

Exemplifying learner profiles at Key Stages 2 and 3 in religious education

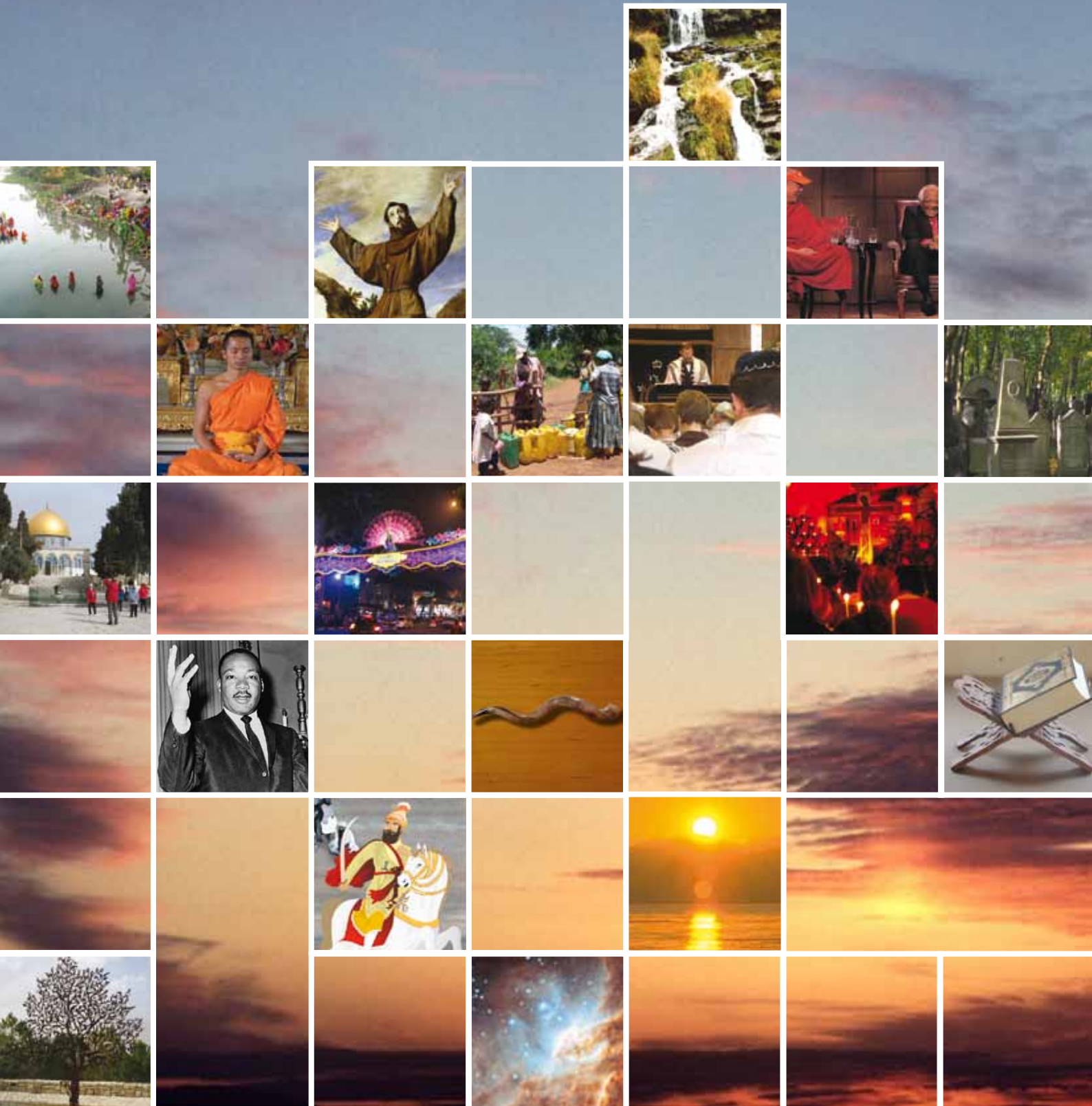
Additional guidance



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
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Additional guidance

Audience	Teachers at Key Stages 2 and 3; SACREs; local authorities; regional consortia; tutors in initial teacher training; and others with an interest in continuing professional development.
Overview	These materials accompany the document <i>Religious education: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3 – Key messages for planning learning and teaching</i> and provide profiles of learners' work at Key Stages 2 and 3 to exemplify the standards set out in the level descriptions and illustrate how to use level descriptions to make best-fit judgements at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3.
Action required	SACREs to review learning plans and activities in their locally agreed syllabuses at Key Stages 2 and 3, and to prepare to make judgements at the end of Key Stage 3.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Curriculum Division The Education Directorate Welsh Assembly Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ e-mail: curriculumdivision@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Learning Wales website at gov.wales/learning
Related documents	<i>Religious education: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3 – Key messages for planning learning and teaching</i> (Welsh Assembly Government, 2011); <i>Religious education: Guidance for 14 to 19-year-olds</i> (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009); <i>National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales</i> ; <i>Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales</i> ; <i>Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum</i> ; <i>Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3</i> (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008)

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Introduction

The programmes of study in the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* set out the opportunities that learners should be given at each key stage and provide the basis from which you, as a teacher, can plan learning and teaching. They are divided into two sections, Skills and Range. The Skills section lists the skills to be developed in a subject and the Range section comprises the opportunities and contexts through which these skills can be developed and consolidated.

Ongoing formative assessment – assessment **for** learning – lies at the heart of good teaching. Through the assessments that you make in the course of your teaching, you will build up an extensive knowledge of your learners' strengths, as well as the areas that need further development, and you will use this knowledge to help you plan for the next steps in their learning. Learners will also gain understanding of specific learning goals and the associated success criteria so that, supported by you, they can develop their capacity for self-assessment and peer assessment. In this way, they can establish their current position, set and move towards targets, and discover if and when the targets have been reached. Individual targets are linked to improving the quality of a learner's work, as highlighted through formative feedback, and are therefore linked to success criteria for specific tasks. Level descriptions do not make effective targets as these describe attainment across the breadth of the programme of study at the end of a key stage.

Level descriptions can help to inform your planning, teaching and assessment at Key Stages 2 and 3 by indicating expectations at particular levels and progression in the subject. Evidence from assessment for learning will indicate where more time is needed to consolidate learning and when learners are ready to move on. You may wish to keep some evidence so that you can discuss a learner's work and progress with them and/or with colleagues or parents/guardians. However, there is no statutory requirement to keep unnecessarily complex records or detailed evidence on every learner.

The essential function of level descriptions is to help you make rounded summative judgements at the end of the key stage about a learner's overall performance. Level descriptions are designed neither to be used to 'level' individual pieces of work nor for the production of half-termly or termly data. It is only by the end of the key stage that you will have built up sufficient knowledge about a learner's performance across a range of work, and in a variety of contexts, to enable you to make a judgement in relation to the level descriptions.

It may be that some learners will be more advanced in some aspects of the work than in others, and that no one level description provides an exact fit. That is to be expected, and the range of individual learners' work included in these materials illustrates the making of best-fit judgements under those circumstances. Many schools/departments have found it helpful to develop their own learner profiles to support moderation of end of key stage judgements. These profiles also help to maintain a common understanding of standards when they are reviewed annually and refreshed when necessary.

SACRE, through its agreed syllabus, may recommend that schools report at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3.

When making judgements at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3, you should decide which level description **best fits** a learner's performance. The aim is for a rounded judgement that:

- is based on your knowledge of how the learner performs across a range of contexts
- takes into account different strengths and areas for development in that learner's performance
- is checked against adjacent level descriptions to ensure that the level judged to be the most appropriate is the closest overall match to the learner's performance.

Religious education outcomes have also been written for learners working below Level 1.

Using these materials

The guidance for religious education at Key Stages 2 and 3 is set out in two separate documents.

This booklet is divided into two sections.

Section 1 contains a series of Key Stage 2 learner profiles. These are designed to show the use of the level descriptions in coming to judgements about a learner's overall performance at the end of the key stage.

Section 2 contains a series of Key Stage 3 learner profiles. These are designed to show the use of the level descriptions in coming to judgements about a learner's overall performance at the end of the key stage.

The accompanying document *Religious education: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3 – Key messages for planning learning and teaching* is available as a hard copy document, on the accompanying CD-ROM and on the Welsh Assembly Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

It is divided into two sections.

Section 1 highlights key messages for learning and teaching in religious education.

Section 2 highlights expectations and progression in religious education.

Both documents can be used for reference when you wish to:

- review your learning plans and activities
- consider the standards set out in the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*
- work with other teachers to reach a shared understanding of the level descriptions
- prepare to make judgements at the end of the key stage
- develop your own learner profiles
- support transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.

For ease of reference, the level descriptions are included at the end of this booklet.

This guidance is part of a series of materials that will help teachers at Key Stages 2 and 3 to implement the revised curriculum and its associated assessment arrangements. The series includes:

- *Making the most of learning: Implementing the revised curriculum* – overview guidance on implementing the new curriculum
- *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* – which includes guidance about progression in skills
- *Ensuring consistency in teacher assessment: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3*
- *A curriculum for all learners: Guidance to support teachers of learners with additional needs*
- *How to develop thinking and assessment for learning in the classroom* (web-based only)
- specific guidance for religious education, all national curriculum subjects, personal and social education, careers and the world of work
- *Religious education: Guidance for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales*
- *People, Beliefs and Questions: Religious education for children 3 to 7-years-old*
- *Making the most of assessment, 7–14* (web-based only).

Section

1

Using the level descriptions in Key Stage 2

Religious education must be taught in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus. *The National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* has been used to guide agreed syllabus development.

There is no requirement to make end of key stage judgements in religious education at Key Stage 2, but the locally agreed syllabus may recommend it. However, knowledge of the characteristics of the level descriptions will help you to recognise learners' strengths, as well as areas for improvement, and to plan for progression.

You may find the following points useful when considering the profiles in this section.

- The learner profiles are not presented as a model for how you should collect evidence about your learners. Decisions about collecting evidence, and about its purpose and use, are matters for teachers working within an agreed school policy.
- The commentaries on the pieces of work have been written to indicate particular qualities of the work and make links to characteristics of the level descriptions. They are not intended as an example of a report to parents/guardians.
- The materials in each learner profile can only represent a small part of the information and experiences that make up a teacher's knowledge of each learner. They do not reflect the extent of the knowledge of each learner that you will have built up over time across a range of different contexts. You will use this knowledge to recognise learners' strengths and areas for development, and to plan for progression.
- Some of your learners may need to use a range of alternative forms of communication to show what they know, what they understand and what they can do.

Helen

Characteristics of Levels 2 and 3

Helen is an 11-year-old learner in Key Stage 2.

Her teacher knows much more about Helen's performance than can be included here. However, this profile has been selected to illustrate characteristic features of Helen's work across a range of activities. Each example is accompanied by a brief commentary to provide a context and indicate particular qualities in the work.

Helen's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 2 and 3, but mainly the characteristics of Level 2.

Helen's teacher planned for the Year 6 class to address elements of the three core skills through the topic 'Holy Books'. Investigation of the information and values contained in the Christian, Jewish and Muslim holy books and the impact that these books have on believers' lives was undertaken.

The investigation included exploration of selected texts from the New Testament, Torah and Qur'an, information about the religious beliefs and practices associated with the specific religious texts from the internet and text books. The class prepared questions to ask visitors and visited a church, chapel, synagogue and mosque to see how holy books are used in worship. The topic deals with elements of the three core skills and the learning plan for the year provides opportunities for the learners to develop their skills through each aspect of the Range.

Investigating | Why are books important to you and other people?

Learners categorised a range of books from different genres and types and then expressed personal responses about the significance of their own special books and the way special books impact on people's lives. Helen *described her own opinions* about her special book and *in simple terms commented on the viewpoints of others* in relation to her special book (a characteristic of Level 3).

Why do people read books

People read books because it is fun and education for younger children because they can learn colours or numbers. If you are feeling in you could sit down quietly and read or you could read if you get into a quiet mood. It is also fun to read before bed.

What is the name of your special book?

the name of my special book is "humphreys corner."

Why is your book important to you?

My book is special to me because I used to read it every day and the pictures are very good so I loved looking at them. I have had this book since I was about six.

How do you look after this book?

I keep this book in my cupboard with the rest of my special things. I try to look after it a lot.

Why doesn't everyone else feel the same about your book?

because nobody else has grown up with this book and kept it safe. And I loved that book a lot.

Investigating | What is special about holy books?

In order to answer the fundamental question about why holy books are valuable to religious people learners were given opportunities to explore the religious beliefs, teachings and practices of each religion through a market place activity¹. In this particular activity, photographs of how each of the holy books are respected and used in worship were made available on several different tables, as was information about how the teachings from each of the holy books are used to help guide people's lives. When reporting back on behalf

¹ A market place activity is one where information about different aspects of a topic is placed on different tables in the classroom. Each group investigates the resources provided. They choose a member of their group to stay at the table and when the groups move to the next table the chosen person guides the new group through their investigation of the materials. This continues until each group has gathered information about the topic and most people have taken a turn to lead the investigation.

of her group (and in her subsequent written work) Helen describes some of the basic religious practices involved with religious people's treatment of their holy books, for example placing the Bible on a lectern, keeping the Torah in the Ark and performing wudu before using the Qur'an². This suggests an understanding of the importance of the holy books for believers in this task as she is *recalling and communicating simply some of the basic religious . . . practices investigated* (a characteristic of Level 2). She suggests in very simple terms that the books are precious because they are old rather than because they contain important information for believers which demonstrates that she shows *some awareness that these aspects of religion are special* (a characteristic of Level 1).



