recommended so that his/her emotional development and individual needs and interests are

	taken into account (NCCA, 1999a).
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	The SPHE curriculum document recommends that Social, Personal and Health Education is provided in a combination of three ways within primary education:
	• In a positive school climate and atmosphere which fosters the health and well-being of all the members of the school community.
	• As discrete SPHE time which provides for the teaching of some elements of the programme during designated class periods.
	• In an integrated approach which allows for many aspects of SPHE (and the ethics elements of SPHE) to be dealt with in the context of relevant subject areas (NCCA, 1999a).
	See question 3 in addition.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	In infant classes (shorter day classes for four- to six-year-olds) and full-day primary education, half an hour each week is allocated to the teaching of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). This means that, in a 36-week school year, 18 hours each year are allocated to SPHE (NCCA, 1999a).
	In infant classes (for children aged four to six years), two and a quarter hours each week are allocated to the three subjects (history, geography and science) which make up Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE). This means that, in a 36-week school year, 81 hours are allocated to SESE. In first to sixth class (children aged six to 12), three hours a week are allocated to SESE. This means that in the 36-week school year, 108 hours are allocated to SESE (NCCA, 1999b).
	Following increases to the amount of time to be spent on literacy and numeracy, the nature of these hours may have changed. .

	Full day		Short day (infant classes, four- to six-year-olds)	
Curriculum areas	One week		One week	
Secular instruction				
Language	Hours	Minutes	Hours	Minutes

L^1 (English)	4	00	3	00
L^2 (Irish)	3	30	2	30
Mathematics	3	00	2	15
Social, environmental and scientific education (SESE)	3	00	2	15
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)	0	30	0	30
Physical education	1	00	1	00
Arts education	3	00	2	30
Discretionary curriculum time	2	00	1	00
Total secular instruction	20	00	15	00
Religious education (typically)	2	30	2	30
Assembly time	1	40	1	40
Roll call	0	50	0	50
Breaks	0	50	0	50
Recreation typically)	2	30	2	30
Total	28	20	23	20

(European Commission *et al.,* 2014, 2014a)

6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	Yes. Section 30 (2)(e) of the Education Act 1998 permits the opt-out of a child from any subject that is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the child.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	Although there is no formal curriculum review process for the ethics education curriculum, reviews of the general primary curriculum in Ireland were undertaken in 2005 and 2008 (NCCA 2005 and 2008), with SPHE featuring in the 2008 review. As a result of the reviews, revised language and mathematics curricula are being developed, along with a new curriculum for education about religions and beliefs (ERB) and ethics for all children. The latter is a key part of the Irish Government's commitment to supporting greater inclusion and

	diversity in primary schools (DES, 2014).
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	No. Specific resources or support material are not provided for the teaching of ethics.

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The Netherlands

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

In 1985, the pre-school system in the Netherlands became integrated with the primary system, so that primary schools offer all-through pre-primary and primary education for children aged four to 12 years. Most children begin pre-primary education at age four, although attendance does not become compulsory until the first school day of the month following the child's fifth birthday (European Commission *et al*., 2014).

The pre-primary element of this provision lasts for two years and has both a social and an academic function, although the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics are usually taught from the first year of primary education. Together, pre-primary and primary education consist of eight year groups (grades), so the majority of children are 12 years old when they begin secondary education (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

Prior to their fourth birthday, children can attend a day nursery or crèche. These groups cater for two- to four-year-olds and fall under the responsibility of the local authorities. There are few pre-school facilities for the under-fours. There are programmes for early childhood education, but these are aimed at two- to five-year-olds at risk of educational disadvantage. Such provision is not considered further in this description.

Grade/Year	Age range
1	4/5
2	5/6
3	6/7
4	7/8
5	8/9
6	9/10
7	10/11

8	11/12

Primary education is regulated by two acts, the Primary Education Act (WPO) (*Wet op Primair Onderwijs*) and the Expertise Centres Act (WEC) (*Wet op de Expertisecentra*). Among other elements, the WPO and the WEC describe the core objectives of primary education (attainment targets) and prescribe how teaching should be structured and organised. The Core Objectives describe the desired results of the learning process, not the way these are to be achieved. They do not prescribe teaching methods or programmes of study. Schools are expected to organise their teaching such that all the core objectives/attainment targets are reached by the end of primary education (European Commission *et al.*, 2014 and SLO, 2006).

The core objectives/attainment targets of primary education are divided into a number of subject areas:
- Dutch language
- English language
- maths/arithmetic
- personal and world orientation which includes social studies, nature and technology, space, and time (covering geography, history, science, citizenship, social and life skills, healthy living, social structures, and religious and ideological movements)
- art education
- physical education (SLO, 2006).

Primary schools in Friesland are also obliged to include teaching of the Frisian language (SLO, 2006). Schools can also provide religious instruction.

In addition, teachers are expected to cover the objectives which underpin all learning areas:
- a good working attitude
- use of learning strategies
- reflection on one's own actions and learning
- expression of one's own thoughts and feelings
- respectful listening to and criticising of others' opinions, and the acquisition and processing of information
- development of self-confidence, respectful and responsible dealing with each other, and care and appreciation for the living environment (SLO, 2006).

One of the key features of the Dutch education system, guaranteed under article 23 of the Constitution, is freedom of education. This refers to the freedom to found schools (freedom of establishment), to organise the teaching in schools (freedom of organisation of teaching) and to determine the principles on which they are based (freedom of conviction). People have the right to found schools and to provide teaching based on religious, ideological or educational beliefs. As a result there are both public and private schools in the Netherlands. Public schools are open to all children regardless of religion or outlook and provide education on behalf of the state. Public schools are subject to public law. They are governed by the municipal council or by a public legal entity or foundation set up by the council. Some public schools base their teaching on specific educational ideas, such as the Montessori, Jenaplan or Dalton methods (Leeuwn *et al.*, n.d).

Private schools are subject to private law and are state-funded although not set up by the state. These schools are governed by the board of the association or foundation that set them up. These so-called denominational schools base their teaching on religious or ideological beliefs. They include Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindustani and anthroposophic schools. Some private schools base their teaching on specific educational ideas, such as the Montessori, Jenaplan or Dalton methods. Denominational schools can refuse to admit pupils whose parents do not subscribe to the belief or ideology on which the school's teaching is based (Leeuwn *et al.,* n.d).

Despite the secularisation of society as a whole in the Netherlands, religious organisations operate many schools (the 1848 Constitution allowed parents to ask the state to establish a school for their children at state expense; many of these schools are affiliated with religions). Most primary and secondary students (76 per cent) attend the private, mainly confessional, sector of education. Most schools are managed by a school board responsible for several schools, to which the money supplied by the state is given. In the case of religious schools, these management groups are affiliated with the relevant religious organisation. In the case of non-religious primary schools, management is often affiliated to organisations committed to a particular pedagogical approach, such as Montessori or Waldorf schools. There are no defined catchment areas in the Netherlands, so parents may enroll their children in any primary school they wish. Schools affiliated with religions can refuse pupils who do not subscribe to their beliefs but, in practice, they typically accept pupils from many religions and no religion; if the

schools are oversubscribed, they typically take children from the neighbourhood first and the siblings of pupils already at the school (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2009).

Line of Inquiry 1 – Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes. Church and state became separated in the Netherlands in the 1848 constitution and, although many schools are run by religious organisations, they take pupils of other denominations and religions. They also teach about religions and beliefs other than those of the organising group, introducing pupils to the values and concepts of those religions from a comparative perspective (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2009).
	In 1985 a new law on primary education was implemented by the Dutch Ministry of Education. Part of this law was the introduction of a new 'learning area' called 'Religious and Ideological Movements'. From that moment on it became obligatory for all schools to pay attention to religions and philosophies of life, regardless of whether a school had a confessional basis or a neutral one (Avest *et al.*, 2007).
	Religious and Ideological Movements can be offered as a regular school subject as such or can be integrated into other regular school subjects like geography, history and world studies. It aims at acquainting pupils with the main world religions and discussing religious arguments and at helping pupils gain an insight into the various value systems in a pluralistic society (Avest *et al.*, 2007).
	Public schools can also organise courses in specific religions (religious instruction) at the request of families, in which case teachers are trained and paid by the relevant religious organisation. Private schools with a religious orientation funded by the state may also provide religious instruction (Pépin, 2009).
	The core learning objectives/attainment targets for primary education in the Netherlands which cover education about religions and beliefs are:
	• 37 – Pupils learn the essentials of the religious movements that play an important part in Dutch pluralistic society, and they learn to respect people's difference of opinion.
	• 47 - Pupils learn to compare the spatial organisation of their own environment with other environments in the Netherlands and abroad, from the perspectives of landscape, living, working, government, traffic, recreation, welfare, culture, and religion. Attention is given to at least two member states of the European Union and two countries that became a member in 2004, to the United States, and to a country in Asia,

	one in Africa, and one in South America.
	• 49 – Pupils learn about the global spatial spread of population densities and religions, about climates, energy sources and natural landscapes such as volcanoes, deserts, tropical rainforests, high mountain ranges and rivers (SLO, 2006).
	These objectives are deliberately general, expressing what could be taught. It is up to schools to decide if the objective has been reached.
2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	See question 1 above in addition.
	Schools are responsible for devising their own curriculum based upon the Core Objectives for primary education (SLO, 2006).
	The 'religious and ideological movements' theme (within the 'personal and world orientation 'strand of the primary curriculum) covers education about religions and beliefs. It aims to acquaint pupils in an objective, knowledge-based way with the main world religions or worldviews represented in the Netherlands, to discuss religious propositions, and to help pupils gain insight into the values and norms behind various worldviews (Fatih Genc *et al.*, 2011).
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	Schools are responsible for devising their own curriculum based upon the core objectives/attainment targets for primary education (SLO, 2006). The way the curriculum will differ across the primary school years is therefore a matter for individual schools.
	At secondary school level, students are expected to learn to recognise similarities, differences, and changes in culture and religious and humanistic beliefs, to relate them to their own and other people's lives, and to value their relevance for a society based on respect for other people's beliefs and modes of living (Ainley *et al.*, 2013). The primary curriculum provides the groundwork for this later development, requiring pupils to be taught about religious and ideological movements, and to learn to show respect for others in general, with a specified focus on diversity (which will, by definition, include developing understanding of and respect for those of other faiths) (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).
4. Is education about religions and beliefs	Yes – education about religions and beliefs is part of the 'personal and world orientation' strand of the primary curriculum and it is a requirement of the Primary Education Act that these core subject areas/learning areas

integrated across the curriculum?	should be taught in an integrated way where possible (UNESCO-IBE, 2012).
	The Core Objectives for primary education state that 'content and objectives should be closely linked, be connected to everyday life, and presented in coherence with each other' (SLO, 2006).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	No. The Primary Education Act (WPO) does not prescribe or provide guidelines on the number of teaching hours in each curriculum area. Schools decide for themselves how to organise their curriculum time, and they also have some flexibility regarding the length of the school day so that their timetables can reflect the specific needs and wishes of the school and the community.
	That said, schools are required to provide at least 7520 teaching hours over the eight years of the primary phase of schooling. How they meet this requirement is for them to decide (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).
6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	No. Primary schools must cover the content set out in the attainment targets (the core objectives for primary education), which includes aspects of religions and beliefs. They are, however, free to decide how these attainment targets are reached (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).
	As religious organisations operate many schools in the Netherlands - and these schools will provide some religious instruction in line with their beliefs - and there are no catchment areas, parents will be opting in or out when they make their school choice, rather than at classroom level.
	The personal and world orientation strand of the core objectives/attainment targets for primary education (which includes education about religions and beliefs) is an option in the end-of-primary-school assessment (at age 12); this option is taken up by most schools (UNESCO-IBE, 2012).
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	There is no specific review process in place for the religious education curriculum. The current core curriculum objectives (attainment targets) for primary education were published in 2006 (European Commission *et al.,* 2014). These core objectives/ attainment targets are periodically reviewed.
	In primary education, the third generation of core objectives is currently in use. Since the first generation in 1993, the number of core objectives has been substantially reduced – from 122 to 58 – and the objectives are formulated in more general terms. Broader and more global descriptions are used, without specifications of

	teaching and learning activities (Thijs and van den Akker, 2009). The teaching of foreign languages will be reformed in August 2015, with more scope for intensive language teaching in the early years of primary schooling (including teaching some subjects through a foreign language). Given that some elements of the teaching of 'respect for others' are conducted through languages teaching, this has the potential to impact on teaching about religions. In addition, the 2013 National Education Agreement set out strategic objectives related to improving the quality of education. These ongoing reforms may impact on teaching about religions (e.g. through teacher registration and quality).[3]
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	Yes. Primary schools have discretion over how to implement the core objectives/ attainment targets, but additional guidance is provided by the National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO). SLO helps schools select teaching materials by providing an overview of all the textbooks and teaching materials available for primary education (in Dutch) (European Commission *et al*., 2014).

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[3] Comments from the Dutch Eurydice Unit, October 2014

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes. Although there is no specific mention in the curriculum of 'ethics' as a subject, ethical concepts are represented throughout the curriculum, integrated with other curriculum areas. These areas of the curriculum aim to help pupils develop understanding of others' different viewpoints, engendering respect, and to develop pupils as active citizens of the future. See the response to question 2 below in addition.
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	Aspects of ethics education are, in particular, covered in the 'personal and world orientation' strand of the Core Objectives /attainment targets for primary education.

In this learning area, pupils orientate on themselves, on how people relate to each other, how they solve problems, and how they give meaning to their existence. Pupils orientate on their natural environment and the phenomena occurring in it. Pupils also orientate on the world around them – nearby and faraway; then and now – and while doing so make use of cultural heritage. Children are naturally curious. They are always on the lookout to learn about themselves and explore the world. This development need is a starting point for this learning area. At the same time, society, in which the children are growing up, is making its demands. Children are fulfilling, and will fulfil, tasks and roles, for which education is preparing them. These concern the role of consumer, the role of traffic participant, and the role of citizen in a democratic constitutional state. Knowledge about and insight in important values and standards, and knowing how to act accordingly, are preconditions for coexistence. Respect and tolerance are forms of these (SLO, 2006).