How are the holy books respected and used in worship?

Bible	Torah	Qur'an
The bible is read on a lectern	Inside a synagogue. The torah is kept in an Ark and people kiss there pray shawls then kiss the torah	For the qu'ran the have to wash hands, feet and arm the sit on a prayer mat then put the book on a stand. The women wear a Scarf on there head.
Why are these books considered precious?		
That they are very old and precious. And people keep them clean.		

² When using photographs to support a task it is important to provide sufficient range so that learners are not inadvertently led to stereotyping, e.g. whilst Muslims have traditionally read the Qur'an whilst sitting on the floor they are just as likely in today's society to read the Qur'an whilst sitting on a sofa or on a bus.

Investigating | What do the holy books contain?

The class' knowledge and understanding of the religious beliefs, teachings and practices was deepened by their having to design their own diamond nine for other class members to use and plan³.



The class was then introduced to important teachings from each of the holy books and individually learners were asked to 'hot seat'⁴ a central character from the story from a holy book and explain how this story from the teachings would impact on the central character's life. In her hot seating exercise, Helen provides simple, general information, but does not fully convey the sense of the Exodus narrative and its impact on the Israelites. Her responses to the questions asked by other learners are recorded opposite which demonstrates that she is *communicating simply some of the basic . . . teachings investigated* (a characteristic of Level 2).

³ For this work, learners write out nine responses to the question on specially prepared pieces of paper and then rank them in order of importance.

⁴ 'Hot seating' is where a learner or teacher role plays a character or object from an event or circumstance. Hot seating can be used as an interesting way of conveying factual information or can be seen as a creative activity where the person in the hot seat uses their ingenuity to respond to challenges or questioning from the class.

Hot seating

*I am one of the Israelites
Moses helped us leave Egypt
I didn't like being a slave
Our bread tasted awful
We are now safe*

Investigating | How do holy books affect religious people's lives?

Having carried out further investigation and analysis of the various religious texts, learners were asked to consider the impact that holy books have on the lives of believers and how the texts influence believers' viewpoints and actions. The teacher uses Welsh examples such as Mary Jones and Thomas Charles of Bala (who set up the British and Foreign Bible Society). In responding to this question, learners consider what they have learned about the links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices. In her response Helen states that believers read their holy books because 'people want to know more about their religious books' and she also recalls some basic dietary and behavioral rules relating to each religion. In this she is communicating simply some *basic religious practices and suggesting, in simple terms, why these aspects of religion are important to some people* (a characteristic of Level 2).

Why do people read Holy Books today?

because people want to know more about their religious book.

How do Holy Books affect believers' lives?

It affects peoples lives because muslims can't drink alchahol, christians can't Swear and Jews have a special diet because they can't put meat and milk together.

Investigating | What gives your life meaning and purpose?

On the basis of what they have learned about the influence holy books have on believers' lives learners were asked a further fundamental question about what gives life meaning and purpose for believers. In group discussion, Helen makes links with her previous response about food laws and says that 'eating food is good' (for religious people). In her personal response to the question, Helen recognises the importance of her parents and their qualities thus *communicating in simple terms her own opinions* (a characteristic of Level 2).

What gives your life meaning and purpose?

My mum and dad have given me

1. a home
2. love
3. manners
4. respect
5. cloths

Summary

Helen's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 2 and 3, but mainly the characteristics of Level 2.

Overall, Helen displays basic recall of simple information in terms of the factual information that she has gathered from religious stories or lifestyle. She shows simple insight into the fundamental question that relates to the significance of holy books for religious people. She shows very basic understanding of how religious beliefs, teachings, and practices are expressed through holy books and how they give religious people meaning and/or purpose to their lives. When asked to give details of what gives her life meaning and purpose, she provides (in her personal response) a list of items or qualities she has gained from her family, rather than a description of what is important to her and how these things help her make sense of her life and help her deal with happy/difficult times. In her communication skills, she makes appropriate use of simple religious vocabulary such as knowing the use of a lectern, Holy Ark, synagogue, etc. Her work therefore, mainly shows characteristics of Level 2.

Way forward

Overall, the teacher considered that Helen had begun to make progress in expressing her personal responses and in recalling some relevant information, but needs more practice in investigating and gathering evidence. This could be supported by giving her a range of structured 'W' questions or a range of ranking and sorting exercises. As a next step, Helen also needs to develop her understanding of what counts as being important and why. To develop this aspect of her work, Helen could be given a selection of subsidiary tasks that help her think through the question raised, for example highlighting words she thinks are important in a piece of religious text, listing important features in a religious story, comparing lists of important religious objects or ideas and ranking them. Similar subsidiary tasks could be provided as opportunities for her to fully understand the significance of fundamental questions about meaning and purpose.

Sion

Characteristics of Levels 2, 3 and 4

Sion is an 11-year-old learner in Key Stage 2.

His teacher knows much more about Sion's performance than can be included here. However, this profile has been selected to illustrate characteristic features of Sion's work across a range of activities. Each example is accompanied by a brief commentary to provide a context and indicate particular qualities in the work.

Sion's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 2, 3 and 4, but mainly the characteristics of Level 3.

A Year 6 class engaged with the fundamental question 'How do people explain it when bad things happen to good people?'. Sion's teacher planned for the class to explore religious beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism to inform this fundamental question relating to suffering. This built on specific work relating to Christianity and Judaism from the Year 5 learning plan. The topic deals with elements of the three core skills and the learning plan for the year provides opportunities for the learners to develop their skills through each aspect of the Range.

The resources used in the investigation included specially produced sheets created by the teacher. These provided information about the beliefs and teachings relating to religious perspectives on suffering and the practices relating to suffering. Learners also used case studies (produced by the teacher) showing how individuals from different religions have interpreted and coped with suffering and text books so they could carry out additional research into religious matters.

Investigating | **How do people explain it when bad things happen to good people?**

The class began their investigation of the fundamental question 'How do people explain it when bad things happen to good people?' by discussing in groups what makes them happy and what makes them sad, what would make the community and the world happy/sad and what can you say to those who suffer. In this introductory work, Sion shows that he has thought carefully about

the questions. This is shown in the way he suggests that better relationships will help create happiness, for example he says that 'nobody can help with death, but people could put aside their differences', he also suggests that happiness can be supported if people are 'open to our neighbours and help them at hard times'. The teacher was also aware of the discussion that ensued in his group when he suggests that war is often caused by greed and that people, where they have enough to live on, should be happy with what they have. This demonstrates that he has *discussed the questions raised . . . giving his own opinion* (a characteristic of Level 3).

What make you feel happy? Being with my family and meeting new people	
What makes you feel sad? Bullying or a Death of someone close.	Who could help? Nobody can help with death but people could put aside their differences
What do you think could make our community happy? To be open to our neighbours and help them at hard times.	
What do you think could make our community sad? I think vandalism will make our community sad.	Who could help? teenages stopping doing it.
What do you think causes the most happiness in the world? A world war finished and helping each other because we all have different skills.	
What do you think causes the most sadness in the world? The start of a war because we don't understand.	Who could help? Politicians could stop and be happy with what they have.

Investigating | How do religions explain suffering? (Buddhism)

As part of their exploration of this fundamental question, the class studied the story of Buddha and the story of Kissa Gotami (to describe how his teachings had an effect on his followers). They also used a range of active thinking strategies to help them grapple with the question about innocent suffering. Sion planned a role play⁵ to explain the four sights to Siddhartha (the Buddha) and the inevitability of suffering and he used a planning sheet to make sure that he included appropriate information.



In Sion's response sheet he describes what happened to Siddhartha when he began his search for meaning by answering Siddhartha's questions (supplied by the teacher). In this he uses Buddhist teachings and his own words to recall and explain the narrative. Sion uses the last four questions to *describe some of the basic beliefs* and describes how the religious beliefs and teachings *affect believers' lives* (characteristics of Level 3) by stating that 'all people suffer in life . . . They must not be greedy and selfish (and if they do this) they might be happier'. Sion shows some indication of explanation when he states 'If you are less selfish and greedy you can live a better life', but does not provide sufficient *explanation* of the teachings through the Four Noble Truths and does not give *specific examples* of the way in which this teaching/belief *affects believers' lives* (characteristics of Level 4).

⁵ The experience of role playing was particularly successful because it provided a powerful insight into how it would feel to engage personally with these questions.

<p>Siddhartha's question - Who is that man? The man is old</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Can we stop it happening? My mum uses cream to make her look younger, but she still has a birthday every year</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Why is he like that? We all get older every day</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Who is that man? The man is sick</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Can we stop it happening? We can eat healthy food and take medicine</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Why is he like that? Everyone catches germs. I was sick last week, but not as sick as that man</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Who is that man? The man is dead</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Can we stop it happening? No</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Why is he like that? Everyone will stop breathing eventually. My rabbit died last year and I was very sad</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Who is that man? The man is a holy man</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Why is he like that? He asks lots of questions and is trying to find answers about how to live the best life and what happens after death.</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - What did the Buddha do? Why did he act in this way? He became a holy man</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - What did the Buddha learn when he became a holy man? All people suffer in life. If you are less selfish and greedy you can live a better life.</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - How should a Buddhist live their life? They must not be greedy and selfish</p>
<p>Siddhartha's question - Why will this help? They might be happier</p>

Investigating | How do religions explain suffering? (Christianity/Judaism)

Sion carried out individual research to engage further with this fundamental question concerned with suffering. To support this work the teacher gave a choice of case studies to respond to. In his response, Sion recognises that Martin Gray and Blaise Pascal suffered and that their suffering raises fundamental religious questions. For example he says of Martin Gray that 'he didn't want to blame someone (for the fire that killed his wife and children) . . . but other people may think he was being punished' and he recognises that Blaise Pascal is interested in religion because 'he had a vision and that (he) may have thought about God more'. He goes on to suggest that his suffering might have caused a challenge of faith because 'he suffered from a disease (and because of this) he must have thought God could have helped'. In this way he *discusses the questions raised* by the case studies and also *aspects of religion, giving his own opinions* (characteristics of Level 3).

Why was he interested in religion? (3 things)

He may have been interested by the two Doctors because they were christian as well. It may be because his sister Jacqueline became a nun or maybe it was that he had a vision and that may have thought about God more.

Why would you think he might NOT have believed in God? (2 reasons)

He suffered from a disease he must have thought God could have helped, he became poor.

Who knew about sadness at the start of the story?

I think that Martin Gray felt sadness of the beginning because he had been a Jew in World War II.

How did Martin feel after the fire?

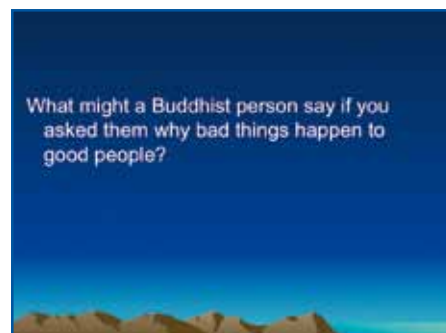
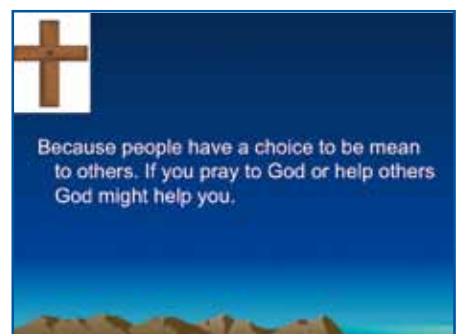
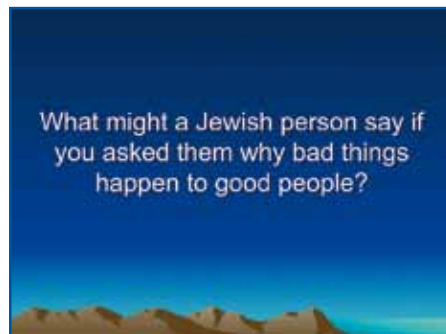
Sad but wanted to put things right and make sure no fires happened again

Why did he not want to blame someone for the fire?

He didn't want to blame someone because it was in the past and he wanted to go into the future also it may make hate. But other people may think he was being Punished.

Investigating | How do religions explain suffering? (Christianity/Judaism/Buddhism)

To build on the insights gained, Sion worked with others to match (simplified) teachings to the associated religious beliefs about suffering (from cards provided by the teacher). In order to answer the question 'How do religions explain suffering?', Sion drew out the main points of his investigation (in his own words) and initially wrote them on paper. With support from the teacher he learned how to use PowerPoint to present and record his work. In relation to this work, Sion *communicates simply some of the basic . . . beliefs* (a characteristic of Level 2), for example 'if you pray to God or help others God might help you'. In this activity, Sion does not describe the content of the teachings that the class has been provided with and does not describe some of the basic religious beliefs associated with suffering. In this activity therefore, he is showing characteristics of Level 2.



Investigating | How do people explain it when bad things happen to good people?

As a summary exercise, the teacher provided some questions that relate back to the fundamental question about why people suffer. In this work, Sion shows some developed insight into religious interpretations of suffering, for example 'he doesn't stop it (natural disasters) because he made earth act in a certain way, so it's not God's fault. It's ours most of the time because we build buildings on the danger zones where earthquakes and volcanos erupt'. In this way he sees God as having set up nature in a certain way and that some forms of suffering could be prevented by choices we make. It is not clear whether this is his viewpoint or whether he is considering *others' responses to questions about life . . . and religion*, but either way it is a relevant argument and points to the potential of showing characteristics of Level 4 or beyond.

When the teacher asked Sion to provide a personal response to suffering, he states that 'God might use me to help other people stop suffering'. This is quite a thoughtful response and when considered in relation to some of his other comments, for example 'people could put aside their differences' and be 'open to their neighbours and help them at hard times', 'if you pray to God or help others God might help you' it suggests that he has *described his own . . . opinions* (a characteristic of Level 3) suggesting that humans acting on behalf of God have a responsibility to deal with suffering.

Why do you think bad things (e.g. cyclones, tsunamis, wars) sometimes happen?

Sometimes its peoples fault but sometime its nature.

Why doesn't God stop suffering?

He doesn't stop it because he made on-earth act in a certain way so its not Gods fault its ours most of the time because we build buildings on the danger zones where earthquakes and volcanos erupt.

What is God's role in suffering? Your thoughts.

God might use me to help other people stop suffering.

Investigating | What is the value and purpose of life?



When Sion considered how religious individuals and groups locally work to reduce the suffering of others, he suggests that they do so through charity work and volunteering to give their time to help others. His summary provides *specific examples of the ways in which religion affects believers' lives* and when he suggests that religious people 'care for others because they believe God wants them to help others or because their religious teaching tells them to' he is *identifying some similarities within religions* (characteristics of Level 4).

Religious people give their time to help others by raising money for the poor in other countries. Some people go to poor countries and help to build hospitals and schools and water pumps.

Some people work in charity shops for free.

Some people stay up late giving out food to homeless people in Britain. Some people help young people who have turned to drugs. The work is often tiring, difficult and sometimes dangerous.

They care for others because they believe God wants them to help others or because their religious teaching tells them to.

In his editorial for a local newspaper about a current event when someone suffered or was very sad, Sion described the events of the cyclone in Burma. Sion provides some useful details regarding the events that took place, but only provides a few simple responses from a personal perspective and these seem to focus mainly on sadness, demonstrating that Sion *talks in simple terms about his own feelings . . . and opinions* (characteristics of Level 2). Even though he describes the actions of others (i.e. the Burmese authorities and the aid agencies) he doesn't do this in sufficient detail to show characteristics beyond Level 2.

At the present moment in time they are clearing up and uncovering dead bodies under the rubble and I wouldn't like that job. This is all in Burma after there huge cyclone that killed in excess of twenty thousand people. When I heard at first about it I thought 'something like the tsunam'. then my Dad said it was a hurricane and a lot of rain I felt sad about it and thought hard and I don't like it. They are being helped by aids but aren't all opening there borders to get more aides. I wish I could peswade them to take the aid.

Summary

Sion's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 2, 3 and 4, but mainly the characteristics of Level 3.

In general, Sion uses a range of personal and religious evidence to demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental questions raised. Sion does, however, go beyond the expectations of Level 3 when dealing with complex questions that require religious and personal insight, for example Sion is able to clearly identify religious justifications for the possible reasons for suffering. In his communication skills, his understanding of complex religious ideas about God's role in suffering and human responsibility to ease suffering on God's behalf often takes his use of religious symbols and vocabulary beyond Level 4. This shows potential for greater levels of philosophical thinking, which he could make better use of in the future particularly if he focuses on making better use of teachings, beliefs and practices from the religions studied. Similarly, his personal responses would have benefited from more detailed description and explanation.

Way forward

To support development of philosophical/theological thinking, Sion should be given opportunities to explore a range of reasons for a religious issue studied, and then be asked to respond to 'What if . . . ?' questions. He could also be given more opportunity to answer fundamental religious questions directly, as he did with Siddhartha's questions. This will help Sion to develop hypotheses and use the evidence gathered to predict outcomes. Sion needs to carry out focused research to clearly identify the teachings and beliefs of the different religions studied. This could be supported by providing him with sorting, matching and comparison activities so as to better develop familiarity with the ideas before expecting him to make use of them in a different context. Sion also needs access to more descriptive practical materials to help him understand the significance of practice and its relationship with beliefs. For example, he could have explored some religious practices such as Good Friday and funerals from different traditions to identify how the rituals (practices) and beliefs can help prepare and support people in sad times. For Sion to better express personal responses, he needs to be given clear guidelines so that he provides sufficient detail and specifically considers his own opinions and the opinions of others.

Ben

Characteristics of Levels 3 and 4

Ben is an 11-year-old learner in Key Stage 2.

His teacher knows much more about Ben's performance than can be included here. However, this profile has been selected to illustrate characteristic features of Ben's work across a range of activities. Each example is accompanied by a brief commentary to provide a context and indicate particular qualities in the work.

Ben's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 3 and 4, but mainly the characteristics of Level 4.

'Why is Jesus important for people today?' was the fundamental question used to stimulate thought and debate in a Year 6 class. Ben's teacher planned for the class to explore religious beliefs, teachings and practices to inform this fundamental question and to consider what difference certain beliefs can make to people's lives. This built on a topic on Easter which explores the significance of the events of Holy Week and is undertaken in Year 5. The topic deals with elements of the three core skills and the learning plan for the year provides opportunities for the learners to develop their skills through each aspect of the Range.

The resources used in the investigation included textual sources from the Bible and access to research materials especially created for the school by learners from the local secondary school as part of school clustering work. Resources also included access to the internet to find information about the work of local Christian groups that support young people in difficulty and that demonstrate faith in action, access to text books which provide information about the religious beliefs, teachings and practices studied and artistic sources showing different representations of Jesus.

Investigating | Why do we avoid difficult things in life?

Christmas Is Really For the Children

Christmas is really
for the children.
Especially for children
who like animals, stables,
stars and babies wrapped
in swaddling clothes.
Then there are wise men,
kings in fine robes,
humble shepherds and a
hint of rich perfume.

Easter is not really
for the children
unless accompanied by
a cream filled egg.
It has whips, blood, nails,
a spear and allegations
of body snatching.
It involves politics, God
and the sins of the world.
It is not good for people
of a nervous disposition.
They would do better to
think on rabbits, chickens
and the first snowdrop
of spring.

Or they'd do better to
wait for a re-run of
Christmas without asking
too many questions about
what Jesus did when he grew up
or whether there's any connection.

Steve Turner




In exploring the poem *Christmas is Really for the Children* by Steve Turner using the Philosophy for Children⁶ approach, all learners were encouraged to ask questions about the poem and then provide a personal response. In his response, Ben shows that he can communicate in *simple terms about his own feelings* . . . and opinions and those of other people (a characteristic of Level 2). His level of engagement with the content is very simple and just considers good and bad things in general rather than in the religious context used by the poet. However, this is not characteristic of his overall performance.

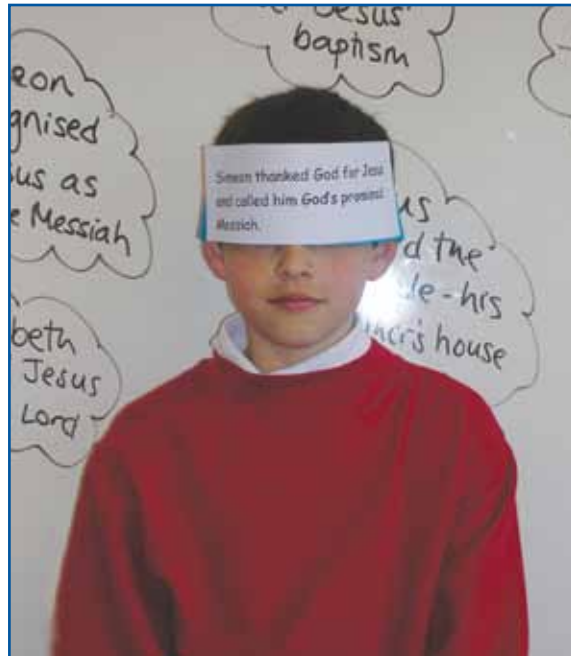
I think Steve Turner is showing us that there are good times in life but we have to remember the bad things that happen. This poem is a different poem than I usually see and I have never gone back to the bad things I just looked at the good things.

⁶ 'Philosophy for Children' is an approach which allows learners to openly investigate a provided stimulus (in this case a poem), discuss its content and symbolism and then by consensus choose appropriate questions to raise and discuss.

Investigating | Who was Jesus?

Ben sorted and matched a selection of photographs of paintings of Jesus (on cards supplied by the teacher) alongside cards containing New Testament quotes. Ben made good use of the Biblical quotes and gave insightful interpretations to the photographs in his own words. In doing this he *describes . . . the religious beliefs* identified in the paintings *and begins to explain the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated* (characteristics of Level 4). For example, 'Jesus is holding a lamb' shows that Jesus 'is like a shepherd who cares for people and looks for them when they are lost. He isn't happy until he knows everyone is safe'. There is some indication that he has started to *make links between the . . . beliefs and teachings* (a characteristic of Level 5) because he refers indirectly to associated teachings; for example, the story of the lost sheep, Jesus at the wedding and him turning over the tables in the temple during holy week. He also refers to the belief(s) about Jesus being caring and the link between the teaching of Jesus turning the tables over in the temple and people starting to worry that he might be too challenging, etc. but these links have not been sufficiently identified and explained.

Description of photograph of Jesus	This shows that Jesus . . .
<p>Jesus holding a lamp</p> 	<p>helps people see when it's dark. His stories show people how to behave</p>
<p>Jesus is holding a lamb</p>	<p>is like a shepherd who cares for sheep. Jesus cares for people and looks for them when they are lost. He isn't happy until he knows everyone is safe.</p>
<p>Looks like an American Indian</p> 	<p>is for everyone it doesn't matter where you come from.</p>
<p>Jesus laughing</p>	<p>is good fun and enjoys weddings</p>
<p>Jesus is on a cross</p> 	<p>is on a cross to show he is suffering and he is floating to show he not just any old human, but is special</p>
<p>Jesus looks really angry</p>	<p>is arguing at the temple because he thinks people are cheating and he doesn't like it. Some people don't like him messing up their tables.</p>



Using some information provided by the teacher as stimulus for investigation, the class played the game 'Who am I?'⁷, which allowed them to actively investigate information about Jesus.

As a follow up to this activity, Ben used the New Testament, relevant text books and the internet to carry out some further research into a specific story from Jesus' life. Ben's story was concerned with Jesus' temptations and he chose to engage in a hot seat role play telling the story from the perspective of the devil. To prepare for his hot seat presentation, Ben made notes to act as a prompt. In this work Ben *describes* what happened at Jesus' temptation and *begins to explain what the teachings* might mean (characteristics of Level 4) by using his own words to interpret the meaning. In order for him to *make links between the . . . beliefs and teachings* (a characteristic of Level 5) he would have needed to show that people believed Jesus was the Messiah (chosen by God) and as the Messiah he could have done these things, but that he chose a different path. He would also have needed to show how this new path *impacted on believers' lives* (a characteristic of Level 5).

⁷ For the game 'Who am I?', learners were given the name of a famous person from the life of Jesus, e.g. Mary, Herod or Simeon. The learner does not see the name because it is placed on a band around the learner's head. By asking questions to the rest of the class (the class can only answer yes or no) the learner eventually determines who they are. The questions could be – 'Am I a prophet?', 'Am I a woman?', 'Am I old?', etc.

You have been in this desert for 40 days and nights.
You must be hungry. You seem to think you are special
well why don't you turn those stones into bread and feed
yourself?

(Jesus) There are more important things in life?

What is more important than eating?

You think you are so clever why don't you prove you are
the Son of God by jumping off the temple roof

(Jesus) I'm not going to test God

You are not going to test God, what does that mean? Are
you scared?

Coward!

Well if you are scared of God why don't you bow down
and worship me. I'm much more friendly - I wouldn't leave
you to starve

(Jesus) I don't want to choose evil

Fair enough!

Investigating | Was Jesus the Son of God?

In answering this fundamental religious question, Ben suggests that some people might say that they 'don't believe in all the things he did or they don't believe in Jesus or even in God'. He goes on to show that there is evidence not only from the Bible (teachings), but also from historians to suggest Jesus was a historical character and that (according to Christians) prophets like Isaiah 'told about Jesus being born 700 years before he was born. Isaiah also said "we are in darkness now and when he is born we will be in light"', suggesting he is special. Ben also refers to comments from Elizabeth, Simeon, Herod, John the Baptist and the symbolic gifts given to Jesus by the wise men which showed they believed their gifts 'planned out his life'. And in summarizing this information he raises his own questions, for example 'How special Jesus was (?)' and 'how (did) people (get) affected by Jesus' presence, like king Herod?' showing that he *discusses his own and others' responses to questions about . . . religion* (a characteristic of Level 4).