The introduction to the core objectives/attainment targets also includes a number of objectives which are considered important for all learning areas, some of which cover ethical concepts:

• a good working attitude

• reflection on one's own actions and learning

• expression of one's own thoughts and feelings |

	- respective listening to and criticising of others' opinions
	- respectful and responsible dealing with each other
	- care and appreciation for the living environment (SLO, 2006).
	The following core objectives/attainment targets for primary level education could be considered to have an ethical element:
	- 36 – Pupils learn about the essentials of Dutch and European politics and citizens' duties.
	- 37 – Pupils learn to behave from a sense of respect for generally accepted standards and values.
	- 39 – Pupils learn to handle the environment with care (SLO, 2006).
3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The foundations of ethics education are laid in pre-primary, where pupils are exposed to a curriculum aimed at developing their social-emotional skills (e.g. learning to deal with the different feelings they experience, and learning social behaviour, including cooperation and collaboration) (Thijs *et al.*, n.d.).
	These ideas are developed further in the primary years, where pupils learn about diversity and respect, including matters such as how to communicate with other people, how to solve problems, and questions regarding the meaning of life. Specifically, pupils learn about their responsibilities as citizens; to develop respect for generally accepted standards and values, and differences of opinion; and to handle the environment with care (Bron, n.d.).
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	Yes. Ethical education content is integrated throughout the Core Objectives (attainment targets) for primary education (see question 2 above) and features specifically under the 'personal and world orientation' strand (which includes elements of citizenship, social and life skills, social structures and religious and ideological movements) (Ainley *et al.*, 2013).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	No. The Primary Education Act (WPO) does not lay down the number of teaching hours in each curriculum area. Schools decide for themselves how to organise their curriculum time, and they also have some flexibility regarding the length of the school day, so that their timetables can reflect the specific needs and wishes of the school and the community. Schools are required to provide at least 7520 teaching hours over the eight years of

	the primary phase of schooling, but how they meet this requirement is for them to decide (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	No. Primary schools must teach the content set out in the core objectives/attainment targets, which includes aspects of ethics education.
	The personal and world orientation strand of the core objectives/attainment targets for primary education (which includes education in ethics) is an option in the end-of-primary-school assessment (at age 12); this option is taken up by most schools (UNESCO-IBE, 2012).
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	There is no specific review process in place for ethics education. The current curriculum was published in 2006 (European Commission *et al.,* 2014) and the core objectives/attainment targets are periodically reviewed.
	In primary education, the third generation of core objectives is currently in use. Since the first generation in 1993, the number of core objectives has been substantially reduced – from 122 to 58 – and the objectives are formulated in more general terms. Broader and more global descriptions are used, without specifications of teaching and learning activities (Thijs and van den Akker, 2009).
	The teaching of foreign languages will be reformed in August 2015, with more scope for intensive language teaching in the early years of primary schooling (including teaching some subjects through a foreign language). Given that some elements of the teaching of respect for others are conducted through languages teaching, this has the potential to impact on teaching relating to ethics. In addition, the 2013 National Education Agreement set out strategic objectives related to improving the quality of education. These ongoing reforms may impact on teaching about ethics (e.g. through teacher registration and quality).[4]
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	Yes. Primary schools have discretion over how to implement the core objectives/ attainment targets, but additional guidance is provided by the National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO). SLO helps schools select teaching materials by providing an overview of all the textbooks and teaching materials available for primary education (in Dutch) (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

[4] Comments from the Dutch Eurydice Unit, October 2014

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New Zealand

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

Education does not become compulsory until the age of six. However, children almost universally start school at the age of five, going into what are known as 'new entrant groups'. Primary education then generally lasts eight years to age 12/13 (Grayson *et al*., 2014).

Primary education is split into three stages: Junior classes (Years 1-2), Standards 1-4 (Years 3-6) and Forms 1-2 (Years 7-8).

Children generally receive Forms 1-2 education (Years 7 and 8), ages 11-12 and 12-13, in primary schools but may also be in intermediate or middle schools. In rural areas, there are also composite schools which cater for the full age range ('area schools', ages five/six-18) or Form 1-7 schools (Years 7 to 13, age 11-18) (Grayson *et al*., 2014).

Although early childhood education is voluntary, most children receive some form of pre-school education, at least at the ages of three and four (Grayson *et al*., 2014).

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) is compulsory from Year 1 (ages five/six) to the end of Year 10 (ages 15-16) in English-medium schools. The *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa applies in Maori-medium schools.* The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) was revised in 2007 and gives schools direction for teaching and learning. It is an outline framework rather than a detailed plan and schools develop their own curriculum and teaching programmes from it. It includes and explains:

* The principles that guided the curriculum's development: high expectations, Treaty of Waitangi[5], cultural diversity, inclusion, learning to learn, community engagement, coherence and future focus.

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[5]The Treaty of Waitangi forms part of New Zealand's constitution. **The New Zealand Curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bi-cultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand.** The Treaty of Waitangi principle puts students at the centre of teaching and learning, asserting that they should experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them, is forward-looking and inclusive, and affirms New Zealand's unique identity.

- The values to be developed and modelled through teaching and learning: excellence; innovation, enquiry, and curiosity; diversity; equity; community and participation; ecological sustainability; integrity and respect.
- The key competencies - the capabilities people need in order to live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities: managing self; relating to others; participating and contributing; thinking; and using language, symbols and texts.
- The eight learning areas: social sciences; arts; technology; science; mathematics and statistics; health and physical education; English; and learning languages. The curriculum explains the rationale and structure of each of these learning areas (NFER, 2013).

Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) is the early childhood education curriculum framework. It is specifically designed for children from the time of birth to school entry, and provides links to learning in school settings. *Te Whāriki* is not subject-based; it sets out principles, strands and goals for the phase. The strands are well-being, belonging, contribution, communication, and exploration (NFER, 2013).

Year group	Age range	Stage or class	Curriculum
Birth to school entry	0-5	Early childhood education (non-compulsory)	*Te Whāriki* (early childhood education curriculum framework)
0	5	Junior/new entrant	New Zealand Curriculum
1	5/6	Junior 1	New Zealand Curriculum
2	6/7	Junior 2	New Zealand Curriculum
3	7/8	Standard 1	New Zealand Curriculum
4	8/9	Standard 2	New Zealand Curriculum
5	9/10	Standard 3	New Zealand Curriculum
6	10/11	Standard 4	New Zealand Curriculum
7	11/12	Form 1	New Zealand Curriculum
	12/13	Form 2	New Zealand Curriculum

The Education Act 1877 allowed all schools to be free, compulsory and secular but, following issues regarding funding in the 1970s, the Government enacted the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975, which allowed Catholic schools and other private schools to 'integrate' with the state system, receiving public funding and keeping their Catholic character. In addition to the core curriculum as set out in the New Zealand Curriculum documents, religious education (RE) (religious instruction) is also a compulsory learning area in all Catholic schools.

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

| 1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles? | **Pre-school education**

No, education about religions or beliefs is not mentioned in _Te Whāriki_ the early childhood education curriculum framework. The early childhood curriculum supports the cultural identity of all children, affirms and celebrates cultural differences, and aims to help children gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures. _Te Whāriki_ is not subject-based; it sets out principles, strands and goals for the phase. The strands are well-being, belonging, contribution, communication, and exploration. Under the strand of communication, there is a goal that children experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Primary education

Education about religions and beliefs.

No, education about religions and beliefs is not included in the New Zealand Curriculum as a distinct subject or 'learning area'. Religion or faith is not explicitly mentioned in the curriculum framework. However, this framework, which gives considerable autonomy to schools in devising the detail of what they teach, offers scope to teach about different religions and beliefs. Schools are required to clearly align their curriculum with the intent of the New Zealand Curriculum framework document, but can draw on a wide range of ideas, resources and models. They must though base their curriculum on the four strands of the framework – the learning areas; the principles; the values; and the key competencies to achieve the vision of young people who are confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Elements of the curriculum framework which may allow for teaching about religions and beliefs include the principle of 'cultural diversity' and the values which underpin the curriculum framework.

The principle of cultural diversity states that the curriculum 'reflects New Zealand's cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people'.

Within the values underpinning the curriculum framework, which are defined as 'deeply held beliefs about what is important or desirable 'and which are central to the curriculum framework, are diversity, equity, integrity and respect. Through their learning experiences, pupils are expected to learn about:

• their own values and those of others
• different kinds of values, such as moral, social, cultural, aesthetic, and economic values
• the values on which New Zealand's cultural and institutional traditions are based |

- the values of other groups and cultures (Ministry of Education, 2007).

This is supported by a (2009) report on religion in schools by New Zealand's Human Rights Commission which stated that:

Schools are free to teach about different religions and the role that religion has played in politics, culture, art, history and literature. The New Zealand Curriculum is based on principles that say the curriculum should be forward-looking and inclusive, should reflect the Treaty of Waitangi and New Zealand's cultural diversity and value the traditions of all its people. Among the things that the Curriculum encourages pupils to value are inquiry and curiosity, diversity, community and respect. Knowing about, and understanding, the beliefs of others are an important part of this. Schools are therefore free to teach about religions, so long as they teach pupils about beliefs rather than instruct them on what to believe (HRC, 2009, p.7).

The Human Rights Commission's position on religion in New Zealand schools spells out that providing a secular education does not mean that schools cannot teach about religion, making the distinction between studying what people believe and teaching a student what to believe (HRC, 2014).

What typically happens in practice in New Zealand's primary schools is unclear. An article based on recent doctoral research underlines the anomaly that:

Although cultural diversity is now embedded in the curriculum there are no curriculum guidelines, minimal resources and no training available for primary school teachers in the area of religious diversity (Bradstock, 2012, p.2).

In addition, the qualitative research undertaken by Bradstock in primary schools in two regions of contrasting religious diversity in New Zealand indicates that principals, teachers and parents all think that the secular system proscribes teaching about religion. The inadequacy of education about religions and beliefs in New Zealand's primary schools is also highlighted in blog articles across the spectrum – see the Secular Education Network (2014) and Rev Bosco Peters (2014).

Religious instruction

Under the Education Act 1964, the state allows primary schools to make provision for religious instruction but they do not have to do so. The legislation states that primary schools

may be closed at any time or times of the school day for any period or periods exceeding in the aggregate neither 60 minutes in any week nor 20 hours in any school year, for any class, for the purposes of religious

instruction given by voluntary instructors approved by the school's board and of religious observances conducted in a manner approved by the school's board or for either of those purposes; and the school buildings may be used for those purposes or for either of them (New Zealand Legislation, 1964).

The Ministry of Education does not, however, endorse any providers of religious instruction or observance, and has no role in approving or formulating any programmes of religious instruction (Human Rights Commission and Victoria University of Wellington, 2009).

Catholic schools

Catholic schools are 'integrated' with the state system and receive public funding. The New Zealand Catholic Education Office assists in the running of Catholic schools in New Zealand and the schools include religious education (religious instruction) as a compulsory learning area, alongside the core curriculum.

The primary school RE curriculum, produced by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, is approved and mandated by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, and aims to help children to develop an understanding about how Catholics celebrate, live and pray in ways that are relevant to the new millennium. It was developed by teachers and seeks to enhance the collaborative relationship between the home, the school and the Parish as they work together to educate their children in faith. The curriculum has six 'Learning Strands' for each of the eight years of primary school: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Church, Sacrament, and Communion of Saints. There are also three 'Learning Modules' for each year level: Liturgical Year; Prayer and Sacramental Celebrations; Myself and Others.

Religious education (religious instruction) is also part of the Catholic Early Childhood Service; its aim is to lead children to a loving personal relationship with God. RE at early childhood level aims to help children:

- develop a sense of wonder and awe at the world around them
- become sensitive to the spiritual
- come to know God's unconditional love for them
- develop an awareness that God is present in them, in others and in all things
- appreciate that they are a gift from God
- have a sense of belonging to the Catholic community
- experience joy and ease in spontaneous prayer

- become aware of the attitudes and elements of celebration, ritual and worship.

The New Zealand Curriculum

Directions for Learning

Vision
Young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners.

Values
Excellence;
Innovation, inquiry, and curiosity;
Diversity;
Equity;
Community and participation;
Ecological sustainability;
Integrity;
Respect.

Key Competencies
Thinking;
Using language, symbols, and texts;
Managing self;
Relating to others;
Participating and contributing.

Learning Areas
English;
The arts;
Health and physical education;
Learning languages;
Mathematics and statistics;
Science;
Social sciences;
Technology.
Official languages

Achievement Objectives

Principles
High expectations, Treaty of Waitangi, Cultural diversity, Inclusion, Learning to learn, Community engagement, Coherence, Future focus

Guidance

Purpose and Scope

Effective Pedagogy

The School Curriculum: Design and Review

The School Curriculum

2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	Education about religions and beliefs is not included in the New Zealand Curriculum as a distinct subject or 'learning area'. See question 1 above.
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	Education about religions and beliefs is not included in the New Zealand Curriculum as a distinct subject or 'learning area'. See question 1 above.
4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	Education about religions and beliefs is not included in the New Zealand Curriculum as a distinct subject or 'learning area'. See question 1 above.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	The New Zealand Curriculum is not a time-based curriculum. That is, there are no regulations regarding timetabling or the amount of time schools must allocate to each subject (NFER, 2013). **Religious Instruction** As mentioned in the response to question 1 above, Section 78 of the Education Act 1964 allows a school (or part of a school) to close for up to one hour a week up to a total of 20 hours a year for religious instruction or religious observance, to be conducted in a manner approved by the school's Board of Trustees (schools are considered as 'closed' during the lunch break and after school). A recent survey by the Secular Education Network is reported to have found that 37.7 per cent of state primary schools offered religious instruction (based on 1663 responses out of a total 1833 state primary schools) (O'Callaghan, 2014).

6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	**Education about religions/beliefs** No, there is no formal mechanism for pupils to opt out of education about religion and beliefs where this is provided. **Religious instruction** Yes, Section 79 of the Education Act 1964 allows children to opt out if their parents do not wish them to participate in religious instruction or observances. Statistics of pupils who opt out are not available. There are reports about principals taking the decision to get parents to opt in rather than out to avoid contention in this area (O'Callaghan, 2014).
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	There is no specific review process in place for religious instruction or for the religious education curriculum. Following a 'stocktake' of the curriculum, a revised New Zealand Curriculum for teaching and learning for compulsory phase education was released at the beginning of November 2007. This curriculum was introduced between 2007 and 2010 (Sargent *et al*., 2010). There is however considerable public debate around the place of education about religions and beliefs and about religious instruction.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	No, the Ministry of Education has not produced resources or support materials for teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs. However the Ministry's Online Learning Centre (TKI) provides access via a search function to web resources (for example the UK's BBC website on religion and ethics) which teachers could draw on. In 2010 the Human Rights Commission called for the development of educational resources to teach about religious diversity in the school curriculum (HRC, 2010).

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	**Pre-school education** Ethics education is not specifically referred to in _Te Whāriki_ (1996), the early childhood education curriculum framework. _Te Whāriki_ is not subject-based; it sets out principles, strands and goals for the phase which are intended to make up the early childhood curriculum as if woven together like the strands of a woven mat, or _'whariki'_ (NFER, 2013). Ethical considerations are, however, reflected in the framework. Four foundation principles underpin _Te Whāriki_. These are: • Empowerment: the Early Childhood Curriculum should empower the child to learn and grow. • Family and community: the wider world of family and community should be an integral part of the Early Childhood Curriculum. • Holistic development: the Early Childhood Curriculum should reflect the holistic way children learn and grow and should encourage learning as a whole, rather than in separate subjects. • Relationships: the Early Childhood Curriculum should reflect the fact that children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things (Ministry of Education, 1996). _Te Whāriki_ is also based on the following aims or strands, which are interwoven with the principles: • Well-being: the health and well-being of the child should be protected and nurtured. • Belonging: linking with the children's families, with what they do and how they do it. • Contribution: opportunities for learning should be equitable and each child's contribution should be valid. • Communication: the languages and symbols of their own and other cultures should be promoted and protected and all kinds of language should be used (spoken, written, drawn and signalled). • Exploration: the child should learn through active exploration of the environment (that is, through playing and working things out through new experiences) (Ministry of Education, 1996). Lastly, goals are intended to provide clear direction for learning programmes, based on the principles and strands. The goals set out in _Te Whariki_ describe: • learning outcomes for developing children's knowledge, skills and attitudes • questions to help children think about how a programme is working • examples of the kind of experiences that can help children learn (Ministry of Education, 1996). Some example goals across the strands which may reflect ethical considerations include: • 'Belonging': children and families experience an environment where they know the limits and boundaries of

acceptable behaviour.

- 'Contribution': children experience an environment where they are encouraged to learn with and alongside others (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Primary education

Ethics education is also not a discrete learning area in the [New Zealand Curriculum](). However the curriculum framework is built upon principles and values – in addition to learning areas and competencies - which mean that ethical considerations are reflected throughout the school curriculum. Schools are required to base their curriculum on the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum (high expectations, Treaty of Waitangi, cultural diversity, inclusion, learning to learn, community engagement, coherence and future focus) and to encourage and model the values. These are:

- excellence by aiming high and by persevering in the face of difficulties
- innovation, inquiry, and curiosity, by thinking critically, creatively, and reflectively
- diversity, as found in our different cultures, languages, and heritages
- equity, through fairness and social justice
- community and participation for the common good
- ecological sustainability, which includes care for the environment
- integrity, which involves being honest, responsible, and accountable and acting ethically
- respect for themselves, for others, and for human rights (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Through their learning experiences, pupils are expected to learn about:

- their own values and those of others
- different kinds of values, such as moral, social, cultural, aesthetic, and economic values
- the values on which New Zealand's cultural and institutional traditions are based
- the values of other groups and cultures (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Through their learning experiences, pupils are also expected to develop their ability to:

- express their own values
- explore, with empathy, the values of others
- critically analyse values and actions based on them
- discuss disagreements that arise from differences in values and negotiate solutions

	• make ethical decisions and act on them (Ministry of Education, 2007). In addition, the science and technology areas of learning make specific reference to ethical considerations, and ethical considerations are reflected in the social sciences learning area (Ministry of Education, 2007).
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	The New Zealand Curriculum is a framework which provides schools with direction for teaching and learning. It is a framework rather than a detailed plan and schools develop their own curriculum and teaching programmes from it. The social sciences learning area framework includes four strands, some of which have ethical elements: • **Identity, Culture, and Organisation** – Students learn about society and communities and how they function. They also learn about the diverse cultures and identities of people within those communities and about the effects of these on the participation of groups and individuals. • **Place and Environment** – Students learn about how people perceive, represent, interpret, and interact with places and environments. They come to understand the relationships that exist between people and the environment. • **Continuity and Change** – Students learn about past events, experiences, and actions and the changing ways in which these have been interpreted over time. This helps them to understand the past and the present and to imagine possible futures. • The **Economic World** – Students learn about the ways in which people participate in economic activities and about the consumption, production, and distribution of goods and services. They develop an understanding of their role in the economy and of how economic decisions affect individuals and communities. There are similar ethical considerations in the three strands of the technology curriculum as below and in the science curriculum. • In the **technological practice** strand, students examine the practice of others and undertake their own. They develop a range of outcomes, including concepts, plans, briefs, technological models, and fully realised products or systems. Students investigate issues and existing outcomes and use the understandings gained, together with design principles and approaches, to inform their own practice. They

	also learn to consider ethics, legal requirements, protocols, codes of practice, and the needs of and potential impacts on stakeholders and the environment.
	• Through the **technological knowledge** strand, students develop knowledge particular to technological enterprises and environments and understandings of how and why things work. Students learn how functional modelling is used to evaluate design ideas and how prototyping is used to evaluate the fitness for purpose of systems and products as they are developed. An understanding of material properties, uses, and development is essential to understanding how and why products work the way they do. Similarly, an understanding of the constituent parts of systems and how these work together is essential to understanding how and why systems operate in the way they do.
	• Through the **nature of technology** strand, students develop an understanding of technology as a discipline and of how it differs from other disciplines. They learn to critique the impact of technology on societies and the environment and to explore how developments and outcomes are valued by different peoples in different times. As they do so, they come to appreciate the socially embedded nature of technology and become increasingly able to engage with current and historical issues and to explore future scenarios.
	See question 1 above in addition.
3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	The New Zealand Curriculum is a framework which provides schools with direction for teaching and learning. It is a framework rather than a detailed plan and schools develop their own curriculum and teaching programmes from it.
	Where aspects of ethics are included within the learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum (e.g. in social sciences, science and technology), achievement objectives are set at eight levels through which children progress. Each level represents a learning stage in that subject. Most Year 1-8 students (ages five to 13) will be learning between levels 1-5; the level at which each child is learning will vary by age and curriculum subject and a child will progress to the next level in a particular subject when he/she has mastered most of the skills, knowledge and understanding required at the current learning stage. As an example, the levels for the social sciences are available online.
	See question 1 above in addition.
4. Is the ethical education	Yes, ethical education is reflected in *Te Whāriki* (1996), the early childhood education curriculum framework

content integrated across the curriculum?	and in the principles and values of the New Zealand Curriculum. As highlighted above, it is also an aspect included in the social sciences, science, and technology curriculum learning areas.
	If and how ethical education content is integrated across the curriculum is a matter for individual schools to determine.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	No. The New Zealand Curriculum is not a time-based curriculum. That is, there are no regulations regarding timetabling or the amount of time schools must allocate to each subject (NFER, 2013).
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	No. There is no formal mechanism for pupils to opt out of education in ethics where this is provided.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	There is no specific review process in place for ethics in education.
	Following a 'stocktake' of the curriculum, a revised New Zealand Curriculum for teaching and learning for compulsory phase education was released at the beginning of November 2007. This curriculum was introduced between 2007 and 2010 (Sargent et *al*., 2010).
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	No. The Ministry of Education has not produced specific resources or support materials for teachers for the teaching of ethics in education. However the Ministry's Online Learning Centre (TKI) provides access via a search function to web resources which teachers could draw on.

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Northern Ireland

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

There are seven years in primary education, accommodating children aged four to 11.

Children attain compulsory school age depending on the date of their fourth birthday. A child's age on 1 July determines the point of entry: for example, children who turned four between 1 September 2013 and 1 July 2014 began primary school in September 2014, whereas children who turned four between 2 July 2014 and 31 August 2014 will begin school in September 2015.

There are three stages in primary school education in Northern Ireland:

- the Foundation Stage covering children aged four-six

- Key Stage 1 for children aged six-eight

- Key Stage 2 for eight- to 11-year-olds.

Primary schools normally have seven year groups, covering the Foundation Stage and two key stages, as follows:

Year group	Age range	Phase	Curriculum
Years 1 and 2 (P1-2)	4–6 years	Foundation Stage	Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum
Years 3 and 4 (P3-4)	6–8 years	Key Stage 1	Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum
Years 5, 6 and 7 (P5, 6, 7)	8–11 years	Key Stage 2	Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum

(European Commission, *et al.,* 2014)

The Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum (CCEA, 2007) covers six statutory Areas of Learning across the three stages.

At Foundation Stage these cover:

- language and literacy, including talking and listening, reading and writing

- mathematics and numeracy, including number, measures, shape and space, sorting and pattern and relationships

- the arts, including art and design, music and drama

- the world around us, including geography, history and science and technology

- personal development and mutual understanding, including personal understanding and health and mutual understanding in the local and wider community

- physical development and movement, including athletics, dance, games and gymnastics.

The Key Stage 1 and 2 curricula cover:

- language and literacy, including talking and listening, reading and writing and opportunities to incorporate drama

- mathematics and numeracy, focusing on the development of mathematical concepts and numeracy across the curriculum, and including mathematical processes, number, measures, shape and space, and handling data

- the arts, including art and design, music and opportunities to incorporate drama

- the world around us, focusing on the development of skills and knowledge in geography, history, and science and technology

- personal development and mutual understanding, focusing on two strands: personal understanding and health (incorporating emotional development, learning to learn, health, relationships and sexuality education); and mutual understanding in the local and global community

- physical education, focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of physical activities, including athletics, dance, games and swimming.

In addition, religious education (RE) is a compulsory subject in all grant-aided (publicly funded) schools.

The acquisition of skills through the Areas of Learning also forms a central part of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. These skills include cross-curricular and 'other' skills. The cross-curricular skills are:

- communication

- using mathematics

- using ICT.

The 'other' skills are the five strands of 'thinking skills and personal capabilities':

- thinking, problem-solving and decision-making

- self management

- working with others

- managing information

- being creative (CCEA, 2007).

Pre-school provision

All children in their final pre-school year (three- to four-year-olds) who want it receive free provision in nursery schools and nursery classes for 38 weeks during the period September to June. The pre-school year is not covered further in this country table. It is worth noting that there is no requirement for education about religions and beliefs or religious education to be provided during the pre-school year.

Note on the main categories of publicly-funded primary schools in Northern Ireland. These are:

- controlled schools – owned by Education and Library Board (ELBs) which mainly educate Protestant children

- controlled integrated schools – owned by ELBs and which educate Protestant and Catholic children together

- Catholic-maintained schools – owned mainly by the Catholic Church and which educate mainly Catholic children

- grant-maintained integrated schools – owned by trustees or the school board of governors and which educate Protestant and Catholic children together (European Commission, *et al.,* 2014).

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	No. Although the core syllabus does not preclude education about religions and beliefs, there is no specific mention of it, beyond a stated learning objective for pupils in Key Stage 2 (ages eight to eleven) to 'be aware of and have respect for differing cultures and faiths'. Teaching about 'World Religions' does not begin until secondary school.
	In addition to the statutory Areas of Learning in the curriculum, religious education (RE) is a compulsory subject in all grant-aided (publicly-funded) schools. A daily act of collective worship, most commonly through a pupil assesmbly, is also required. Catholic-maintained schools generally provide denominational RE and preparation for the sacraments. Controlled schools, mainly attended by the Protestant community, must provide religious education which is un-denominational and based upon the Holy Scriptures or some authoritative version of them (CCEA, 2014).
	Under the terms of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, there is a common core syllabus for RE defined by the Department of Education and drawn up with the agreement of the four main churches – Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist. The common core is entirely Christian in content. The core syllabus aims to ensure consistency in RE teaching and contribute to the spiritual and moral development of young people and to mutual understanding among those from different backgrounds.
	In 2002, the leaders of the four main churches were asked to review the core syllabus in light of equality and human rights obligations and the increasing religious and cultural diversity of the Northern Ireland population. The terms of reference for the review included a specific requirement to consider the inclusion of other world faiths as part of the core syllabus. The final proposals recommended that 'World Religions', designed to introduce pupils to two religions other than Christianity, should be introduced only at Key Stage 3, when children were aged 11—14 and in secondary school and, following an equality impact assessment. The proposals were accepted by the Department of Education.
	The religious education core syllabus is in line with government guidelines provided in A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland (OFMDFM, 2005), which requires that the policies, structure and curricula of schools should prepare young people to live in a diversified society and

multicultural world.

Religious education is also intended to contribute to the objectives of the Government's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) policy (DE, 2011), including that of 'equipping children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to recognize, understand and respect difference in all its forms'.