In his use of Biblical teachings, Ben could have begun to show the *links between the . . . beliefs and teachings* (a characteristic of Level 5) by explaining for example why the gifts from the wise men were symbolic and foretold Jesus' future, but he seemed satisfied to only *describe and begin to explain the religious . . . teachings* (a characteristic of Level 4).

What reasons might someone give for saying this?

They might say it because they don't believe in all the things he did or they don't believe in Jesus or even in God. People might think he was just a carpenter and people just wrote what they think happened or people just think Jesus nothing special what's so great about him it's my life and I want to do it my way.

Which statement do you find easiest to accept? Why?

It's Jesus is a man because we can find it in the Bible and a Greek historian ~~was~~ wrote about him a Roman and Jewish historians wrote about him and in the Bible it says "a boy is born".

Which Biblical 'clues' could Christians use to support this point of view?

In the bible it holds many facts of what Jesus had done in his life. The bible says, I saiah told about Jesus being born 700 years before he was born, I saiah also said "we are in darkness now and when he is born we will be in light.


Elizabeth, Mary's cousin said "my lord is in my house and his mother to". Simeon asked God if he could live till "He saw the lord in his hands" and he did and he said "thank you God for keeping me alive to see the lord I can die now". Mary got told by an angel that she was pregnant and she would have Gods son also Jesus got 3 special gifts called gold, frankincense and myrrh and they the meaning planned out his life. King Herod wanted to kill Jesus because he felt treated by Jesus because it says he was going to be king so he asked the wise men to tell him where he was born. John the baptist baptised Jesus and when he was being baptised God spoke to him.

Our work has made me wonder . . . (if/about/why/how . . .)

How special Jesus was by getting those 3 special gifts and held by simeon, when he was in the temple and how people got affected by Jesus' presense like king Herod and is all of these things propably real plus could this ever happen again to someone.

Investigating | What is the influence of Jesus on people today?


As well as exploring the story of Jesus' temptations, Ben also deepened his knowledge of the beliefs, teachings and practices by considering some teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. He considered the impact this teaching has had on Christians and how difficult it is to implement these teachings. Ben chose the teaching:



If someone asks
for your coat
give him your
shirt also . . .

In his response, Ben shows that he understands the *teaching* by providing an *explanation* of its meaning (characteristics of Level 4). For example, he suggests that Jesus wanted people to 'be kind to every one. Help everyone even if they are bullies', 'do it just for the good of being good' and that 'Jesus took the idea⁸ and changed it to . . . help everyone'. He goes on to explain that 'God gives everyone rain and sunshine and gives food to the good people and bad people, everyone just share everything'. Such explanations points to his work showing characteristics of Level 4.

We looked at Jesus saying something different



If someone asks
you for your coat,
give him your
shirt also...

3. Jesus is saying... be kind to everyone help everyone even if they are bullies or your best friend if they take something give them something extra do it the good way not the bad way do it just for the good of being good.

5. How did Jesus take the idea of doing good further than just doing 'nice' things to 'nice' people. Jesus took the idea and changed it to be help everyone even if they beat you up let them do it don't hit back give them something else and share things with everyone God gives everyone rain and sunshine and gives food to the good people and bad people everyone just share everything here is the world and share it with everyone it is what God wants so just share with everyone.

⁸ 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

When he provides a personal response to this teaching, by stating 'I think it might be difficult to do because if someone hits you, you feel inside that you have to hit them back . . . '. However, he goes on to record some positive actions that he tries out at home. He explains how these actions made him feel and the response of his parents. In doing this he is describing *his own feelings . . . and opinions* (a characteristic of Level 3), but goes beyond this to *explain in simple terms* how his actions make him and his parents *feel* about his new found kindness (a characteristic of Level 4). Even though this is an experiment on his part, this experience also gives him a *specific example* of ways in which this teaching can be put into effect and *affect believers' lives* (a characteristic of Level 4).

6. Why might this be a difficult thing to do? I think it might be difficult to do because if someone hits you you feel inside that you have to hit them back and if someone steals something you will do anything to get it back - even hurt people to get it back. Or if someone is being nice to you you just want to ignore it and it is so hard to actually to say hello back if you don't even want to say anything back to them.

Jesus said something like this: "If someone asks for your shirt, give them your coat as well. If someone asks you to carry their pack 1 km, carry it 2km. If someone asks you to bring the shopping in from the car, put it in the cupboards as well." (Adapted from Matthew 5)

Experiment on your family with Jesus' 'upside down' teaching.

Don't tell anyone what you are doing until it's all over, because you need to observe the way they react. Have fun! Be kind to your mum if she falls down in a faint...

Situation	What I said/did	How the person reacted	How I felt about it
My Mum asked me to wash the dishes with no help.	I washed the dishes and I also put the dishes away in the right place.	My Mum was shell shocked she couldn't believe her eyes on what I had done.	I felt really pleased in myself of what I had done and it made me feel better.
My dad asked me to Hoover up the living room.	I hoovered up and I polished the table plus I polished the windows as well.	My dad was not surprised because he thought I did it to just to get the money.	I felt abit better because I did what I could not be bothered to do anyover day.
I was told to lay the table for our roast dinner.	I layed the table and I cleared the table after even the cups.	My mum and dad were pleased because I had never done that before and how neatly I did it	I felt a lot better because I had not had a good day and it cheered me up.

Investigating | Why is Jesus important to people today?

In responding to this fundamental religious question, Ben carried out an investigation into the work of a local Christian group that supports young people experiencing difficulties (through case studies on the internet) and by means of a visit from a representative of this group. As a result of his investigation, Ben described some of the work of this group and *begins to explain how 'Jesus' teaching was important . . . to help people in need even if they have been bad you should still help them no matter what.* Ben's work gives *specific examples of the ways in which these aspects affect believers' lives* (characteristics of Level 4) by explaining that the work can be dangerous, but that their work 'also helps people and they become friends after all'. Ben sums up why Jesus is important to people today by stating that 'Jesus' teaching is different because it is a lot harder and tricky but if we did do it Jesus' way the planet would be a safer place'.

What do Teen Challenge workers do that shows they are following Jesus' teaching?

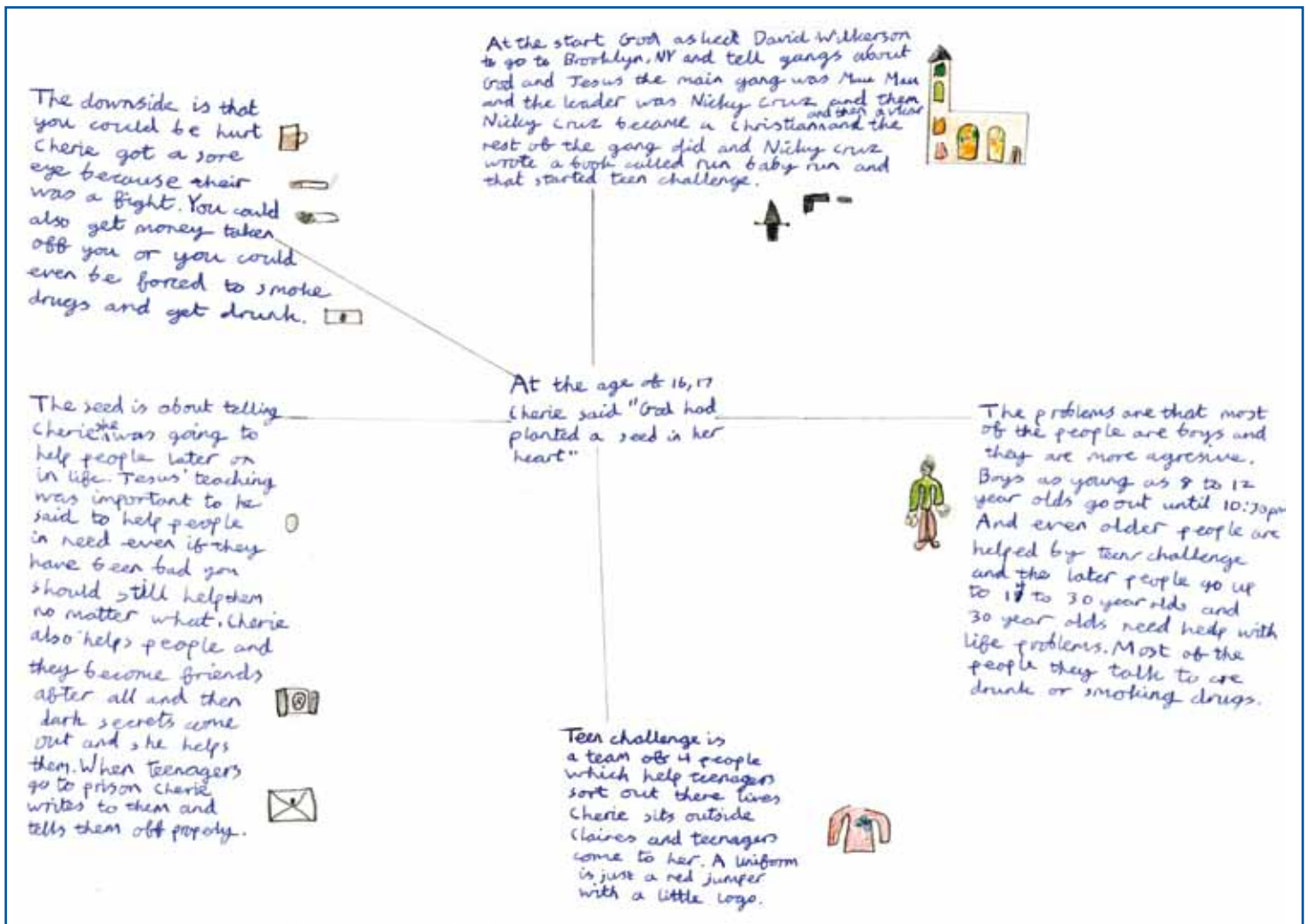
Teen Challenge show they follow Jesus' teaching by helping everyone. Some might be drunk, some might have just come out of a fight some might even be smoking drugs but they still help them quit what they have been doing or help them with their dark secrets of their lives.

What difficulties do they face?

Teen challenge have difficulties with it being so cold at night getting hurt from fights, people smoking drugs in your face and you inhale it, some drunk people might retaliate against you, drunks giving you beer and staying up so late just to help people and most of all missing your family so much you just want to go home and hug them and sit in your chair feet up next to the fire watching tv.

How do you think their belief helps them to do this work?

I think their beliefs help them do this job by Jesus' saying help everyone even if you don't know who they it is good to help everyone. I might be just making friends with the people who come to you and see each other often. It could be because of the book run baby run by the leader of the Mau-mau Nicky Cruz and the vicar who went to Brooklyn David Wilkerson who created Teen challenge.



Jesus' teaching is different because it is a lot harder and tricky but if we did do it Jesus' way the planet would be a safer place.

Summary

Ben's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 3 and 4, but mainly the characteristics of Level 4.

Ben generally uses a range of responses when discussing fundamental questions about life and religion. This is particularly evident when he considers whether Jesus can be considered to be the Son of God. He also uses religious and non-religious sources as evidence. His interpretation of the teachings showed that he could apply his creativity in interpreting works of art and in describing Biblical events. He uses religious vocabulary appropriately and he sometimes shows an awareness of religious symbols, for example gold, frankincense and myrrh and Jesus as the shepherd, but seldom gives a complete explanation of the meaning of the symbols. He is beginning to provide simple explanations about the religious beliefs and teachings relating to Jesus and about why Christians today follow Jesus' teachings, but needs further practice in this aspect of work. He often describes his personal responses, but does not consistently explain why he responds in a particular way and how his responses differ from those of other people.

Way forward

In order for his skills to demonstrate characteristics of the next level, he needs to practice expressing and justifying ideas and opinions based on evidence. To practice this skill, the teacher could give Ben a range of information and then ask him to draw well-considered conclusions or to think of new ways of resolving an issue. He could do this by highlighting the sentences that support an argument in one colour, and those that reject the argument in another. By drawing up a 'pros and con' list, he could use this to develop a case to justify his opinion. When making links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practice he needs to build on the information already obtained, and by explaining the meaning of certain teachings he will be better able to work out the associated beliefs and how they impact on believers' lives. In relation to personal responses, he needs opportunities to show how feelings, actions and opinions impact on people's lives, including his own. He had the opportunity to do this in relation to his study of Christianity in action, but could also have made better use of the materials accessed in other parts of the course, for example using the interpretation of art and Jesus' teachings/beliefs to show how these impacted on committed believers' lives.