While the core syllabus for primary schools is concerned mainly with Christianity, it also states that primary children should 'be aware of and have respect for differing cultures and faiths' (Core Syllabus for RE, DE, 2007). This revised core syllabus, introduced in 2007, is not intended to be the total provision for religious education in schools, but to provide the basis on which each school can build a programme to suit its particular needs and ethos. This gives schools scope to include, for example, additional material on world religions, but it is only at Key Stage 3, in post-primary school, that there is a specific learning objective which covers the study of 'World Religions'.

Non-statutory guidelines issued by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in 2014 to help teachers in their teaching of RE, state that the focus on the Christian faith should be balanced with 'the growing need of children to develop broad intercultural competencies in their awareness and understanding of religion'. The guidelines include a range of world religions in the examples given to more fully reflect the religious diversity which children now experience. The document states further that, in an increasingly plural society, RE might be described as education in the awareness and understanding of religion, with two aspects:

Learning about religion: the knowledge base of RE which includes developing an awareness of religions and religious ideas, and an understanding of religious language, terminology and concepts.

Learning from religion: the affective or values dimension of religious learning which includes being able to reflect on ideas and to discuss and evaluate them, developing attitudes, making judgements, and listening to the views of others (CCEA, 2014).

Denominational schools may follow a specific religious instruction programme, as long as the requirements of the core syllabus are met. Examples are the all-Ireland programmes 'Alive-O', for Catholic schools and 'Follow Me' for Church of Ireland schools. Further details can be found in the country table for Ireland.

| 2. What strands/themes are | Under the core syllabus, for religious education, there are three learning objectives common to the Foundation |

taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
	Learning Objective 1: The Revelation of God
	Pupils should begin to develop an awareness, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the key Christian teachings about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), about Jesus Christ, and about the Bible; and begin to develop an ability to interpret and relate the Bible to life.
	Learning Objective 2: The Christian Church
	Pupils should begin to develop a knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the growth of Christianity, of its worship, prayer and religious language; a growing awareness of the meaning of belonging to a Christian tradition; and sensitivity towards the beliefs of others.
	Learning Objective 3: Morality
	Pupils should begin to develop their ability to think and judge about morality; to relate Christian moral principles to personal and social life; and begin to identify values and attitudes that influence behaviour (CCEA, 2007).
	CCEA's guidelines extract seven themes from these three areas as the basis for a balanced programme of religious education:
	• the Bible
	• Jesus
	• church
	• festivals
	• moral and spiritual values
	• the natural world
	• Judaism (Key Stages 1 and 2) (CCEA, 2014).
	See question 1 above, in addition.
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-	Although the categories of learning objectives for religious education remain the same across primary education, the content covered is appropriate to the age of pupils. 'Morality', for example, at Key Stage 2 includes treatment of sexuality and drugs not included at earlier stages. The breadth of the content also increases as pupils

school and) primary education?	progress through the key stages. The history of the Church, for example, is only introduced at Key Stage 2 (CCEA, 2007).
4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	The overall aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum is to empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives. There are three broad objectives: to help young people to develop as individuals, as contributors to society, and as contributors to the economy and environment. The key elements to be fostered within these categories are: • as individuals: personal and mutual understanding, personal health, moral character and spiritual understanding • as contributors to society: citizenship, cultural understanding, ethical awareness • as contributors to the economy and environment: employability, economic awareness and education for sustainable development. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) describes the role of religious education (RE) in the curriculum as 'presenting young people with chances to develop their personal understanding and enhance their spiritual and ethical awareness'. In 2014, CCEA issued non-statutory guidelines to help teachers to relate their teaching of RE more clearly to the objectives and approaches of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. This includes linking RE to the 'thinking skills and personal capabilities' of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (thinking, problem-solving and decision-making; self management; working with others; managing information; being creative), as well as encouraging teachers to make full use of cross-curricular approaches and active learning and teaching methods. Strand 2 of the Area of Learning 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' (PDMU) at Key Stage 1, 'Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community', includes the aims of: • appreciating ways we are similar and different, for example, age, culture, disability, gender, hobbies, race, religion, sporting interests, abilities and work • being aware of their own cultural heritage, its traditions and celebrations. At Key Stage 2, strand 2 of PDMU includes understanding that differences and similarities between people arise from a number of factors including cultural, ethnic/racial and religious diversity, gender and disability (CCEA, 2007).

	Underpinning the curriculum is the principle of 'Connected Learning'. Throughout their school careers, young people need to be motivated to learn and see the relevance and connections in what they are learning. An important part of that process is being able to see how knowledge gained in one area can connect to another and how similar skills are being developed and reinforced right across the curriculum (CCEA, 2007). 'Ideas for Connected Learning' (ICLs), developed by CCEA, include examples of how some elements of education about religions and beliefs could be incorporated into teaching. They include, for example: • Food for Thought – which looks at the significance and symbolism of food within pupils' own and other faith traditions and celebrations at different times of the year (for Years 3 and 4, ages six to eight). • Let's Celebrate – which looks at different celebrations to allow pupils to begin to appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural and religious groups (for Years 3 and 4, ages six to eight). • Saint Patrick and People of Faith – which aims to build understanding of the leaders of faiths other than Christianity (for Year 5, age eight-nine). • Faith and Light – which features festivals and special times such as Advent/Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali and Ramadan (for Years 6 and 7, ages nine to 11).
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	Under the terms of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the amount of time to be spent per subject cannot be prescribed. Organisation of the school timetable and the allocation of hours to subjects is left to the school's discretion. However, under the Statutory Rules (N.I.) 21 (4) 1973 No. 402, there is a minimum requirement of one half hour (30 minutes) of religious education per day. Based on a five-day-week and a 38-week school year, the annual minimum allocation of hours to religious education would be 95. Schools may make provision for more than the minimum. Whether schools remain within or go beyond this allocation, any inclusion of education about religions and beliefs is discretionary and will vary from school to school. There is a lack of evidence on how RE is taught in schools. The exemption of RE from inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate, unless by request of the Board of Governors, contributes to this lack.
6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	Yes, parents have the right to withdraw their children wholly or partly from religious education and collective worship. There is no officially collected data on the incidence of parents withdrawing their children from religious education. In November 2005, as part of the review of the core syllabus for RE, the Department of Education

	carried out a survey of schools to find out how many pupils were withdrawn from RE lessons at the request of their parents during the 2004/05 school year. The survey included 77 primary schools with a total of 14,434 pupils enrolled.
	Key findings were that:
	• There were pupils withdrawn from RE lessons in 21 per cent of the primary schools surveyed.
	• Of the primary school pupils surveyed, 0.39 per cent had been withdrawn (57 in 16 of the 77 schools).
	(Reported in *Results of an Equality Impact Assessment of Proposals for the Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education* (DE, 2006).)
	Mawhinny *et al.* (2010) argue that increased provision of inclusive RE within the Northern Ireland education system would provide an option for minority belief students who wish to study RE, and would also considerably reduce the need of many to opt out.
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	There is no specified review process for religious education. The last review took place in 2006, in parallel with the general review of other elements of the statutory curriculum being undertaken by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). At this time, the four main churches reviewed the core syllabus for RE; the revised syllabus was introduced in 2007.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	Yes. In June 2014, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) issued *Religious Education in the Primary School: Non-Statutory Guidance Materials.* The materials were prepared:
	to help teachers in primary schools to make effective use of the Northern Ireland Core Syllabus for Religious Education and to assist curriculum leaders and co-ordinators in their planning for RE throughout the school. They offer advice and suggestions on how to develop themes and topics from the core syllabus and to teach them using approaches and activities that teachers are familiar with from other areas of the curriculum (CCEA, 2014).
	In addition, Northern Ireland Curriculum Thematic Units were developed by the Religious Education Advisory Group and issued to schools in 2010. The section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website on Ideas for Connected Learning (ICLs), also contains resources.

	The section of the website 'Living.Learning.Together' has resources for year groups 1 -7 for the closely connected Area of Learning of Personal Development and Mutual Undestanding. There is, for example, a unit within Year 3 on 'living with difference', and one on organising visits to churches for people of different faiths.

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Although there is no discrete provision made for education in ethics in the curriculum, treatment of ethical considerations can be found in several areas of the curriculum. For example, in the whole curriculum aims and objectives section of the curriculum for primary education, the three broad objectives are described as being: to help young people to develop as individuals, as contributors to society and as contributors to the economy and environment. Informed by the idea of helping young people to achieve personal fulfilment and individual well-being through worthwhile activities and relationships, the key elements associated with helping children to develop as individuals are: • personal and mutual understanding, personal health, moral character and spiritual understanding. Informed by the principle that individual fulfilment is closely intertwined with other people's lives and that children and young people need to be concerned for the well-being of others as well as themselves, in their own society and beyond it, the key curriculum elements associated with developing children as positive contributors to society are: • citizenship, cultural understanding, and ethical awareness. To prepare pupils for the future economic choices they will have to make and for the impact they will have, individually and collectively, on the environment, the key elements of preparing children to develop as contributors to the economy and environment are: • employability, economic awareness and education for sustainable development (CCEA, 2007).
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	The Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) Area of Learning has the closest links with ethics, being concerned with the development of values and attitudes. PDMU has two strands, 'Personal Understanding and Health' and 'Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community'. Included in the 'Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities' which underpin the curriculum, is 'Working with others'. Amongst the ethical themes covered in this are:

	- listening actively and sharing opinions - developing routines of turn taking, sharing and co-operating - understanding how actions and words effect others - adapting behaviour and language to suit different people and situations - being fair - respecting the views and opinions of others and reaching agreements using negotiation and compromise (CCEA, 2007).
3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	Although the broad themes of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) are the same across primary education, the specific topics dealt with are introduced at an appropriate age and taught at an appropriate level. At Foundation Stage level (ages four to six) pupils should be enabled to explore: - their relationships with family and friends - their responsibilities for self and others - how to respond appropriately in conflict situations - similarities and differences between groups of people - learning to live as a member of a community. At Key Stage 1 (ages six to eight) pupils should be enabled to explore: - initiating and developing mutually satisfying relationships - responsibility and respect, honesty and fairness - constructive approaches to conflict - similarities and differences between people - developing themselves as members of a community. At Key Stage 2 (ages eight to 11) pupils should be enabled to explore:

	- initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships - human rights and social responsibility - causes of conflict and appropriate responses - valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity - playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment. The activities in the Foundation Stage aim to enhance the emotional development of children, their understanding of themselves and their relationships with others. The Foundation Stage builds upon the child's own experiences and understanding from home, pre-school and community. Through Key Stages 1 and 2, children should be provided with opportunities to progress from: - learning about themselves as individuals and exploring their own feelings and emotions to becoming more aware of others, learning more about how they interact with others and impact on their feelings and behaviour - having a positive attitude about themselves and their learning to developing strategies to improve their learning - learning about the different options for a healthy, safe lifestyle and how we grow to respecting their own body and keeping it safe and healthy by making the right choices becoming aware of the relationships they have with their family, friends and others in school and in the local community to an appreciation and understanding of other cultures in the local and wider community (CCEA, 2007).
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	Ethical education content is integrated across the curriculum in Northern Ireland. See questions 1, 2 and 3 above.
5. Are there guidelines as to	No, under the terms of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the amount of time to be spent per subject

how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	cannot be prescribed. Organisation of the school timetable and the allocation of hours to subjects is left to the school's discretion.
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	No, there is no opt-out from any of the Areas of Learning through which ethical issues are considered, except for religious education.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	There is no specific review process in place for ethics in the curriculum. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has a remit to keep all aspects of the curriculum under review. Fundamental reviews are undertaken at the request of the Minister for Education. The current National Curriculum was introduced in 2007.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	Yes, a suite of learning activities has been provided on the Living.Learning.Together (PDMU) section of the CCEA website. The materials cover all year groups. Some of the most relevant units include:

Year 1 (age 4/5)	Year 2 (age 5/6)	Year 3 (age 6/7)	Year 4 (age 7/8)	Year 5 (age 8/9)	Year 6 (age 9/10)	Year 7 (age 10/11)
Belonging and co-operating Caring and sharing You and me (valuing diversity)	Getting along with others	Why should I? Living with differences	I am...you are...we can (inclusiveness)	Valuing self and others Learning more about others	Working at harmony Decisions... decisions (increasing awareness of others)	Says who? (Making responsible decisions) Who cares? (exploration of fairness and justice, prejudice, discrimination and sectarianism)

CCEA also provides a microsite Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities to support teachers in developing these skills in pupils.

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Scotland

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

Scotland's Education Acts define the age at which education becomes compulsory and the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 deals at some length with how to determine and interpret this. rimary schooling is organised as a separate level of education over seven years (Primary 1-7) from age five to 12 (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).

Pupils usually start primary school at age five, although there are some four-year-olds in school, since four-year-olds who will become five before the following February may enter school at the beginning of the academic year in August (although, in this case, parents have the option of deferring entry for a year) (Scottish Government, 2014b). Where a child does not become five until after February, that child will begin primary school in the August following their fifth birthday (Sturman, 2008).

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 gives local authorities a duty to provide a free, part-time pre-school education place for all three- and four-year-olds whose parents want it. This legislation came into effect in April 2002 (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

The primary school curriculum is part of Scotland's all-through curriculum, for pupils from pre-school through to pre-university level. This [Curriculum for Excellence](#) (Scottish Government *et al*., 2014) aims to provide a coherent, flexible, enriched curriculum from ages three to 18 (Education Scotland, 2014c).

The early level of Curriculum for Excellence treats both pre-school education and the early part of primary school as 'early education' and seeks to promote similar kinds of learning in both settings. It argues that active learning is crucial as the means by which young children develop vital skills and knowledge and a positive attitude to learning (Scottish Government *et al*., 2014). Additional information (Scottish Government, 2010b) supplements the curriculum, providing guidance on how to ensure that all children in pre-school and primary school settings experience stimulating, effective learning in ways that are appropriate to their needs to enable them to develop their capacities as:

- successful learners

- confident individuals

- responsible citizens and

- effective contributors (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).