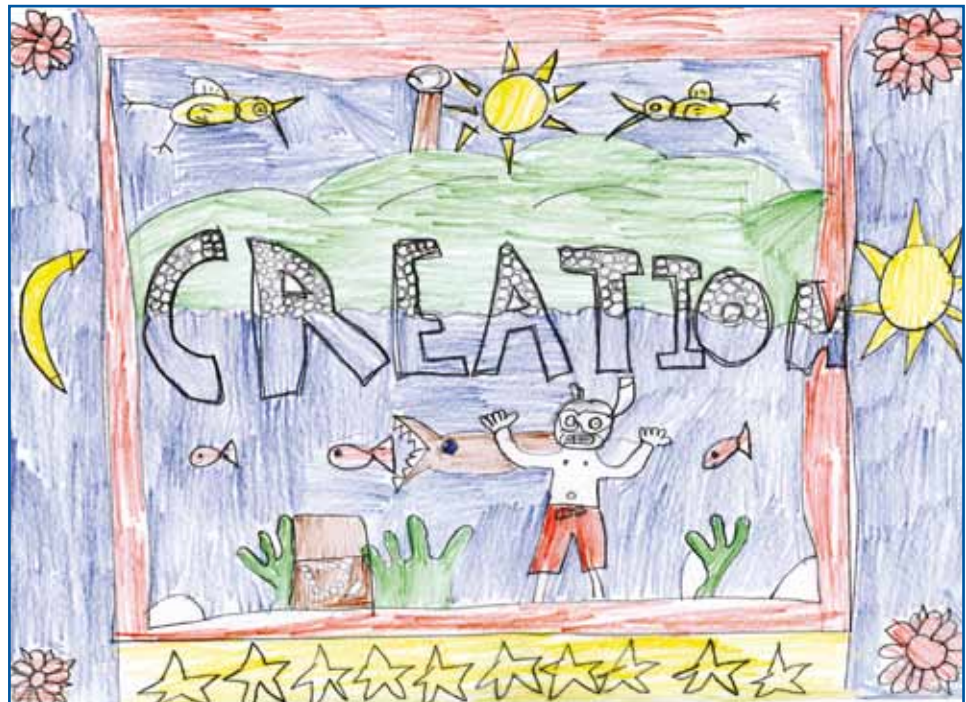
Mali

Characteristics of Levels 5 and 6

Mali is an 11-year-old learner in Key Stage 2.

Her teacher knows much more about Mali's performance than can be included here. However, this profile has been selected to illustrate characteristic features of Mali's work across a range of activities. Each example is accompanied by a brief commentary to provide a context and indicate particular qualities in the work.

Mali's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 5 and 6, but mainly the characteristics of Level 5.



Mali's class explored fundamental questions about the origins and purpose of the world and living things, considering interpretations of meaning that are presented by various religions and how these interpretations of meaning impact on believers' lives. The topic builds on general information about Christianity, Islam and Judaism undertaken in Year 5. Each topic deals with elements of the three core skills and the learning plan for the year provides opportunities for the learners to develop their skills through each aspect of the Range.

The resources used in the investigation included photographs from the Hubble telescope, selections of teachings from the New Testament, Torah and Qur'an, textbooks concerned with religious beliefs and practices associated with responsibility for the world and living things, information from visits to local places of worship, places of environmental beauty and simplified information sheets (produced by the teacher from authentic scientific sources).

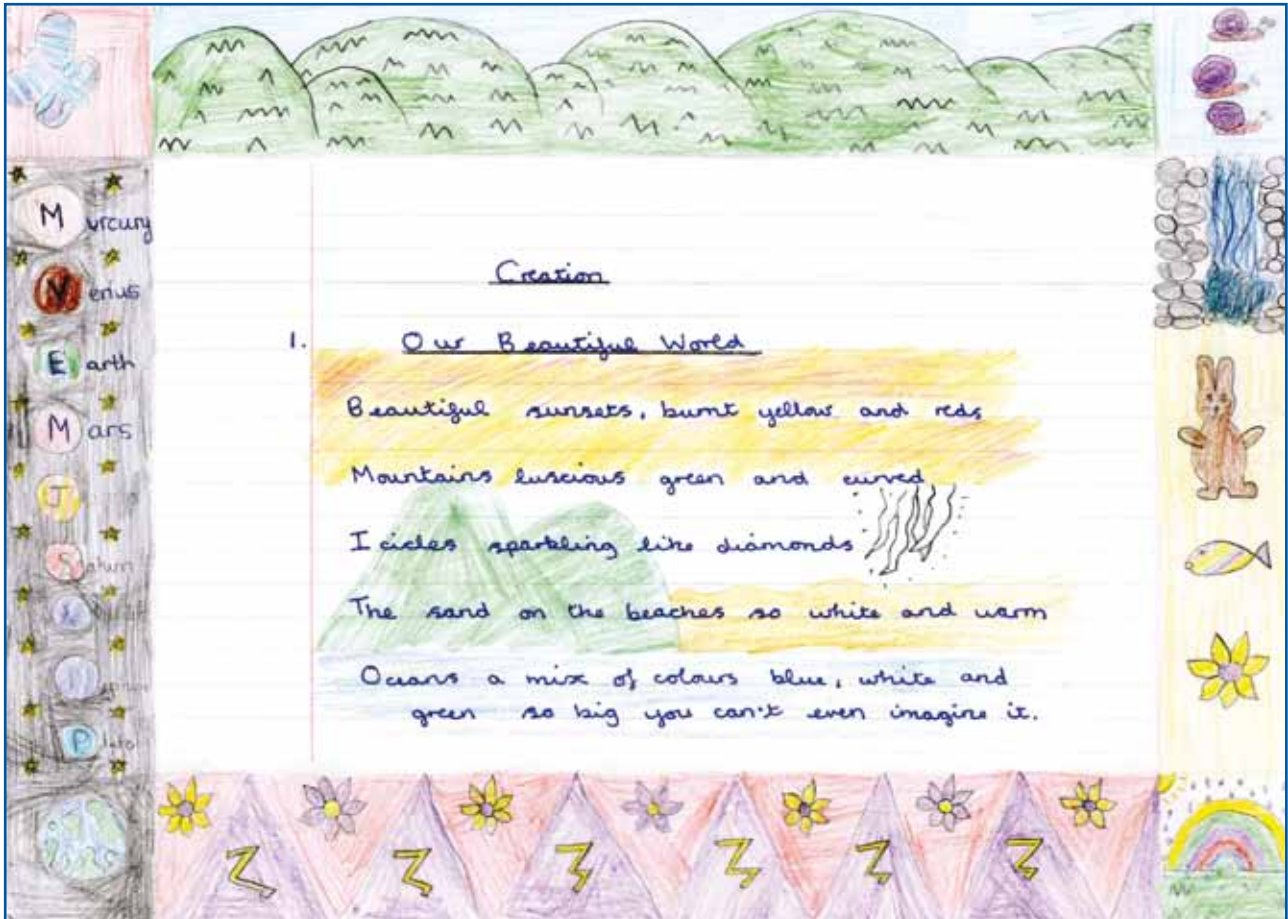
Investigating | What is the origin and purpose of life?



Learners were asked to share and explore their own photographs and postcards showing the wonder of the universe and living things. With the backdrop of additional visual images (including photographs from the Hubble telescope) and evocative music, learners were asked to reflect on their insights, consider appropriate language, prepare creative responses and raise and engage with fundamental questions. Learners wrote their own poetry in response to the stimulus, and each placed a question they wanted to discuss on sticky notes on the 'investigation wall'⁹.

When responding to the fundamental question 'What is the origin and purpose of life?', Mali begins *discussing her own* (general) *responses* (a characteristic of Level 4) by suggesting that despite carrying out investigations and using technology it is 'impossible for anyone to know everything about how it was made' and she recognises that belief influences interpretation.

⁹ In this school, the 'investigation wall' is a specified space at the back of the room. When learners have questions they want to raise and investigate, they place these on pink sticky notes. When they have found out some information, they add simple bullet points on orange sticky notes and when they have drawn a conclusion (even if the conclusion is that they need to carry out more research or that the question is too complex to answer) they place this idea on a green sticky note. This helps to keep interest and to demonstrate how the children are trying to respond to a question.



What is the origin and purpose of life?

Looking at our universe what I wonder is who made the earth? Is there life on other planets? No-one can really know for sure the answer to these questions. You can investigate any way you want, use any technology but it all depends on what you believe.

It is impossible for anyone to ^{know} everything about how it was made. Although I think there was a supreme being that picked one planet to hold everything and everyone. This is how our planet earth came into being. (I think)

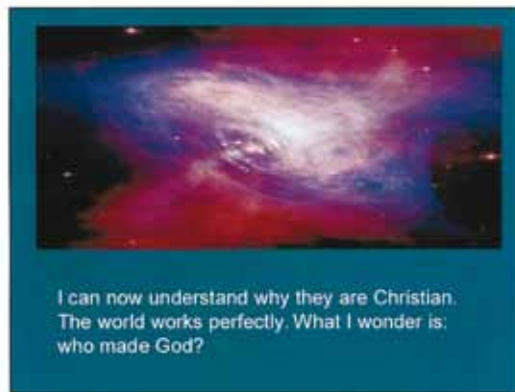
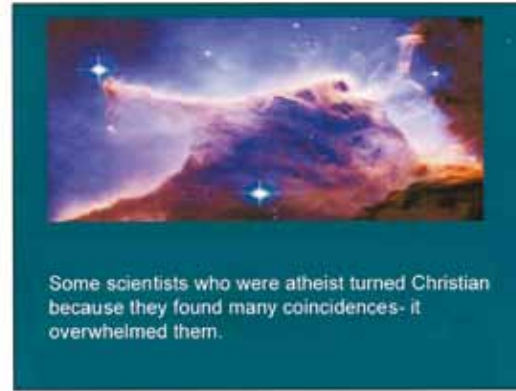
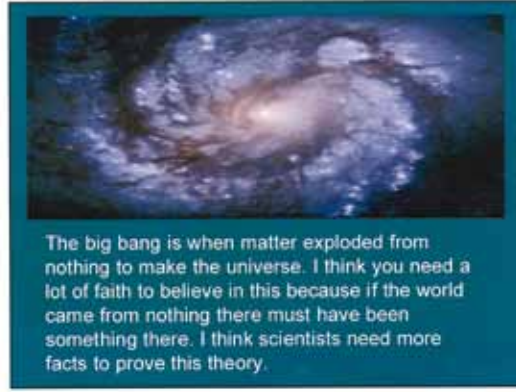
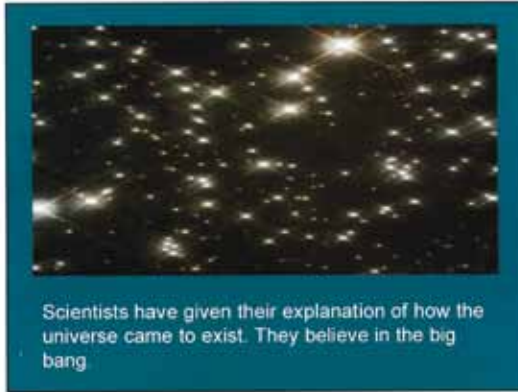


Investigating | What does science say about the origin of the universe?

In order to interrogate a range of evidence from non-religious sources, learners explored age-appropriate information (provided by the teacher) about a variety of theories and insights from religious scientists such as Stephen C Meyer and Sir Fred Hoyle.

Mali drew out the main points of her investigation and initially wrote them on paper. With support from the teacher she learned how to create PowerPoint slides that included images taken from the Hubble telescope to make a presentation to the class.

In her presentation, Mali *discusses her own and other people's responses* (a characteristic of Level 4) by sharing her own opinion about the big bang theory stating 'I think you need a lot of faith to believe in this because if the world came from nothing there must have been something there'. Her opinion shows evidence of simple evaluation skills. She does, however, begin to *justify* this by *using information gained from investigations* about the Hubble telescope. Whilst this suggests elements of Level 5, the justification is not sufficiently developed or sustained, so her work mainly shows characteristics of Level 4.



Investigating | What are the religious responses to questions about the origin and purpose of life?

When exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practices, learners were encouraged to investigate teachings from Christian, Islamic and Jewish sources.

Mali used the teachings (on differentiated text cards provided by the teacher) from these religions to categorise them so as to identify similarities and differences within the religions. Then in a group, Mali worked with others to match religious texts to themes identified by

the teacher, for example ‘Which texts describe the beginning?’, ‘Which texts identify responsibility?’, ‘Which texts refer to other issues such as death, suffering, good, evil, etc?’, ‘Which texts challenge current scientific thinking?’. Mali chose to write about two of these themes.

In her writing, Mali recognises that many cultures have explanations about the origin and purpose of life and that these religious beliefs are conveyed in holy books that relate to belief in God. In this she is beginning to *make links between the . . . beliefs and teachings* (a characteristic of Level 5) by stating that ‘Christians believe that in the first book of the Bible called Genesis, God has told them how the universe was made’ and that ‘the Qur’an teaches Muslims that Allah created the world in six days . . .’¹⁰. In discussing Islam, she also returns to the fundamental question raised and suggests that ‘Muslims have no problem with the big bang theory’ and *justifies* this idea (a characteristic of Level 5) by using a quote from the Qur’an – ‘The heavens. We have built them with power. And verily We are expanding it’ (Surah 51:47).