Year group	Age range	Phase	Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, early level
Nursery schools and classes	3-5		Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, early level
Primary 1 (P1)	5-6	Infant or early education	Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, first level
Primary 2 (P2)	6-7	Infant or early education	Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, first level
Primary 3 (P3)	7-8	Infant or early education	Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, first level
Primary 4 (P4)	8-9	Middle primary stage	Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, second level
Primary 5 (P5)	9-10	Middle primary stage	Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, second level
Primary 6 (P6)	10-11	Upper primary stage	Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18, second level
Primary 7 (P7)	11-12	Upper primary stage	

NFER, 2013

The curriculum aims to ensure that pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to flourish, in the present and future. It seeks to promote health and well-being, literacy and numeracy; to engage children in learning about and understanding their environment; to help them express themselves through art, music, drama and physical activity; to develop their awareness of religious, moral and social values; and to learn about the impact of science and technology on society (European Commission *et al.*, 2014). The 'experiences and outcomes' of Curriculum for Excellence are organised into eight curriculum areas:

- Expressive arts

- Health and well-being

- Languages

- Mathematics

- Religious and moral education (religious education in state-funded Catholic schools)

- Sciences

- Social studies

- Technologies

The majority of schools in Scotland are non-denominational, but denominational state schools do exist. The vast majority of denominational state schools are Roman Catholic (but there are also three Scottish Episcopal and one Jewish school). As part of the arrangement that brought Roman Catholic schools within the state education system, there were specific legal provisions made to ensure the promotion of a Roman Catholic ethos in such schools and the Roman Catholic church in Scotland appoints a chaplain to each of these schools.

The position of religious education in denominational schools is set out in statute. In Catholic schools, the Catholic Education Commission has responsibility for the faith content of the curriculum on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland. The Scottish Government has worked in partnership with the Catholic Education Commission in the development of guidance for Catholic schools in keeping with the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and, in Catholic schools, the term 'religious education' is used in preference to 'religious and moral education' (Scottish Government *et al*., 2014).

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes, 'religious and moral education' is statutory in publicly-funded non-denominational Scottish schools (but not in pre-school centres). Requirements are outlined in the curriculum area of religious and moral education (RME), one of eight curriculum areas in the Curriculum for Excellence. In state-funded Catholic schools, 'religious education' is the statutory curriculum area. This too is covered in the 'experiences and outcomes' document for the Curriculum for Excellence.
	Religious and moral education (RME) is designed to enable pupils to explore the world's major religions (as well as views which are independent of religious belief) and to consider the challenges posed by these beliefs and values. It supports pupils in developing and reflecting upon their own values and their capacity for moral judgement. Through developing awareness and appreciation of the value of each individual in a diverse society, RME aims to engender responsible attitudes to other people. It is intended that this awareness and appreciation will assist in counteracting prejudice and intolerance as children and young people consider issues such as sectarianism and discrimination more broadly.
	The specific aims and principles of RME are that pupils should:
	• recognise religion as an important expression of human experience
	• learn about and from the beliefs, values, practices and traditions of Christianity and the world religions selected for study, and about other traditions including viewpoints independent of religious belief
	• explore and develop their knowledge and understanding of religions, recognising the place of Christianity in the Scottish context
	• investigate and understand the responses which religious and non-religious views can offer to questions about the nature and meaning of life
	• recognise and understand religious diversity and the importance of religion in society
	• develop respect for others and an understanding of beliefs and practices which are different from their own
	• explore and establish values such as wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity and engage in the

development of and reflection upon their own moral values

- develop their beliefs, attitudes, values and practices through reflection, discovery and critical evaluation

- develop the skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking and deciding how to act when making moral decisions

- make a positive difference to the world by putting their beliefs and values into action

- establish a firm foundation for lifelong learning, further learning and adult life (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).

Religious education in Catholic schools takes place within the context of the wider Catholic faith community, in partnership with home and parish. It is an integral part of the Catholic school, which is itself a community of faith. It is designed to assist children and young people to be increasingly able to make an informed and mature response to God in faith and to nurture that faith. It offers opportunities for both evangelisation – proclaiming the Gospel message to all – and catechesis – the deepening of existing faith commitments among believers (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).

Although the focus of religious education in state-funded Catholic schools is in pupils developing their understanding of the Catholic faith, children also learn respect for, and understanding of, other Christian traditions and an appreciation of significant aspects of major world religions. Where appropriate, they also learn about stances for living which are independent of religious belief. The specific aims and principles of religious education in Catholic schools are that pupils should:

- develop their knowledge and deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith
- investigate and understand the relevance of the Catholic faith to questions about truth and the meaning of life
- highlight, develop and foster the values, attitudes and practices which are compatible with a positive response to the invitation to faith
- develop the skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking, and deciding how to act in accordance with an informed conscience when making moral decisions
- nurture their prayer life as an individual and as part of the school community

	• understand and appreciate significant aspects of other Christian traditions and major world religions
	• make a positive difference to themselves and to the world by putting their beliefs and values into action (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	The curriculum for religious and moral education contains an emphasis on Christianity since it has shaped the history and traditions of Scotland and continues to exert an influence on national life. Nonetheless, it is also seen as a fundamental principle that pupils should consider a range of faiths and views, whatever their own situation and local context. The experiences and outcomes of the curriculum are designed to lead pupils to extend their learning far beyond the local context to national and international contexts, and pupils are exposed to religions other than Christianity from the earliest years of their curriculum experience. There are three lines of development throughout the religious and moral education (RME) area of the curriculum. These are:

• beliefs

• values and issues

• practices and traditions (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).

Each of these lines of development is specified in relation to Christianity and then again in relation to the other world religions and viewpoints selected for study. Throughout the early and primary years, pupils experience RME through stories, images, music, poetry, artefacts, places, celebrations, and discussion.

By the end of primary school, it is intended that pupils will show understanding of stories from the biblical tradition and other traditions. They will have become familiar with some of the key beliefs of Christians and those of the other faiths they are studying, and they will be able to describe similarities and differences between those beliefs and their own developing beliefs. They will understand some practices and traditions from Christianity and from other faiths, will show respect for the practices and traditions of others, and will understand how some of the Christian practices and traditions have shaped aspects of Scottish society. They will be able to discuss their developing moral values (such as the values of fairness, equality, love, caring, sharing and human rights (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).

Teachers are expected to take account of and value the religious and cultural diversity within their own local communities, teaching through relevant contexts which are familiar to their pupils. Teachers in their schools |

	decide which world religions will be selected for study alongside Christianity, in order to develop depth of understanding in their pupils. In making these decisions, teachers are advised to acknowledge local circumstances and community expectations, to involve parents in decision making, and to avoid superficial coverage of too many religions and too many aspects (which is seen as potentially confusing for pupils). Primary schools are encouraged to focus on a maximum of two world religions in addition to Christianity, although it is noted that teachers may also want to draw upon carefully selected aspects of other religions, possibly in the context of interdisciplinary learning (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014). RME has some overlap with ethical education, which is outlined in more detail under line of inquiry 2. Guidance on assessment in the area of RME is also included in the curriculum document. The curriculum for religious education in Catholic schools builds on the openness of Catholic schools to other young people regardless of denominations and faiths. It is organised in two main strands – 'Catholic Christianity' (which includes mystery of God, in the image of God, revealed truth of God, son of God, signs of God, word of God, hours of God, and reign of God) and 'Other world religions' which is organised around the same lines of development as RME – beliefs, values and issues, and practices and traditions (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
3. How does education about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	As noted in the response to question 2 above, it is a fundamental principle that all pupils should consider a range of faiths and views, whatever their own situation and local context, and regardless of whether they are following the RME curriculum or the religious education curriculum in a Catholic school. Hence, the curriculum at the beginning and end of primary school varies in depth, sophistication and detail, rather than in the range of experience expected (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014). The Curriculum for Excellence defines five levels of learning, the first three of which apply to primary level education. The early level of the Curriculum for Excellence applies to children in pre-school and Primary 1 (P1) (ages three to five/six); the first level from Primary 2 (P2) to P4 (ages six to eight/nine), and the second level up to P7, the final year of primary school (ages nine to 11/12) (Education Scotland, 2014c). At the early level (pre-school to P1), learning is experiential. Pupils experience stories, images, music and poems related to religions and beliefs. They learn through play and socialising activities, and through celebrations and festivals. As pupils move from the early level to the first and second levels, they explore the specified topics in

	more depth, discuss them in more detail, encounter a broader range of artefacts and experiences, relate their learning more widely to their own knowledge, experience and beliefs, and begin to consider the influence of Christian beliefs on Scottish society (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	The religious education curriculum for Catholic schools states explicitly that, in addition to developing their understanding of the Catholic faith, children and young people will come to an appreciation of significant aspects of major world religions. During the pre-school period and from experiences within their local community, most children will have learned something about other world religions, for example through festivals and celebrations, and teachers will want to build on that knowledge as they gradually introduce learning about other world religions. It states further that other world religions would normally be taught from P3 (age seven) onwards but that, where appropriate, this should be adapted to meet the needs of a diverse school community. The outcomes for primary religious education in Catholic schools can be met through a consideration of Judaism and Islam in the primary stages (although this can be adapted, where appropriate, to include some other world religions which exist in the school context) (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	Yes. Religious and moral education (RME) is designed to contribute to the curriculum as a whole. Values such as justice, wisdom, compassion and integrity are expected to be constantly enacted through all aspects of the life of the school as a community. It is expected that pupils will be given opportunities to participate in service to others, to meet people who show their faith in action and to learn from those who offer inspiration, challenge and support. The RME experiences and outcomes encourage links with other areas of the curriculum to provide learners with deeper, more enjoyable and active experiences. These experiences contribute to the development of the four capacities of: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors, as referenced throughout the curriculum (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	RME has strong associations with learning for citizenship, enterprise, international education, creativity and sustainable development. Teachers are encouraged to organise and group experiences and outcomes in different and creative ways to bring together various elements of learning as well as linking with the school's involvement in the wider community. Aspects of health and well-being in the curriculum provide opportunities for learning about moral dimensions of life including relationships, and pupils are expected to examine moral and ethical issues in other areas of the curriculum. Social studies and science offer opportunities to relate RME to global contexts and to raise contemporary moral and ethical issues. The expressive arts provide means to raise

	awareness of different views and beliefs, and to promote discussion and debate. Effective links with English and Gaelic also support the exploration of beliefs, values and issues through literature, poetry and other types of text (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	In addition, the experiences and outcomes relating to the development of pupils' own beliefs and values are not seen as a separate context for planning but are expected to be intertwined with the experiences and outcomes for Christianity and the world religions selected for study (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	The curriculum for religious education in Catholic schools states that, if education in faith is at the heart of the Catholic school, then this should be reflected in the priority Catholic schools give to religious education as a subject in its own right. That said, the curriculum document states further that there are, of course, meaningful links between religious education and all other areas of the curriculum which are important and complement, but do not displace, the need for the minimum time allocation for religious education in Catholic schools (see question 5 below). In particular, some aspects of health and well-being provide opportunities for learning about some moral dimensions of life – for example, relationships education (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	Note: In addition, all staff in Scottish schools have a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend learning in health and well-being across learning; literacy across learning; and numeracy across learning.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	No. For the teaching of religious and moral education, the Curriculum for Excellence framework outlines what is to be taught, but not the time to be allocated to learning in each area. Schools have the freedom to think imaginatively about how the experiences and outcomes might be organised and planned for in creative ways that encourage deep, sustained learning and meet the needs of pupils (Education Scotland, 2014a).
	In Catholic schools however, there are guidelines for the amount of time to be allocated to the teaching of religious education. All Catholic schools are expected by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland to follow guidelines established by the Catholic Education Commission on the provision of adequate time for religious education within the school curriculum. These guidelines indicate a requirement for a minimum of 2.5 hours per week in primary school (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014), so 95 hours per year in the 38-week school year in Scotland.
6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to	Yes. The Education Acts stipulates that schools must provide religious education, as well as religious observance, although parents may withdraw their children from both (European Commission *et al.*, 2014).

receive education about religions and beliefs?	A conscience clause in section 9 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 advises that parents have a statutory right to withdraw children from participation in religious and moral education (RME) and religious education in Roman Catholic schools (Scottish Government, 2011a).
	There does not appear to be a publicly-available record of the numbers opting out – of religious and moral education, religious education or religious observance - or of the background of those who choose to opt out.
	Where parents are considering withdrawing their child(ren) from the study of religious and moral education, schools are expected to provide them with sufficient information on which to base this decision, and to ensure that they are aware of the content of the RME that the school wishes to undertake. Where a pupil is withdrawn, schools should make suitable arrangements for them to participate in a worthwhile alternative activity (Scottish Government, 2011a).
	Parents also have a right to withdraw children from participation in religious observance (e.g. religious assemblies). This right should always be made known to parents and their wishes respected, and parents should be provided with sufficient information on which to base a decision. Schools are encouraged to inform parents (without applying pressure to change their minds) that religious observance complements religious (and moral) education and is an important contribution to pupils' development, as well as having a role in promoting the ethos of a school by bringing pupils together and creating a sense of community. Where a child is withdrawn from religious observance, schools should make suitable arrangements for the child to participate in a worthwhile alternative activity (Scottish Government, 2011b).
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	There is no timetabled review for the religious education curriculum.
	Curriculum for Excellence was developed over a number of years, beginning with a national debate in 2002, publication of the curriculum itself in 2004, publication of the draft experiences and outcomes in 2007-2008 and publication of the new curriculum guidelines in 2009, ahead of the planning and implementation phase from 2009 to 2011 (Education Scotland, 2009). There does not appear to be a formal timetabled review process, but the Scottish Government carries out policy reviews as appropriate and the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Group monitors progress, publishes an annual report, and makes recommendations for action as appropriate (Education Scotland, 2012).
	The latest implementation plan for Curriculum for Excellence (Education Scotland, 2014b) outlines activities to be

carried out in 2014-15 in order to further support the implementation of the religious and moral education (RME) curriculum. These include the establishment of a national reference group of practitioners for RME and religious education in Catholic schools, and a review of online resources. The inclusion of RME activities in the 2014-15 Curriculum for Excellence implementation plan follows the publication, in February 2014, of the [impact review of religious and moral education](#).

Findings from this impact review include that:

- Children and young people in Scotland often have good opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and health and well-being through religious and moral education.

- Increasingly, effective learning takes place outdoors or with partners in the wider community.
- Children and young people increasingly engage in learning about religions and beliefs relevant to their local community.
- Children in pre-school often engage in learning which encourages them to share beliefs and family traditions.
- Almost all Catholic schools deliver an appropriate broad general education.

Aspects for development in the teaching of religious and moral education in Scotland highlighted in the review include that:

- Not all children and young people experience high-quality teaching and learning.

- The development of information and communications technology (ICT) skills is not consistently a well-planned aspect of learning in religious and moral education.
- In most schools, arrangements for assessment and moderation of religious and moral education are at an early stage of development.
- Parents require more information about how they can support learning in RME and religious education.
- There is scope for local authorities to improve arrangements for quality assuring RME and religious education to bring about sustained improvements.
- In a significant number of non-denominational schools, children and young people need more opportunities to develop their own beliefs and values through learning about a range of religions and other beliefs.
- There are few examples of effective planning for progression from primary to secondary education.
- In many Catholic schools, there is scope to further strengthen partnership working with parents and the

parish community to extend learning and achievement (Education Scotland, 2014e).

Alongside the impact report, Education Scotland published examples of effective practice in the teaching of RME and religious education.

Prior to the 2014 impact review of RME and religious education, in 2011, the Scottish Government established the RME Excellence Group to identify features of best practice in RME and religious education; to examine issues for teachers of RME and the wider educational community; and to make suggestions for the promotion and delivery of excellence within RME. Some of the issues/aspects for development highlighted in the final (2011) report of the RME Excellence Group remain development areas in the 2014 impact review (including progression in the teaching of RME from primary to secondary education, the use of and access to ICT in the teaching of RME, and communication with parents about RME provision) (RME Excellence Group, n.d.).

In 2011, the Scottish Government also had a policy focus on religious observance, having recognised the need to update the 1991 and 2005 Circulars on the provision of RME and religious observance. The purpose of the revisions was to bring previous advice in line with the new curriculum. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 continues to impose a statutory duty on all local authorities to provide religious education and religious observance in Scottish schools and the review did not impose changes to the legislative position regarding this (Scottish Government, 2014a).

8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	Yes. As the Curriculum for Excellence was introduced, a series of supporting documents (Building the Curriculum) was produced. Building the Curriculum 1 (Scottish Government, 2010a,) aimed to help teachers plan for integrated learning; identify ways of developing learning and teaching to reflect the four capacities; make connections across the curriculum through collaborative planning; plan interdisciplinary work; and engage with the experiences and outcomes. Building the Curriculum 2 (Scottish Government, 2008) was concerned with practical ways to introduce more active approaches to learning and teaching in early primary settings. It encourages teachers in all stages to reflect on and develop their professional practice regarding the consistent use of active learning approaches. Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2010b) expanded further, providing guidance on the new framework and setting out considerations that were critical to the adoption of Curriculum for Excellence. This series of documents supported teachers in integrating religious and moral education (RME), as well as other subjects, as the new curriculum began to embed.

In addition to this structural support, the outline of each curriculum area in the Curriculum for Excellence document includes a summary of principles and practice, which gives teachers guidance on how to implement that area.

In terms of teaching content, the Education Scotland religious and moral education webpage includes a support section containing resources such as testimonies and descriptions of the key tenets of various faiths and world views, planning tools, and case studies. There is also a section of the website devoted to sharing practice, which includes some resources specific to RME.

The religious education in Roman Catholic schools page of the Education Scotland website similarly includes a link to support documents for the teaching of religious education in Catholic schools. In addition, the publication *This is Our Faith* provides guidance to teachers on the religious education curriculum which has been developed for children and young people in Catholic schools in Scotland. This sits alongside the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes document. *This is Our Faith* was last reviewed in 2011.

Although not connected to the education department, Young Scot (a national youth information and citizenship charity) provides a website aimed at pupils aged 11+ (relevant to the last year of primary school, and to secondary schooling), which includes useful information relevant to RME, among other areas.

In addition, to support the professional development of teachers of religious and moral education in Scotland, the Religious Education Movement in Scotland (REMS) has developed a website of peer-reviewed resources set in the context of the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes. Some elements of education in ethics are taught through religious and moral education (RME) (or religious education in Catholic schools) and have been discussed in line of inquiry 1. Others are covered elsewhere in the curriculum, primarily through social studies and through cross-curricular learning related to the curriculum's four capacities: to enable each child or young person to be a successful learner; a confident individual; a responsible citizen; and an effective contributor (European Commission *et al.,* 2014). The four capacities underlie the curriculum and are intended to be embedded throughout the curriculum. These elements are all statutory requirements.
	Through social studies, pupils develop their understanding of the world by learning about other people and their values, in different times, places and circumstances. They also develop their understanding of their environment and of how it has been shaped. As they mature, their experiences are broadened using Scottish, British, European and wider contexts for learning, while maintaining a focus on the historical, social, geographic, economic and political changes that have shaped Scotland. They learn about human achievements and about how to make sense of changes in society, of conflicts and of environmental issues. With greater understanding comes the opportunity and ability to influence events by exercising informed and responsible citizenship (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	The specific aims and principles of social studies are that pupils will:
	• develop their understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, and an appreciation of local and national heritage within the world
	• broaden their understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present
	• develop their understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others
	• develop their understanding of the principles of democracy and citizenship through experience of critical and independent thinking
	• explore and evaluate different types of sources and evidence

	• learn how to locate, explore and link periods, people and events in time and place
	• learn how to locate, explore and link features and places locally and further afield
	• engage in activities which encourage enterprising attitudes
	• develop an understanding of concepts that stimulate enterprise and influence business
	• establish firm foundations for lifelong learning and for further specialised study and careers.
	While some of these aims have a remit beyond that of education in ethics, they contribute to the overall integrated approach to teaching encouraged in the curriculum (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	The social studies curriculum is structured under three main 'organisers': • people, past events and societies • people, place and environment • people in society, economy and business. The first organiser covers the historical perspective. This is relevant to education in ethics as it includes pupils using (and evaluating the validity of) sources of evidence, a key skill in ethical understanding. The second organiser covers geographical skills and understanding, including caring for the environment, the impact of humans on the environment and vice versa, land use and housing. This strand is relevant to education in ethics as local study will increase awareness of the local community. Elements of these two organisers are explored in more depth in the third organiser, which covers topics related to education in ethics such as: the validity of evidence from different sources; the roles of people in the community; need and wants; diversity, values and customs; the impact of discrimination; rights, responsibilities and democracy; decision-making; and managing money and business skills (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014). The four capacities are also relevant in this regard (education for successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors):

successful learners	confident individuals	responsible citizens	effective contributors
attributes	**attributes**	**attributes**	**attributes**
• enthusiasm and motivation for learning • determination to reach high standards of achievement • openness to new thinking and ideas	• self-respect • a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being • secure values and beliefs • ambition	• respect for others • commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life	• an enterprising attitude • resilience • self-reliance
capabilities	**capabilities**	**capabilities**	**capabilities**
• use literacy, communication and numeracy skills • use technology for learning • think creatively and independently • learn independently and as part of a group • make reasoned evaluations • link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations.	• relate to others and manage themselves • pursue a healthy and active lifestyle • be self-aware • develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world • live as independently as they can • assess risk and make informed decisions • achieve success in different areas of activity.	• develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it • understand different beliefs and cultures • make informed choices and decisions • evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues • develop informed, ethical views of complex issues.	• communicate in different ways and in different settings • work in partnership and in teams • take the initiative and lead • apply critical thinking in new contexts • create and develop • solve problems

3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	As is the case for RME, each of the three social studies organisers applies at each level of learning (i.e. during the early years and throughout primary schooling), and the curriculum at each stage varies in depth, sophistication and level of detail (Scottish Government *et al*, 2014). The Curriculum for Excellence defines five levels of learning, the first three of which apply to primary level education. The early level of the Curriculum for Excellence applies to children in pre-school and Primary 1 (P1) (ages three to five/six); the first level from Primary 2 (P2) to P4 (ages six to eight/nine), and the second level up to P7, the final year of primary school (ages nine to 11/12) (Education Scotland, 2014c). For example, at the early stage of learning, pupils should become aware that different types of evidence can help them find out about the world while, at the second level (typically reached towards the end of primary

	school), pupils should have progressed to using evidence selectively to research current social, political or economic issues (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	Similarly, at the early stage, pupils would be expected to make decisions and take responsibility in their everyday experiences and play, and to show consideration for others while, at the second level, they should have progressed to a wider understanding, being able to describe the main features of a democracy and discuss the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Scotland (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	As a final example, at the early level, pupils will build their familiarity with their community, including finding out about the different roles people play. By the second level, pupils will have a deeper understanding of their community, including gathering and using information about forms of discrimination against people in societies and considering the impact this has on people's lives (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	More information and examples are available online
4. Is the ethical education content integrated across the curriculum?	Yes. The curriculum is designed to be taught in an integrated way. The four capacities mentioned earlier (enabling each pupil to become a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen, and an effective contributor) are intended to be embedded throughout the curriculum. The requirement related to becoming a responsible citizen, in particular, means that elements of education for ethics are represented in all curriculum areas to some degree (Education Scotland, 2014d).
	The three organisers of the social studies curriculum area (people, past events and societies; people, place and environment; people in society, economy and business) enable teaching to reflect local contexts, and all staff teaching social studies are encouraged to identify opportunities to develop and reinforce social studies knowledge and skills both within their own teaching activities and through working with their colleagues to plan interdisciplinary studies and a coherent approach to the development of literacy, numeracy, citizenship, creativity, enterprise and sustainability. Teachers can plan opportunities for pupils to become involved in their local community and the wider world, and to support pupils in considering and developing their roles as active and informed citizens and in showing respect for others in their community and more widely (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	As noted for religious and moral education (RME), values such as justice, wisdom, compassion and integrity are expected to be constantly enacted through all aspects of the life of the school as a community. It is

	expected that pupils will be given opportunities to participate in service to others, to become familiar with their local communities, and to learn from those who offer inspiration, challenge and support (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	The experiences and outcomes for both RME and social studies encourage links with other areas of the curriculum. Aspects of health and well-being in the curriculum provide opportunities for learning about ethical and moral dimensions of life, and pupils are expected to examine moral and ethical issues in other areas of the curriculum. Social studies, RME and science offer opportunities to learn about global contexts and to raise contemporary moral and ethical issues. The expressive arts provide means to raise awareness and understanding of different views and beliefs and promote discussion and debate. Effective links with English and Gaelic also support the exploration of beliefs, values and issues through literature, poetry and other types of text (Scottish Government *et al.*, 2014).
	Note: In addition, all staff in Scottish schools have a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend learning in health and well-being across learning; literacy across learning; and numeracy across learning.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to ethics education?	No. The Curriculum for Excellence framework outlines what is to be taught, but not the time to be allocated to learning in each area. Schools have the freedom to think imaginatively about how the experiences and outcomes might be organised and planned for in creative ways that encourage deep, sustained learning and meet the needs of pupils (Education Scotland, 2014a).
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	Although there is no opt-out for social studies, or from the four capacities, parents may withdraw their children from religious and moral education (RME), thereby removing them from some exposure to education about ethics. More information about this is provided in response to line of inquiry 1.
	There does not appear to be a publicly-available record of the numbers opting out of RME, or the background of those who choose to opt out.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	There is no timetabled review in place for ethical aspects of the curriculum.
	As noted earlier, the Curriculum for Excellence was developed over a number of years, beginning with a national debate in 2002, publication of the Curriculum itself in 2004, publication of the draft experiences and outcomes in 2007-2008 and publication of the new curriculum guidelines in 2009, ahead of the planning and

	implementation phase from 2009 to 2011 (Education Scotland, 2009).
	Although there is no formal timetabled review process in place, the Scottish Government carries out policy reviews as appropriate and the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Group monitors progress, publishes an annual report, and makes recommendations for action as appropriate (Education Scotland, 2012).
	The latest implementation plan for Curriculum for Excellence (Education Scotland, 2014b) outlines activities to be carried out in 2014-15 in order to further support the implementation of the social studies curriculum. These include the continued development of the social studies local authority network and the development of a web-based resource for practitioners to enable them to identify the unique skills contained in the social studies curriculum area. The inclusion of social studies activities in the 2014-15 Curriculum for Excellence implementation plan follows the publication, in September 2013, of the impact review of social studies education (Education Scotland, 2013).
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	Yes. The support structures are similar to those outlined for RME in line of inquiry 1.
	As the Curriculum for Excellence was introduced, a series of supporting documents (Building the Curriculum) was produced. This series of documents supported teachers in integrating social studies, as well as other subjects, as the new curriculum began to embed.
	As is the case for RME, and in addition to the structural support afforded by Building the Curriculum, the outline of each curriculum area in the Curriculum for Excellence document includes a summary of principles and practice, which gives teachers guidance on how to implement that area. This applies to social studies, just as it did to RME.
	In terms of teaching content, the Education Scotland website also includes a support section for social studies. This contains a wide range of resources, covering a variety of historical and geographical themes, which can be used in the teaching of ethics. There is also a section of the website devoted to sharing practice, which includes some resources specific to social studies.
	The Young Scot website for pupils aged 11+ (relevant to the last year of primary school, and to secondary schooling) also contains information and resources related to ethical education..

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Singapore

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

Primary education lasts for six years (as part of ten years of formal general education) and commences in the January of the year in which a child reaches the age of seven. For example, a child whose date of birth fell between 2nd January 1996 and 1st January 1997, would have begun primary education on 1st January 2003.