She goes on to show awareness of a literalist interpretation of the Bible and explains that whilst she accepts the idea of God, she does not feel this belief needs to discount scientific theories. She goes on to readdress this issue when she points to the fact that for some Christians what is important is God’s contribution to creation rather than a literal interpretation of the Bible. In this way she is using the religious beliefs to further express *and justify ideas and opinions about fundamental questions* (a characteristic of Level 5).

She goes on to *describe the impact* (of the links made between the religious beliefs and teachings) *on believers’ lives* when she explains that Muslims believe that ‘Allah owns and has created the earth, but Muslims must take care of it on his behalf and to treat it with respect’. She goes on to show the *similarities . . . across religion* (Islam and Christianity) (a characteristic of Level 5) by stating that ‘for Christians this means that they have a great responsibility, to look after God’s world just like Muslims’.

In her write-up, she also shows how her personal *opinions affect* the way she sees the world – ‘I believe in the Big Bang theory, but I do believe there was some thing like a supreme being’, but also

¹⁰ Muslims do not consider that six days relate to human measures of time – ‘Verily a Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years in your reckoning’ (Surah 22:47).

recognises that the *opinions of others* affects the way they see the world (characteristics of Level 5) – 'I understand that some people believe in this because they trust the Bible¹¹'.

Which religious texts describe the beginning?

Many different cultures have made up their own myths or stories about the creation. This is because they have their own opinions and turn them into stories because no-one else can explain it properly.

Religions however try to because they believe god has talked to them in their holy books. They believe god has already revealed how the universe was made. Christians believe that in the first book of the Bible called Genesis, God has told them how the universe was made.

In Islam the Qur'an teaches that Allah made the universe. Muslims have no problem with the big bang theory. "The heavens, We have built them with power. And verily we are expanding it. Surah 51:47."

The Qur'an teaches Muslims that Allah created the world in six days and settled himself on the throne. They believe animals came out of water and humans are made out of clay. He draws the night as the veil over the day. Each following each other. He created the heavens and the Earth and all that is between them in six days. No sense of weariness touched him.

¹¹ Despite the fact that Mali seems to be making broad generalisations about many Christians being 'literalists', this could have been resolved if she had used the word 'some Christians'.

Many Christians also believe that the earth was created in six days. They believe that god did it just as it is written in Genesis in the Bible. These are literalists.

I do not believe it I believe in the Big Bang theory. But I do believe there was something like a supreme being. I understand that some people believe in this because they trust the bible.

Other Christians however don't believe in six real days they believe that god created the world and in order as written in the Bible. In six stages. The most important idea is that god created the world in six stages/days and took the 7th to rest. To me six stages make more sense than six days.

Which religious text talks about responsibility?

Muslims believe that they have a duty to look after everything Allah has created including planet Earth this is called Khalifah. The Qur'an contains several references to people as trustees or vice-regents of the Earth.

"It is he who hath made you his agents inheritants to the Earth"
Surah 6:165

Allah owns and has created the Earth but Muslims must take care of it on his behalf and to treat it with respect.

Using a simplified text of a creation story in Genesis, Mali used interpretation cards (created by the teacher) to match the various meanings and religious significance to appropriate parts of the text. In choosing her preferred interpretation, Mali explains (orally) that scientific evidence is not significant to some people and then provides a very insightful interpretation of the Judeo/Christian Creation story. Mali suggests that 'it is important to some Christians to have (scientific) evidence to back up the Bible and for other Christians it is important that they are close to God and that they treat everyone equally as God's children and care for the world'. In this interpretation, Mali demonstrates that religious people use the teachings to support religious beliefs about God and their relationship with God and others. She goes on to explain the concept of humans being created in the image of God (which is a complex religious concept) by saying that 'we are capable of amazing and noble things. But not as well as God because we can do bad things, but we can also do good things like God!'. This demonstrates her understanding of the symbolic language used in the Genesis story and begins to show how she *used the links between the beliefs and teachings . . . to consolidate her understanding of religion* (a characteristic of Level 6). Mali made further *links between the beliefs, teachings and practices* (a characteristic of Level 5) where she uses a quote from the Qur'an and from the Bible to demonstrate why Muslims, Christians and Jews consider themselves to be responsible for God's world.

Why do you think religious people believe in the creation story?

I think half of it's just faith and the other half it's important that science backs it up, e.g. that we have the same chemicals as dust and Genesis says we come from dust. It is important to some Christians to have evidence to back up the Bible and for other Christians it is important that they are close to ~~get~~ God and that they treat everyone equally as God's children and care for the world.

The story in Genesis is not intended to be a scientific text.

What do you think is the most important message for Christians?

In Genesis it says we are made in the image of God. So we are capable of amazing and noble things. But not as well as God because we can do bad things, but we can also do good things like God!



Investigating | How do religious people show their responsibility for the world and living things?

In answering the fundamental question concerned with how religious people show responsibility for the world and living things, Mali carried out her own investigation into two activities.

- A religious celebration or event that shows how the world and living things are respected.
- How some religious people are actively making a difference to protect the environment.

In the first activity, Mali *makes links between the beliefs, teachings and practices* (a characteristic of Level 5) by explaining that Harvest is linked to the belief in creation and relates to what 'they have learned about Jesus and God from their holy book, the Bible'. She makes use of these references to the teachings to explain that 'At Harvest they say thank you to God for all their food and drink. Without them they would die, so they thank God at harvest, they pray for a good one next year and praise him for his creation'. She goes on to say that 'Jesus wanted them to love God and their neighbours . . . (and that) Christians try to remember that Jesus taught them to be kind and one way they can be kind is to give them what they don't need to others who don't have much'. In this way she is showing that belief in God as creator and belief in Jesus' teachings guides Christians to practice their religion through celebrating harvest festivals.

In the second activity, Mali shows that belief in God and the teachings of the Bible relate to the way in which Christians have a duty to care for the environment. When Mali writes about a visit

from the minister of a local Baptist chapel and does some additional research about the Christian Ecology Link, she *describes* how their beliefs *impact on believers' lives* (a characteristic of Level 5).

- A religious celebration or event that shows how the world and living things are respected.

Describe what happens during the celebration of harvest festival for Christians and/or Sukkoth for Jews.

Christians believe God created the Earth. They have a special festival called Harvest, in this time they thank God, and decorate the church and sing special songs and celebrate. Harvest reminds them of all the good things God has given them.

Use the information you have gathered to explain why harvest / Sukkoth is important for Christians / Jews

For Christians their faith in God and belief in Jesus as his only son is the most important foundation in their life. They have learnt about Jesus and God from their holy book, the Bible. It is full of stories about Jesus and his life. In the New Testament he tells his followers how to live and behave. He tells them how to live with other children and people. Jesus wanted them to love God and their neighbours.

At Harvest Christians go to church and sing songs, read the Bible, to worship God and take Holy Communion to remember Jesus. At harvest the church is full of fruit and vegetables and flowers because it is a special occasion for Christians, and they like to make it special. Christians try to remember that Jesus taught them to be kind and one way they can be kind is to give them what they don't need to others who don't have much. At harvest they say thank you to God for all their food and drink. Without them they would die, so they thank God at harvest, they pray for a good one next year and praise him for his creation.

- Religious people actively making a difference to protect the environment.

Christians and jews also believe that although god is creator he has put them in charge of the world. In their holy books it says "You appointed them (humankind) rulers over everything you made. You placed them over all creation" Psalm 8:06

For christians this means that they have a great responsibility, to look after gods world just like muslims.

One particular church have really obeyed the teaching in the Bible. They have put their faith into action by: Using recycled paper, Collect used postage stamps in aid for Leprosy Mission and sell ~~range~~ free-range eggs and organic vegetables from a local farm, Had a 'car-free' Sunday. They believe that taking care of the world is their duty and they will do their best. I agree that if everyone did this the world would be a better place but not everyone can be bothered.

Investigating | Who does the world belong to?



Having fully engaged with the fundamental questions raised and the religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s) the teacher focuses on learners' personal responses by using a popular extract accredited to Chief Seattle's 1854 speech to evoke debate.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

*Chief Seattle's response to President Franklin Pierce in 1854
(Accredited to and interpreted by journalist)*

Having discussed the passage in groups, Mali carried out research into sustainability issues and wrote a speech to present to the class to explain how she thinks the world should be cared for. In this speech, she *explains how her own feelings and actions affect her life* (a characteristic of Level 5) in the way she responds to recycling and fair trade, and also by acknowledging that religious people will respond because of their beliefs.

I think that the world belongs to everyone and everyone is responsible for recycling and trying to not pollute our world. I believe that ~~has~~ is responsible for ~~their~~ themselves e.g. picking up their rubbish.

I think our world should be treated with respect. This is because if we don't take care of the world we won't want to live here anymore.

I am very concerned about fair-trade because I don't think it's fair that the people who grow food don't get a fair amount of money. I find it horrible that people ~~too~~ in Africa don't have enough food but we have more than enough. African babies can't help being born into a poor country.

Things I do to help the environment are recycling paper in the classroom. At home we have a recycling box for glass bottles.

When I am older I would like to sponsor a child in Africa and maybe live in an environmentally friendly house.

Caine is a christian he believes in the christian creation. ~~It~~ It is very important to him to treat the world with respect. We agree on how to treat the world. I don't believe in god but me and Caine both think that we should treat the world with care and respect.



Summary

Mali's profile shows some characteristics of Levels 5 and 6, but mainly the characteristics of Level 5.

In general, Mali uses a range of religious, personal and scientific evidence to demonstrate and justify ideas and opinions about the fundamental questions relating to the origins and purpose of life. She shows understanding of religious teachings and recognises that they can be interpreted in order to provide purpose and meaning to believers' lives and actions. She shows understanding of how these teachings inform the beliefs that religious people hold and that these beliefs are often put into practice through direct action such as support for recycling and fair trade and through the more traditional celebrations and practices during worship and rituals. Her personal responses are based on evidence and research, and show an understanding of how her opinions drive her to take action, and how her motives might differ from those of other people. Her communication skills are well developed and she often demonstrates appropriate use of religious vocabulary and understanding of basic religious language, for example the symbolic understanding of the story of creation, etc. Her use of a variety of information and her powers of interpretation suggest that she is working characteristically at Level 5 (sometimes Level 4), but with support could in the near future show more characteristics of Level 6.

Way forward

Mali's skills, knowledge and understanding in religious education are well developed for a learner in Year 6. In order to make further progress, she would need to develop skills which require her to consolidate and compare a variety of information in order to present evidence in relation to fundamental questions. She could be helped to develop these skills by being given opportunities to collect and present information that supports two distinctive viewpoints and then to justify why she supported one viewpoint over another. In order to build on Level 5 characteristics *making links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices studied, describing the impact on believers' lives and identify(ing) the similarities and differences within and across religion*, which she currently does to a high level, she would need to show that she had used and consolidated her understanding of religion. To this end she could be supported in exploring other ways religious people experience God

(not just through the teachings/holy books) and carry out more work in relation to exploring the beliefs underlying symbolic language and metaphor. If she recorded this information in a spider diagram she would be more easily able to see the common threads and consolidate them in a way that would move her closer to understanding religious concepts (as is seen when she discusses the concept of 'image of God', responsibility and stewardship). Her understanding of the links between her own and other people's beliefs are quite well developed, but to show characteristics of Level 6 she would need to clearly show the connections between her own beliefs and actions and those of other people and be able to present them in a clear, well-organised way, drawing balanced conclusions.

Section

2

Making judgements at the end of
Key Stage 3

Religious education must be taught in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus. The *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* has been used to guide agreed syllabus development.

This section shows how level descriptions can be used when making judgements about which level best describes a learner's overall performance at the end of the key stage.

You may find the following points useful when considering the profiles in this section.

- The learner profiles are not presented as a model for how you should collect evidence about your learners. Although you will want to be able to explain why you have awarded a particular level to a learner at the end of the key stage, there is no requirement for judgements to be explained in this way or supported by detailed collections of evidence on each learner. Decisions about collecting evidence, and about its purpose and use, are matters for teachers working within an agreed school policy.
- The commentaries on the pieces of work have been written to explain the judgement made about a learner's performance. They are not intended as an example of a report to parents/guardians.
- The materials in each learner profile can only represent a small part of the information and experiences that make up a teacher's knowledge of each learner. They do not reflect the extent of the knowledge of each learner that you will have built up over time across a range of different contexts. You will use this knowledge to make a rounded judgement about the level that best fits each learner's performance.
- You will arrive at judgements by taking into account strengths and weaknesses in performance across a range of contexts and over a period of time. Opportunities will need to be provided for learners to demonstrate attainment in all aspects of the level descriptions.
- Some of your learners may need to use a range of alternative forms of communication to show what they know, what they understand and what they can do.

Matthew

Level 5

Matthew is a 14-year-old learner in Key Stage 3.

His teacher knows much more about Matthew's performance than can be included here. However, this profile has been selected to illustrate characteristic features of Matthew's work across a range of activities. Each example is accompanied by a brief commentary to provide a context and indicate particular qualities in the work.

Matthew's teacher judges that his performance in religious education is best described as Level 5.