Primary education in Singapore consists of the four-year foundation stage from Primary 1 to Primary 4 (P1-P4) (ages six/seven to ten) and the two-year orientation stage from Primary 5 to 6 (P5-P6) (ages 10 to 12).

Pre-school education caters for children from the ages of three to six/seven in 'kindergartens' or from two months to six/seven years of age in 'childcare centres'. Although pre-school education is not compulsory, as parents in Singapore place a premium on education in general, around 99 per cent of children experience between one and three years of pre-school education (NFER, 2013).

The primary school curriculum focuses on three main aspects of education – subject disciplines, knowledge skills, and life skills (character development):
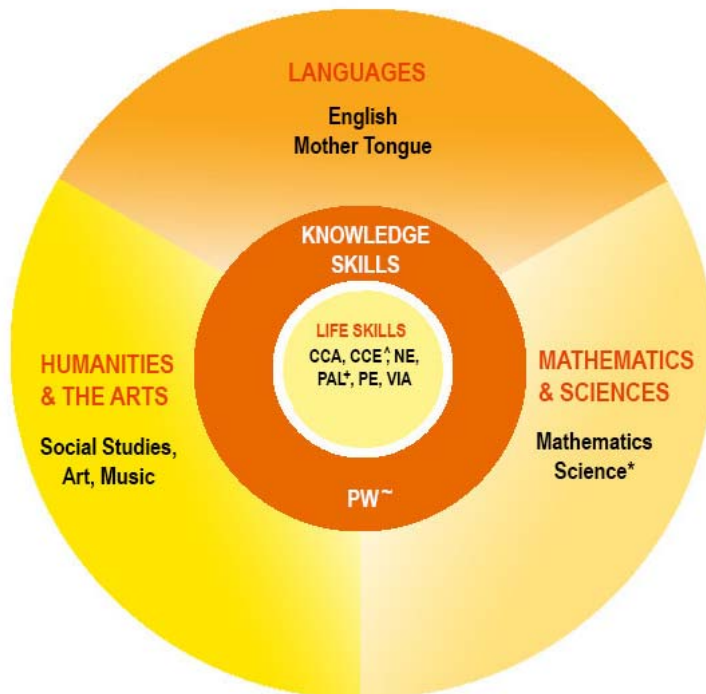
- Subject disciplines include languages (English and the mother tongue language), mathematics, science (taught from P3, aged eight/nine, onwards), and humanities and the arts (social studies, art and music) and are designed to give children a good grounding in different fields of study.
- Knowledge skills focus on developing children's thinking, process and communication skills. They are taught through a variety of subjects and often through a project work (PW) approach, to enable students to use the full range of knowledge skills, work together, and clearly demonstrate what they have learnt.
- Life skills is facilitated through daily teacher-student interactions, as well as programmes in the non-academic curriculum. They focus on instilling sound values in children to take them through life as a responsible adult. Life skills includes developing skills for life and a love for Singapore through Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), National Education (NE), Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) and physical education (PE). The teaching of life skills also includes a programme known as Values in Action (VIA). In addition teaching of a Programme for Active Learning is being rolled out to all primary schools by 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2014).

The figure below shows how these three elements fit together.

Following school-based examinations towards the end of Year 4 (aged around ten), children are placed in ability bands for the study of English, mathematics, science and the mother tongue language in Years 5 and 6, when each of these subjects is offered at 'foundation' or 'standard' level (mother tongue language is also available at 'higher' level). This process is known as 'subject-based banding'. In addition, all children take the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) at the end of Year 6 (age 12) (Ministry of Education, 2014).

PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

LANGUAGES

English
Mother Tongue

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

LIFE SKILLS
CCA, CCE^, NE,
PAL+, PE, VIA

HUMANITIES & THE ARTS

Social Studies,
Art, Music

MATHEMATICS & SCIENCES

Mathematics
Science*

PW~

LEGEND

CCA   Co-Curricular Activities
CCE   Character and Citizenship
        Education
NE   National Education
PAL   Programme for Active
        Learning
PE   Physical Education
PW   Project Work
VIA   Values in Action

SUBJECTS TESTED IN PSLE#

Standard Subjects:
English, Mother Tongue,
Mathematics, Science

Foundation Subjects:
Foundation English,
Foundation Mother Tongue,
Foundation Mathematics,
Foundation Science

Optional Subject:
Higher Mother Tongue

Pupils offer Standard or Foundation subjects based on their aptitude in each subject
* Science is taught from Primary 3 onwards.
^ CCE includes the Form Teacher Guidance Period.
+ PAL will be progressively rolled out to all primary schools by 2017.
~ Project Work is conducted during curriculum time but is not an examination subject

[Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) – a Curriculum for Kindergartens in Singapore](#) aims to guide pre-schools in designing and implementing a quality kindergarten curriculum for children aged four to six. In order for children to achieve the [desired outcomes of education](#) and outcomes of pre-school education, they are expected to acquire knowledge, skills and dispositions through six learning areas which are outlined in the framework:

- aesthetic and creative expression

- discovery of the world

- language and literacy

- motor skills development

- numeracy

- social and emotional development (Ministry of Education, 2012a).

In sum, education for four- to 12-year-olds in Singapore as organised as follows:

Phase	Year group	Age range	Known as	Curriculum
Pre-primary kindergarten		3/4-6		Nurturing Early Learners
Primary	Foundation stage	6-7	P1	Primary School Curriculum
Primary	Foundation stage	7-8	P2	Primary School Curriculum
Primary	Foundation stage	8-9	P3	Primary School Curriculum
Primary	Foundation stage	9-10	P4	Primary School Curriculum
Primary	Orientation stage	10-11	P5	Primary School Curriculum
Primary	Orientation stage	11-12	P6	Primary School Curriculum

(NFER, 2013)

Singapore is a secular state with no state religion. The Ministry of Education's policy and guidelines to public schools on the conduct of religious activities are guided by the need for schools to provide the common space where young people from all communities can grow up together, build bonds and develop shared identity as Singaporeans (Ministry of Education, 2012b). As such, the Government does not permit religious instruction in public schools (government schools). There are, however, 57 government-aided, religiously affiliated schools which can provide religious instruction.

Line of Inquiry 1 - Education about Religions and Beliefs

1. Does the state provide education about religions and beliefs for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	**Primary education**
	In government schools without any religious affiliation, the teaching of 'racial and religious harmony' is a key feature in the primary civics and moral education syllabus, which focuses on six core values
	- respect - responsibility - integrity - care - resilience - harmony (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2006).
	Racial and religious harmony is also part of the knowledge and understandings taught in Primary 2 social studies - in the 'Coming Together as a Nation' cluster of study (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2012, p.24). See question 3 below.
	Civics and moral education (CME) and social studies are discussed in more detail under line of inquiry 2 below, but the rationale behind the civics and moral education syllabus in primary education is to anchor young people in sound moral principles, so that they become morally upright and understand the relevance of moral values in a modern society. The CME curriculum aims to equip pupils with the social and emotional competencies to be able to live out their values in an effective manner. Being equipped with these values and competencies will enable them to make wise decisions amidst the vast array of choices available to them and will enable them to cultivate values which develop a sense of belonging to Singapore (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2006).
	The aims of the social studies syllabus are to develop the civic competencies of pupils to enable them to become informed, concerned and participative citizens (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2012).
	The Government does not permit religious instruction in public schools (government schools), although it is allowed in the country's 57 government-aided, religiously affiliated schools. In these affiliated schools, religious

	instruction is provided outside of regular curriculum time and students have a right to opt out and be given alternatives. Religious instruction is also allowed in private schools not aided by the government, including madrassahs and Christian schools. At the primary level, the Compulsory Education Act allows seven designated private schools (six madrassahs and one Adventist school) to educate primary age students, provided these schools continue to meet or exceed public school performance benchmarks in annual national exams (US Department of State, 2012). All schools with religious affiliations must comply with the Education (Grant-in-Aid) Regulations, if they wish to provide religious instruction distinctive of their beliefs (Ministry of Education, 2012b).
	Kindergarten education
	In kindergarten education, the state does not provide education about religions and beliefs as such. That said, one of the competencies for learning and living in the 21st century which Singaporean children are expected to develop is the ability to 'work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, with different ideas and perspectives' (Ministry of Education, 2010).
2. What strands/themes are taught as part of education about religions and beliefs?	See question 3 below and line of inquiry 2 below for additional information on the CME and social studies curricula in primary education.
	The kindergarten framework Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) – a Curriculum for Kindergartens in Singapore includes six learning areas:
	• aesthetics and creative expression
	• discovery of the world
	• language and literacy
	• motor skills development
	• numeracy
	• social and emotional development (Ministry of Education, 2012a).
	Ethical education features particularly in the social and emotional development learning area under the strand 'show respect for diversity'. See line of inquiry 2 below.
3. How does education	As part of the primary civics and moral education syllabus (additional detail provided under line of inquiry 2 below),

<table>
<tr><td>about religions and beliefs change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?</td><td>'religious and cultural practices' are taught explicitly in upper primary education (children aged around nine/ten to 12).

Under the sixth of the core values of the CME curriculum - 'harmony', and under the topic 'celebrating cultural diversity', there is the learning objective that 'pupils will be able to know and appreciate some of the religious and cultural practices in our multi-racial society'. This includes teaching about some of the religious and cultural events and practices that take place in Singapore's multi-racial society, such as Muslim greetings and daily prayers; Chinese New Year and reunion dinners; and the Hindu baby naming ceremony. In addition, in the upper primary years, racial and religious harmony is also reflected in the teaching of the topics 'being considerate' and 'doing my nation proud' under the same core value of 'harmony'. (The six core values in the CME curriculum are respect, responsibility, integrity, care, resilience and harmony.) (Ministry of Education Curriculum Development and Planning Division, 2006, p.A-56).

In the lower primary years (six- to nine/ten-year-olds), rather than being taught explicitly, racial and religious harmony is reflected in the teaching of the core value 'respect' under the topic 'appreciating others', as well as under the topic 'loving Singapore' as part of the same core value (respect). It is also reflected in the teaching of the core value 'harmony', under the topic 'interacting with friends of different races' (Ministry of Education, Curriculum Planning and Development Division 2006). See line of inquiry 2 in addition.

The primary social studies curriculum is organised in three broad clusters as below:</td></tr>
</table>

Clusters of study		Inquiry focus
Cluster 1: Discovering Self and Immediate Environment		
Primary 1 (age 6-7)	Knowing Myself, Others and My Surroundings	Who am I in relation to the people and places around me?
Primary 2 (age 7-8)	**Coming Together as a Nation**	What unites us as people of Singapore?
Cluster 2: Understanding Singapore in the Past and Present		
Primary 3 (age 8-9)	Understanding Singapore	How do we appreciate the country we live in?
Primary 4 (age 9-10)	Valuing Our Past	How is life in Singapore today is shaped by what happened in the past

	Cluster 3: Appreciating the World and Region We Live In		
	Primary 5 (age 10-11)	Appreciating the World	How have the legacies of the world impacted our lives today?
	Primary 6 (age 11-12)	Discovering Southeast Asia	How is Southeast Asia important to Singapore?

	Racial and religious harmony is part of the knowledge and understandings taught in Primary 2 in the 'Coming Together as a Nation' cluster of study (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2012, p.24).
4. Is education about religions and beliefs integrated across the curriculum?	Some teaching relating to religions and beliefs and racial and religious harmony permeates the 'life skills' included in the primary curriculum in Singapore. (Life skills are one of the three strands of the primary curriculum, alongside 'knowledge skills' and 'subject disciplines' – see the 'Context' section above.) Life skills focus on instilling sound values in children to take them through life as a responsible adult and include developing skills for life and a love for Singapore through, for example, Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), National Education and a programme known as Values in Action (VIA) (Ministry of Education, 2014).
	Racial and religious harmony is also a feature of the syllabus for civics and moral education (CME) in primary education in Singapore. See question 3 above.
	In addition, there is some limited teaching about racial and religious harmony as part of the social studies syllabus. The primary social studies syllabus has a focus on the 21st century competency of civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills which includes socio-cultural and religious sensitivity and awareness. This refers to the perception and articulation of the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of people from different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. Socio-cultural and religious sensitivity and awareness includes the ability to empathise with others through understanding, acceptance and respect, and engaging in appropriate behaviour with people from different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds in both local and international contexts in a way which enhances social cohesion (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2012, p.46).
	Note: every July in Singapore, all schools also take part in Racial Harmony Day. This aims to promote inter-racial understanding among students and is regarded as an important part of national education in Singapore.
5. Are there guidelines as	Civics and moral education is taught for two periods at the lower primary level (P1 to P3, ages six/seven to nine)

to how much time should be allocated annually to ERB?	and three periods at the upper primary level (P4 to P6, ages nine to 12) (Ministry of Education, Curriculum Planning and Development Division 2006). Schools with religious affiliations (see question 1 above) must ensure that the time devoted to religious instruction and religious observance is additional to that required for school subjects in government schools.
6. Is there an opt-out for pupils who do not wish to receive education about religions and beliefs?	In government schools pupils may not opt out of the curriculum for CME and/or social studies which cover aspects of racial and religious harmony in Singapore's secular society. Schools with religious affiliations must ensure that: • No pupil is required to attend religious instruction or any religious observance if his parent has signified in writing his wish that his child shall not attend. • Attendance at religious instruction or religious observance is not a condition of admission (Ministry of Education, 2012b).
7. Is there a review process in place for the religious education curriculum?	At primary level, the place of racial and religious harmony in the curriculum is reviewed when the CME and social studies curricula, individually, are reviewed. The CME primary curriculum/syllabus was last reviewed in 2006; the social studies primary syllabus in October 2013. The Ministry of Education keeps syllabuses under continual review, updating as necessary. The Ministry of Education is progressively developing, refreshing and reviewing the Nurturing Early Learners framework for kindergarten education.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for teaching about religions and beliefs?	An Approved Textbook List (ATL) for primary and secondary schools in Singapore is drawn up primarily to assist principals, heads of department and subject leaders to select suitable texts for their students. The books in the list have been approved by the Ministry of Education for use in schools. The list includes a range of books approved for use in primary social studies and for character and citizenship studies (which will include CME). Resources for the Nurturing Early Learners framework are being progressively developed.