A Year 6 class engaged with the fundamental question 'Martin Luther King – Did the Dream Die?'. This topic deals directly with racism and prejudice and it explores the way in which Martin Luther King as a Christian interprets the Bible to show why equality is an essential aspect of humanity. Learners were expected to express their personal responses by discussing whether Martin Luther King's dream came to fruition or whether humanity still has some way to go. Each topic deals with elements of the three core skills and the learning plan for the year provides opportunities for the learners to develop their skills through each aspect of the Range.

The resources used in the investigation included specially produced sheets created by the teacher to provide information about the religious beliefs and teachings relating to religious perspectives on equality, justice and freedom. Learners also carried out research using the internet and books in order to explore the life of Martin Luther King and the historical period in which he was living.



Investigating | What were Martin Luther King's Christian beliefs?

The teacher introduced the idea of social action, by describing some famous religious activists who have made great sacrifices on behalf of their religious beliefs, for example Oscar Romero, Mario Borrelli and Martin Luther King. Each one of these people were killed because they were speaking out against inequality and discrimination.

The class began their investigation of Martin Luther King's Christian beliefs by looking at some of the teachings from the Christian Old and New Testaments. In this work, Matthew provides a good interpretation of the texts (teachings) and explains how they can be interpreted to support social action. This means he is *making links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices* (a characteristic of Level 5), by using the religious teachings to work out the associated beliefs.

Passage from the Christian Bible	How can this be interpreted in terms of social action
<p>Genesis 1:27 - God Created human kind in his own image, in the image and likeness of God he created them, male and female he created them.</p>	<p><i>If we are all in the image of God then we must all be equal. Christians believe that God cannot be seen and therefore equality does not depend on what we look like or how clever we are.</i></p>
<p>Psalm 33:5 - The LORD promotes equity and Justice; the LORD's faithfulness extends throughout the earth.</p>	<p><i>This means that people should be treated fairly with respect.</i></p>
<p>Luke 10:25-37 . . . 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself.' Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." . . . [The story of the Good Samaritan follows]</p>	<p><i>Christians believe it is their duty to love all people no matter who they are (even if you don't like them). The Samaritan was from a different country but he treated the injured man who was probably Jewish in a loving way. Jesus' two commandments are concerned with loving God and loving everyone else.</i></p>
<p>Matthew 25:36 - I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me' . . .</p>	<p><i>When Christians are doing good things particularly for other people they are carrying out the action as though they are doing it for Jesus or God. Because by loving your neighbour they are showing their love for God.</i></p>
<p>Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female - for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.</p>	<p><i>In the eyes of God everyone is equal so there should not be discrimination and prejudice in the world.</i></p>

By using religious texts and explanations provided by the teacher (to add a further challenge, not all of the texts directly related to the speech), Matthew uses the text of Martin Luther King's 'I have a Dream' speech to see whether some of these Christian teachings/beliefs inform what was said in the speech. In his work, Matthew does not make use of all the religious language used by King. For example, Matthew does not refer to King's reference to Isaiah 40:14 which relates to God bringing a new order or the reference to 'the faith that earned suffering is redemptive' which relates directly back to the death and suffering of Jesus. Neither does Matthew make a great deal of use of the texts he explained in the previous section. He does, however, *make links between some of the religious beliefs (used in the speech) and teachings (as provided by the teacher)* (a characteristic of Level 5).

'I have a dream' speech	How does it relate to Christian beliefs and teachings?
<p>We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness - Declaration of Independence</p>	<p><i>In his speech Martin Luther King refers to the American Declaration of Independence which was based on Jewish and Christian teachings that God Created everyone as equals. This supports the idea that there should not be discrimination against black people.</i></p>
<p>"Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children."</p>	<p><i>I think he might be referring to Jesus' parable about building your house on sand or rock. Martin Luther King is suggesting building the future on good foundations and getting rid of racial prejudice.</i></p>
<p>Justice must flow like torrents of water, righteous actions, like a stream that never dries up.</p>	<p><i>This means that fairness should be a powerful force that cannot be stopped and doing the right thing should never end.</i></p>

Investigating | How did Martin Luther King's Christian beliefs influence his work for equality?

In answering the question relating to the ways in which Martin Luther King's Christian beliefs influenced his work for equality, Matthew misses the opportunity to *use his understanding of the links between the religious beliefs and teachings . . . investigated to consolidate (his) understanding of religion* (a characteristic of Level 6) and instead only seems to describe the impact on believers' lives (a characteristic of Level 5) in this case King's life. Indeed his only explicit reference to King's religious beliefs relate to him being a pastor. This answer is very descriptive and is closer to Level 4, giving *specific examples of the ways in which these aspects affect believers' lives*.

Martin Luther King's Christian beliefs influenced his work for equality . . .

As a child, King grew up with the shadow of racism overlooking his life. In 1935 he was told he was not allowed to play with his friends because they were white and he was black. Even as a child, King didn't understand why he was being treated differently, but he thought it was unfair and that he shouldn't be treated like he wasn't human or that he was something below a white human. In 1954, King became a pastor of his own church in Montgomery, Alabama.

Between the years of 1955 and 1956, Martin Luther King led the Bus Boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. For 382 days he campaigned against racial segregation and won in late 1956. During this time he was arrested at least once. He was not afraid because he believed he was doing the right things. Not only does he care about civil rights for black people, but also for all racism including religion, nationality and every other racist threat. A year later, King was awarded the Nobel Peace prize which is a massive achievement and great honour.

His beliefs made him work hard for equality and this eventually caused his murder on 4th April 1968.

Investigating | Did the dream die?

Having carried out a number of activities concerned with equality and having carried out personal investigations, learners were asked to answer the fundamental question 'Did the dream die?'

In his writing, Matthew shows that he has carried out significant investigation by referring to the Ku Klux Klan, riots in France, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the award presented to Morgan Freeman, etc. which demonstrates he is not just merely sharing *his own and others'* opinions (a characteristic of Level 4), but is expressing different ideas. By making two different lists containing suggestions why 'the dream might be dead' and those that suggest why 'the dream is still alive' he shows characteristics of Level 5 in that he is beginning to *express and justify ideas and opinions about fundamental questions in the light of (his) investigations and experiences* (a characteristic of Level 5).

Martin Luther King, we have all learned so much about racism from the eyes of the black people and without him there would be no dream, and without him, racism may still have been at its peak, a deadly racial peak.

ya needed to write about all ways that MLK worked - how violence about how his Christian beliefs affected him.

Section 3- Did The Dream Die?

Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech was extremely inspiring and because of it many other black people and other races started to believe and protest for civil rights. But since 1963, is the dream still within us all? Or has the dream died?

There are parts of present society which suggest that the dream has died but there are many other parts that would lead people to believe that the dream is still alive.

Yes the dream has died because racial names are still being said

Immigrants (including blacks) are still being paid the minimum wage they can possibly be paid which I don't believe to be right. Some black people also have the lowest and dirtiest jobs like cleaner/ janitor, dustbin man, window cleaner etc.

There are still murders committed against black people for racial reasons.

Most recently there have been riots breaking out all over France due to the amount of immigrants from places like North Africa.

In America, the Ku Klux Klan is still in existence and still discriminates against black people.

So far it seems that discrimination is almost as bad as before so maybe the dream has died.

No the dream hasn't died because black people are now thought to be equal to everyone else.

Black people now have the right to vote.

If a black person was killed, he/she would have the same justice as any white person.

Black people have the exact same job opportunities.

There is next to no lynching happening.

After hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, black people were helped and funds were put towards new homes.

There is a public holiday for Martin Luther King so people obviously haven't forgotten about him.

The Ku Klux Klan is slowly depleting.

Many black people are very successful because they have been given the chance. For example Morgan Freeman who was quite recently awarded by the 'National Association for the Advancement of Coloured people' (NAACP)

Children go to school together.

We are all treated fairly equally.

In providing a personal response to the question of whether the dream died, Matthew shows characteristics that are closer to Level 3, as he only *describes his own . . . opinions* and includes little or no explanation of why he draws these simple conclusions.

Conclusion

I believe that the dream is still alive. One of the parts of the 'I have a dream' speech led me to believe this. It was when Martin Luther King said 'I have a dream, that one day my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character'. I know the dream is still alive because children are thought none the greater or none the less no matter what there colour is.

I also think that the dream is not completely fulfilled because there is still racism on Earth and we can't avoid it.

So did the dream die? No, it is still within the American dream and the Worlds dream that one day we will not be judged by the colour of our skin or the religious path we take but by the 'content of our character' and that one day we will all be treated as equals.

Summary and overall judgement

Levels 3, 4 and 5 were considered and Level 5 was judged to be the best fit.

When interpreting religious teachings, Matthew was very insightful and once he understood the context of the texts he was able to see how these texts could be interpreted to support social action. In this, he showed clear links between the beliefs (those related to social action in Christianity) and the Judeo/Christian teachings. In this section, he also shows competence in using religious language and symbolism, particularly those used in the Christian Bible. Christian teachings and beliefs made a huge impact on King's life (practice), indeed so much so that he became a pastor, social activist and martyr. Matthew's summary is very descriptive and doesn't show how the information he had gathered could be used to show understanding of these links.

His investigation of the fundamental question 'Did the dream die?' was mainly involved with collecting historical information (this consisted of approximately nine pages of text) which could not be assessed because of its purely historical nature, its lack of engagement with the question and inability to demonstrate appropriate skills development¹². Despite this, his final page, which identified for and against criteria for exploring whether the dream had died, provided sufficient information to justify his position, hence his demonstration of Level 5.

His personal response was not of the same standard as his other work because his conclusion regarding the fundamental question 'Did the dream die?' was very brief and did not make use of the in-depth investigation that he had undertaken. In his summary he could have developed this further by referring to people who might be able to justify the question and then he could have agreed or disagreed with their opinion. For example, he could have considered whether his opinion was similar or different to President Barack Obama or Halle Berry when she received her Oscar.

¹² The teacher intends to provide clear guidance so that this can be avoided in the future.

Way forward

Matthew can make progress in his work by learning to be more discerning when carrying out research, and learning to apply all the information gathered to the task set. For example, he could have made more use of the religious beliefs, teachings and practices and a range of different viewpoints in answering the fundamental question raised and in making his personal response. This would make him better able to *draw on a variety of informed sources and his own experiences in order to present evidence and develop appropriate responses to fundamental questions* (a characteristic of Level 6). He could have consolidated his exploration of the religious beliefs, teachings and practices by using all the information he was given, and by searching for differing religious viewpoints. This could have been carried out by exploring how people from some of the principal religions in the United Kingdom believe their religions contribute to equality issues. This would also have supported his personal response because he could have compared their viewpoints with his own.

Angharad

Level 7

Angharad is a 14-year-old learner in Key Stage 3.

Her teacher knows much more about Angharad's performance than can be included here. However, this profile has been selected to illustrate characteristic features of Angharad's work across a range of activities. Each example is accompanied by a brief commentary to provide a context and indicate particular qualities in the work.

Angharad's teacher judges that her performance in religious education is best described as Level 7.

Angharad's teacher planned opportunities for the Year 9 class to carry out investigations independently and in groups. The aim was for learners to develop their skills in investigating the fundamental questions of good, evil, suffering and hope through exploration of the Holocaust. Each topic deals with elements of the three core skills and the learning plan for the year provides opportunities for the learners to develop their skills through each aspect of the Range.

The investigation included selected texts from the Jewish Bible and New Testament, diary entries from survivors who participated in religious activities during the Holocaust, insights into the experiences of a death camp commandant and information about some of the Righteous Among the Nations¹³.

Investigating | What is evil?

As part of the exploration of this fundamental question, learners investigated evil from the perspective of a Nazi instigator – Franz Stangl – Commandant of the Treblinka extermination camp. Through collaborative group work, learners explored events from his life and evaluated whether he was evil or not. To support this work, they considered teachings from the Jewish Bible and New Testament to explore religious interpretations of evil.

¹³ Those individuals who put themselves at risk during the Holocaust to save Jewish people and who have been honoured for doing so by Yad Vashem (the memorial site for Holocaust victims) in Israel.



In this task, Angharad not only used information gathered from Stangl's life to begin to *present evidence* (a characteristic of Level 6) about whether Stangl was evil, but also draws insightful conclusions that 'anyone has the potential to do good and any one has the potential to be evil.' She also alludes to the concept of free will, 'we are free to choose between good and evil, but our decisions are tainted because of other factors. We are responsible for what we do'. In doing so she draws on religious ideas of free will, etc. which the class discussed using the 'plus, minus and interesting' strategy¹⁴.

After exploring Jewish and Christian concepts of evil, she amends her earlier definitions of evil to show that it is not just about making 'wrong choices', but that it involves intent, i.e. 'purposely making a decision that will mean others suffer, or enhancing the suffering of others' and in doing so demonstrates characteristics of Level 6 where she is *drawing on a variety of informed sources . . . in order to present evidence and develop appropriate responses to fundamental questions*.

¹⁴ Edward De Bono developed the 'plus, minus and interesting' strategy. Identifying what is 'interesting' in particular helps learners to think of a range of alternative opinions.

Stangl had destroyed his conscience and his life, as well as thousands of lives. He had destroyed his chance of a good, honest life and dying a happy man, surrounded by people who loved him. He had destroyed any chance of a good career, in the police or in weaving, and his happiness.