Line of Inquiry 2 - Education in Ethics across Jurisdictions

1. Does the state provide ethics education for four- to 12-year-olds and what are its aims and principles?	Yes. Ethics and values feature within the 'competencies for the 21st century' which the education system in Singapore seeks to nurture and develop in children. Ethical principles feature in the values at the core of the 21st century competencies: • 'Integrity: your child is a person of integrity if he upholds ethical principles and has the moral courage to stand up for what is right.' Ethical decision-making features within the social and emotional competency of responsible decision-making: • '.... should be able to reflect upon the implications of decisions made, based on personal, moral and ethical considerations.' Ethical practices also feature in the 21st century competency of information and communication skills: • 'It is important that our young know what questions to ask, how to sieve information and extract that which is relevant and useful. At the same time, they need to be discerning so that they can shield themselves from harm, while adopting ethical practices in cyberspace' (MOE, 2010). **Primary education** In addition, the civics and moral education (CME) primary syllabus is designed to provide sound moral principles to enable young people to be morally upright and understand the relevance of moral values in a modern society. The overarching goal of CME is to nurture young people of good character, who are caring and act responsibly towards self, family, school, community, nation and the world. The CME syllabus focuses on six core values: • respect • responsibility • integrity • care • resilience • harmony.

These are regarded as the foundation upon which good character is built (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2006).

The teaching of ethical principles is a key part of the core value of integrity which is defined as:

- 'a person of integrity upholds ethical principles and has the moral courage to stand up for what is right' (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2006, p. A-6).

At the end of the CME (primary) programme, pupils are expected to be able to:

- know what is right and good
- formulate sound moral principles
- know the principles involved in making sound moral decisions
- understand the importance of family and their role in it
- consider multiple perspectives when making moral decisions
- be open-minded and non-judgmental when considering the views of others
- practise moral reasoning and critical thinking when making decisions
- understand the need to maintain social cohesion and the importance of racial and religious harmony
- know the values essential to the well-being of the nation
- know their role in the community, nation and the world (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2006, p. A-5).

The CME syllabus is based on the principle that an individual's beliefs, attitudes and behaviour stem from his personal values. It is therefore regarded as important to focus on nurturing sound personal values in pupils so as to develop good character in them. For pupils to internalise and practise good values, they should know what good values are, be able to reflect on and come to an understanding of why it is necessary to uphold good values and also be provided with opportunities to put the values into practice. This can be achieved through understanding the relationship between moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action in the development of a morally upright individual. Moral knowing refers to the cognitive aspect of morality which involves knowing what is right and good; moral feeling refers to the affective aspect of morality and constitutes the bridge between moral knowing and moral action; and moral action refers to doing the right thing, where children learn to base their decisions and actions on moral knowing and moral feeling (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and

Development Division, 2006).

Note: CME is taught in the mother tongue – either Chinese, Malay or Tamil (not English). This is because the Government believes that moral and social values and attitudes can be better conveyed and understood in the pupil's own language.

The primary social studies curriculum also includes some elements of ethics education. At the heart of the Singapore social studies curriculum is the preparation of pupils to be citizens of tomorrow by helping them to better understand the interconnectedness in Singapore and the world they live in, and appreciate the complexities of the human experience. Social studies seeks to inculcate in pupils a deeper understanding of the values that define Singaporean society and nurture dispositions to show concern for the world they live in and demonstrate empathy in their relationships with others. Social studies seeks to develop civic competencies which will empower children to become informed, concerned and participative citizens (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2012).

As an informed citizen, children:

- understand their own identity vis-à-vis their identity as a Singaporean with a global outlook
- understand different perspectives
- view the world with an understanding of the Singapore perspective
- apply reflective thought in making quality decisions
- analyse, negotiate and manage complex situations
- evaluate information, consider different viewpoints and exercise discernment in reaching well-deliberated conclusions and responsible decisions.

As a concerned citizen, children:

- have a sense of belonging to their community and nation
- find it important to engage in issues of societal concern because they understand the potential impact their response has on society
- show commitment to social cohesion by appreciating diversity in society
- have an awareness of the ethical consequences of decision-making.

As a participative citizen, children are:

- motivated to identify issues of concern and take action
- resilient in addressing concerns of the community or society in spite of challenges faced
- empowered to take personal and collective responsibility for effecting change for the common good and serve to make a positive difference to others (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2012). See question 4 below in addition.

Kindergarten

The Key Stage Outcomes of Pre-school Education reflect the importance of the holistic development of children, emphasising the need for them to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to prepare them for lifelong learning. At the end of pre-school education, children should:

- know what is right and what is wrong
- be willing to share and take turns with others
- be able to relate to others
- be curious and able to explore
- be able to listen and speak with understanding
- be comfortable and happy with themselves
- have developed physical coordination and healthy habits and participate in and enjoy a variety of arts experiences
- love their families, friends, teachers and school (Ministry of Education, 2012a, p. 18).

2. What strands/themes are taught as ethics education?	**Primary education** The CME syllabus focuses on six core values: respect, responsibility, integrity, care, resilience, and harmony. In the teaching of the core value of integrity in the CME curriculum , children in lower primary education (ages six to nine/ten) study the topics 'being honest' and 'being trustworthy'. In upper primary (ages nine/ten to 12), they study 'being fair' and 'standing up for what is right' (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, (2006, p. A31-A36). **Kindergarten curriculum**

	For children to achieve the [Desired Outcomes of Education and the Key Outcomes of Pre-School Education](#), they are expected to acquire knowledge, skills and dispositions in six learning areas in the [kindergarten curriculum](#):
	• aesthetics and creative expression
	• discovery of the world
	• language and literacy
	• motor skills development
	• numeracy
	• social and emotional development (Ministry of Education, 2012a).
	Ethical education features particularly in the social and emotional development learning area under the strand 'show respect for diversity'. Under this strand, children are expected to learn to:
	• recognise that everyone is unique in the following ways – physique, race, ability, opinion
	• show respect to the people they interact with – includes, for example, taking part in and talking about events such as 'Racial Harmony Day' (which all schools take part in every July)
	• recognise feelings and show understanding of what others are going through and how they are feeling through actions or words (Ministry of Education, 2012a).
	By the end of kindergarten education, teaching in the social and emotional development learning area should enable children to:
	• develop an awareness of personal identity
	• manage their own emotions and behaviours
	• show respect for diversity
	• communicate, interact and build relationships with others
	• take responsibility for their actions (Ministry of Education, 2012a).
3. How does ethics education change/develop during (pre-school and) primary education?	See questions 1 and 2 above.
4. Is the ethical education	Yes. In **primary education**, ethical education is integrated within the 21st century competencies of the

content integrated across the curriculum?	Singaporean education system (see question 1 above), and some ethical education content permeates the 'life skills' included in the primary curriculum in Singapore. (Life skills are one of the three strands of the primary curriculum, alongside 'knowledge skills' and 'subject disciplines' – see the 'Context' section above.) Life skills focus on instilling sound values in children to take them through life as a responsible adult and include developing skills for life and a love for Singapore through, for example, Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), National Education and a programme known as Values in Action (VIA) (Ministry of Education, 2014).
	The primary CME syllabus (see questions 1 and 2 above) and the primary social studies syllabus also include some elements of ethics education.
	Under the values to be taught under the social studies syllabus, for example, are that, by the end of Primary 6, age 12, pupils will be able to:
	• appreciate cultural diversity and respect multiple points of view • develop personal responsibility in the management of resources • recognise that beliefs shape one's thinking • consider the ethical effects of one's actions and the impact on others so as to make informed decisions and carry out appropriate actions • show curiosity to learn more about the world they live in • show care for the community and the environment • develop a sense of belonging to one's community and country • exercise integrity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) (Ministry of Education Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2012, p.4).
	In **kindergarten education**, ethical education is included within the social and emotional development learning area and features particularly within the strand 'show respect for diversity'. See questions 1 amd 2 above.
5. Are there guidelines as to how much time should be allocated annually to	Civics and moral education is taught for two periods at the lower primary level (P1 to P3, ages six/seven to nine) and three periods at the upper primary level (P4 to P6, ages nine to 12) (Ministry of Education, Curriculum Planning and Development Division 2006).

ethics education?	
6. Is there an opt-out clause for pupils who do not wish to receive education in ethics?	In government schools pupils may not opt out of the curriculum for CME and/or social studies which cover aspects of ethics education.
7. Is there a review process in place for the ethics education curriculum?	At primary level, ethics education in the curriculum is reviewed when the CME and social studies curricula, individually, are reviewed. The CME primary curriculum/syllabus was last reviewed in 2006; the social studies primary syllabus in October 2013. The Ministry of Education keeps syllabuses under continual review, updating as necessary. The Ministry of Education is progressively developing, refreshing and reviewing the Nurturing Early Learners framework for kindergarten education.
8. Are resources or support material provided to teachers for the teaching of ethics?	An Approved Textbook List (ATL) for primary and secondary schools in Singapore is drawn up primarily to assist principals, heads of department and subject leaders to select suitable texts for their students. The books in the list have been approved by the Ministry of Education for use in schools. The list includes a range of books approved for use in primary social studies and for character and citizenship studies (which will include CME). There are no resources specific to the teaching of ethics. Resources for the Nurturing Early Learners framework are being progressively developed.

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Sweden

Context: Provision and Curriculum for Children aged four to 12

Compulsory phase education in the _grundskola_

In Sweden, the nine-year compulsory phase school (_grundskola_) caters for students between the ages of seven and 16. Although compulsory schooling starts in the autumn term of the calendar year a child turns seven (and ends at the close of the spring term the year the child turns 16), children can enrol at the age of six or, under certain circumstances, delay enrolment until the age of eight, if their parents wish. Municipalities are required to accommodate all six-year olds wanting to start school (European Commission _et al._, 2014). Today almost all children also attend the non-compulsory pre-school year for six-to seven-year olds. In practice this means ten years of education in all (Swedish Institute, 2013). _Grundskola_ is non-selective, full-time and co-educational (NFER, 2013).

Grundskola curriculum

The curriculum for the compulsory school also applies to the pre-school class (_förskoleklass_) for six- to seven-year olds. This sets out the goals and general principles; the goals are of two kinds - a) goals to aim for and b) goals to attain. The goals to aim for provide a framework for the direction of the school's work; the goals to be attained are an expression of the minimum level of pupil attainment required when leaving school. The subjects included in the curriculum for the compulsory phase school and the pre-school class/year are:

- Art
- Crafts
- English
- Home and consumer studies
- Language options
- Mathematics

- Music

- Physical education and health

- Swedish/Swedish as a second language

- Geography, history, religion and social studies (studied together)

- Biology, chemistry, technology and physics (studied together) (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

The curriculum documents referred to below generally refer to the whole of the *grundskola* period (and the pre-school year) (pupils aged six to 16 years) or to the pre-school curriculum (see below).

Pre-school education

Pre-school (*förskola*) for children under the age of six is the first stage of the educational system. This is followed by the pre-school class (*förskoleklass*) for six- to seven-year-olds (the year before compulsory school starts). All children are entitled to free pre-school education for at least 525 hours per year from the autumn term when they turn three years old (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

Pre-school curriculum

The pre-school has its own curriculum framework within which individual municipalities are free to decide how to conduct their pre-school services. This applies to children aged one to six in pre-school settings and sets out the fundamental values and tasks, national goals and guidelines for the pre-school. The educational principles of the pre-school curriculum are based on the assumption that care and education go hand in hand. The curriculum also emphasises the importance of play in a child's learning and development and the child's own active participation. The pre-school curriculum was revised in 2010 and now contains clearer objectives for children's development in language and mathematics, and in natural sciences and technology. In addition to the curriculum, a pre-school may have policy documents or working plans of its own provided there is no conflict with the curriculum. These documents may be seen as supplementing the national curriculum in individual pre-schools (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).

In sum, education for children aged four to 12 years in Sweden is provided as follows:

School type	Grade/Year group	Age	Curriculum
Pre-school (*förskola*)	Pre-school	1-6	Curriculum for the Pre-school 2010
Compulsory phase school (*grundskola*)	Pre-school class (*förskoleklass*)	6-7	Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Pre-school Class and the Leisure-time Centre 2011
Compulsory phase school (*grundskola*)	Grade 1	7-8	Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Pre-school Class and the Leisure-time Centre 2011
Compulsory phase school (*grundskola*)	Grade 2	8-9	Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Pre-school Class and the Leisure-time Centre 2011
Compulsory phase school (*grundskola*)	Grade 3	9-10	Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Pre-school Class and the Leisure-time Centre 2011
Compulsory phase school (*grundskola*)	Grade 4	10-11	Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Pre-school Class and the Leisure-time Centre 2011
Compulsory phase school (*grundskola*)	Grade 5	11-12	Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Pre-school Class and the Leisure-time Centre 2011

European Commission *et al*., 2014

Grant-aided independent schools (free schools/*friskolor*)

Some compulsory phase schools (*grundskolor*) are independent schools, funded by municipal grants from the pupils' home municipalities and by state grants (that is, they are grant-aided and free of charge to pupils). In 2013, 16 per cent of Swedish compulsory schools were grant-aided independent schools and some of these have a particular orientation which can include being schools with a particular religious denomination. There are schools founded by Muslim, Jewish and Christian groups, the Church of Scientology, and the Plymouth Brethren. These schools have to be approved by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate and must comply with the regulations for grant-aided schools. These include that the education provided must fulfil the general goals of the compulsory school; that the school is, in principle, open to all pupils who are entitled to equivalent education within the public school system; and that the schools, like municipal schools, are based on democratic values and their activities are governed by openness, tolerance and objectivity. Within the framework of these requirements, a grant-aided school may have a denominational orientation (European Commission *et al.,* 2014).