There was a part of him who loved and cared for his family. On the other hand he had signed thousands of people's deaths and just buried himself under his work so as to stand back and ignore the great suffering that was happening around him. He made a lot of mistakes, which in themselves were not evil, but led to evil acts he performed. My definition of an evil act is an act that promotes great suffering of others. He was responsible for the suffering of others and so he had participated in evil acts.

This story tells us that anyone has the potential to do good, and anyone has the potential to be evil. All it takes is ambition, high power + fear to set a person on the wrong path, and quite often it is very difficult to get on the right path again. We are free to choose between good and evil, but our decisions are tainted because of other factors. We are responsible for what we do.

My revised definition of evil is:-

"Purposely making a decision that will mean others suffer, or enhancing the suffering of others."

To further explore the concept of evil, Angharad uses selected texts from the Jewish Bible, New Testament and other related religious texts. In doing so, she is *investigating the fundamental religious question* regarding the nature of evil from a *variety of religious perspectives and begin(ning)* to *draw reasoned conclusions* (characteristics of Level 7). This shows that she can apply her understanding of religious concepts to consider how they relate to the fundamental questions raised. In her written work, she seems to understand that the temptation story relates to Jesus' rejection of a well established concept of Messiahship. She points out that Jesus' decision is not based on 'self interest', i.e. to serve his own ambitions and fears as was Stangl's. She also shows how the teachings and religious beliefs can be applied to specific contexts, for example she says 'Like Stangl they (Ahab and Jezebel) did not do

the acts themselves, but were nevertheless responsible and they gained from the evil. As a Catholic Stangl knew the difference between right and wrong and made the wrong decisions that led him towards evil'. This shows that she understands that the religious beliefs, teachings and practices need to be applied if they are to fulfil their original intention. When religious evidence is used in this way, it shows that Angharad is demonstrating characteristics of Level 7 – learners investigate fundamental religious and moral questions from a variety of religious perspectives and begin to draw reasoned conclusions.

Jesus is considered to be the epitome of goodness, but in the story of Jesus' temptations he shows his humanity by being tempted to carry out activities that could have led to bad outcomes. Such as turning stones in to bread (to feed people), jumping from the temple roof (to prove he was the Messiah) + bowing down to the devil, who represents absolute evil (to gain power). Christians use this story to help guide believers. This story can be compared to Stangl's life, but unlike Jesus, Stangl made bad choices because largely out of self interest he was tempted to serve his own ambitions and fears.

In Christianity the Golden Rule 'love God and love your neighbour as yourself' should help people avoid the temptation to do evil because you should be looking at what kind of consequences their actions have on themselves and others. The story of Jesus' temptations also makes Christians think twice. If people were to think about what their acts may do to others they may rethink + prevent some cruelty + suffering.

In Judaism many of the kings of Israel act out of self interest and 'do what is evil in the sight of the Lord'. They sometimes break the Ten Commandments that help guide Jews to do 'good', and reject God. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel are described in the Bible as rulers who caused people to be murdered, persecuted and to be victims of theft. Like Stangl they did not do the acts themselves, but were nevertheless responsible and they gained from their evil. As a Catholic

Stangl knew the difference between right + wrong and made the wrong decisions that led him towards evil.

Investigating | What is goodness?

To explore the fundamental question 'What is goodness?', the class used the Christian teaching of the story of the Good Samaritan to consider what the features of goodness are. In her imaginary interview with the Samaritan, Angharad points out that doing the right thing is not about liking someone but that it is about recognising that human life is of great value. She says that the injured man in the story 'was not about liking someone but that it is about recognising that human life is of great value. She says that the injured man in the story 'was human, in fact, he was a living being, and everything that is alive should be valued. Doing the right thing may often be inconvenient but inconvenience shouldn't put you off. Being good is not about taking the easy way out. Like I said, most times it is inconvenient, as anyone who has tried to do good will know.' She goes on to say that goodness is about 'eas(ing) the suffering of others . . . people simply need to tell themselves that they want to do good. It would be so much easier to be good if you had the motives, but you don't have to'. Without actually communicating the fact, Angharad is conveying the Christian concept of Agape¹⁵ which conveys the belief that goodness is a Christian duty rather than preference. In doing so, she shows that she is able to *apply . . . religious concepts to a . . . beliefs, teachings and practices* (a characteristic of Level 7) to use *religious perspectives to begin to draw reasoned conclusions* about the fundamental question 'What is Goodness?'.

¹⁵ Agape is the Greek word for Christian love – unconditional love.

The Christian Understanding of God:

The Good Samaritan (interview)

Interviewer:- Picture this, you are driving down a quiet country lane. You go round a corner and you can see a little way off a man at the side of the road. You slow down. He is unconscious. What do you do? Do you put it to the back of your mind and go on your way or do you stop and help even if it meant that you would be diverted from your journey? Here with me is one person who did just that, so why exactly?

Good Samaritan:- If you saw an injured sparrow would you not be filled with pity? Most would want to take the bird to a vet, to make sure that it would survive and be able to be free again.

Interviewer:- But this was a man, a foreigner to you, someone you had no idea about, who in normal life could be your enemy, not a sparrow

Good Samaritan:- You make it sound as though the life of a sparrow is far more valuable to a human, than that of one's own species.

Interviewer:- Yes, but why did you stop and help?

Good Samaritan:- I felt that it was the right thing to do, and that is that. I think highly of human life.

Interviewer:- So, why should you have helped?

Good Samaritan:- He was human, in fact, he was a living being, and everything that is alive should be valued. Doing the right thing may often be inconvenient but inconvenience shouldn't put you off. Being good is not about taking the easy way out. Like I said, most times it is inconvenient, as anyone who has tried to do good will know. Money and time are involved, but still, knowing that you have helped someone is the greatest knowledge.

Interviewer:- How do you tell if an act is good?

Good Samaritan:- Each person's idea of goodness is different. I suppose I would say that someone or something is good if they ease the suffering of others. It is not hard to do something good, you could do little things that are good in every day life. People simply need to tell themselves that they want to do good. It would be so much easier to be good if you had the motives, but you don't have to.

Interviewer:- So, as the story shows, to do good is simple. You should help to ease the suffering of someone or something and, well, goodness brings its own rewards - a feeling or knowledge of satisfaction. Finally, help anyone who needs it, when you can.

When choosing an example of goodness from the Righteous Among the Nations which had been prepared by the teacher in the form of a selection of 'mysteries', Angharad chose the story of Leopold Socha, which she briefly communicates as a background to linking his story to religious beliefs and teachings. Angharad suggests that whilst Leopold was not originally guided by altruistic goals, he eventually developed a relationship with the Jewish families in his care and because of the relationship he began to move closer to the Christian principles of his upbringing. Angharad identified two Christian principles that might have guided Leopold's practice, for example 'love your neighbour as yourself'¹⁶ and 'store up riches in heaven, where moth and rust cannot destroy and robbers cannot break in and steal. For your heart will always be where your riches are'¹⁷. In showing understanding of how religious beliefs are guided by teachings and lead to altruistic and self-sacrificing practice, she *consolidates her understanding of religion* (a characteristic of Level 6) by stating that 'the religious ideals of a good person may vary slightly from one religion to another, but the main points are generally the same: someone who loves their fellow humans, and the planet, someone who tries to be caring and not do evil to others'. This shows how she has used *the informed sources . . . to present evidence and develop appropriate responses to (the) fundamental question 'What is goodness?'*, but at a lower level than before because she does not refer to any specific conceptual awareness of unconditional love, sacrifice, etc.

¹⁶ Taken from the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)

¹⁷ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:17–29)

Leopold Socha

Leopold Socha was an orphan and grew up on the streets of Lwów in the early 20th Century. In order to survive on the streets of Lwów, he used to steal. Inevitably he spent a lot of his early life in prison. Leopold then became a sewer worker.

Leopold demonstrated goodness during the Nazi invasion. At first, one rich Jewish man gave Leopold money to get him and his family out of the ghetto and in hiding from the Nazis. They escaped through the cement floor of their basement by digging with forks and spoons. This was in May 1943. The Chigers paid Leopold to bring them food and look after them. Although he took money for this deed, I still think it was goodness, as he could have taken the money and just left, but he stayed and helped.

Other Jewish families wished to escape from the Nazis. They paid Leopold to bring them food. However, eventually the money ran out, but he kept on looking after the families, bringing them food and supplies, using his own money. This was one of the best things he had done. He took pride, and looked after the Jewish families for over a year. He would say "This is my work. These are my Jews."

For fourteen months the families lived in the sewers. When the Russians invaded Poland, they left the sewers. 10 out of 21 people survived.

Leopold was killed after the war. He had pushed his daughter away from a Russian military vehicle, saving her from death. He died in her place. This shows how caring he was, to be killed in the place of another.

At first he had looked after the Jewish families for money - they paid him to keep them safe, but after a while he took pride in looking after the families and they trusted him. Leopold was religious, he was a Polish Catholic. He acted on several of the Christian religious principles. He also performed the Jewish principle - "if you save one person, you save the world". Also the Christian principle 'love your neighbour as yourself'. When the money ran out, and he used his own money, it seems quite the sentences from the Sermon on the Mount - instead store up riches for yourself in heaven, where moth + rust cannot destroy, and robbers cannot break in and steal. For your heart will always be where your riches are.

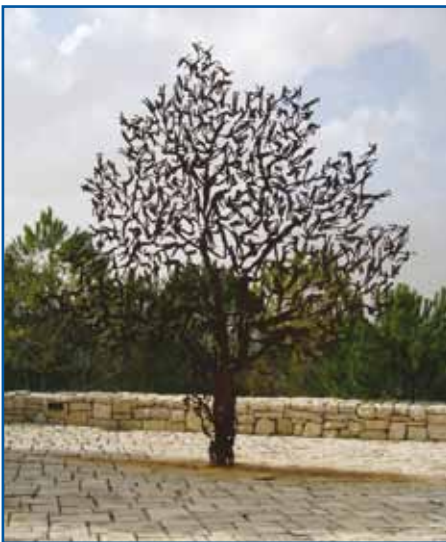
The religious ideals of a good person may vary slightly from one religion to another, but the main points are generally the same: someone who loves their fellow humans, and the planet, someone who tries to be caring and not do evil to others.

Investigating | What is suffering and hope?

In exploring how suffering can be interpreted in Judaism, Angharad considered how the religious practices (such as Pesach), which are guided by religious teachings and beliefs, were experienced and interpreted during the Holocaust. For this task the class read diary excerpts from the Holocaust, which showed how faith in religious traditions survived and flourished. In order to do this work, Angharad used information gathered from a market place activity¹⁸. Angharad prioritised the reasons why Jews celebrated Pesach and then prioritised why she personally thought Pesach would have been important during the Holocaust.

Statement Number	My Comment
1	Remembering that they weren't the first to be persecuted and remembering the hope of the promised land.
4	Hope keeps people going
9	Knowing they weren't alone in their suffering and giving each other their support through troubled times
2	Tradition is one of the most important things to some people
5	The Jews were being treated like slaves and celebrating Passover was a symbol of freedom for them.
11.	Sometimes celebrating makes the world seem much better and gives people hope.

¹⁸ See footnote 1 on page 10.



Using the information gathered along with the personal experiences of survivors, Angharad wrote an article which she entitled 'Physical Freedom and Spiritual Freedom'. In this she *accurately explain(s) and justifies(s) the reasons for the range of viewpoints held by religious people* (a characteristic of Level 7). For example, she states that 'many of the Jews' faiths were strengthened through this time as they turned to God to ask for help and protection. Others found that it was more important to have their Jewish traditions and be part of the Jewish nation'. The rest of the article goes on to show how different people found spiritual freedom in different ways, for example some through 'holding (their) traditions close', others by choosing a different religion (Buddhism) or by acknowledging that there was no need to understand God to believe.

Physical Freedom + Spiritual Freedom

Physical freedom is a treasured thing, it allows people to live their lives fully, making choices out of their own free will. However, physical freedom can be taken away. Usually this is because the person in question has committed a crime, therefore abusing their freedom and so having it taken away. Other ways it could be restricted is if the person in question is dedicated to something, possibly a job, although this restriction isn't as extreme as imprisonment. Physical freedom is limited, in modern society there is only so much you can do within the boundaries of law and humanity.

Spiritual freedom is not limited in such ways. There are no laws telling you what you can and cannot believe, or think. No other person can restrict your spiritual freedom. This freedom allows a person to explore their faiths, their beliefs, the world around them, the people and much more. I believe that only two things can restrict your spiritual freedom yourself and God.

Examples of this are shown by men and women who were held under Hitler during the Holocaust.

Many of the Jewish prisoners explored the meaning of their faiths and traditions, and, of course, God. It is easy for us now to ask how any god could allow such suffering, but then we are not puppets on strings, we have our free will. The Holocaust was an act of an evil man. Many of the Jews' faiths were strengthened through this time as they turned to God to ask for help and protection. Others found that it was more important to have their Jewish traditions and be part of the Jewish nation.

Such a person was a woman called Esther Brunstein. Throughout the Holocaust she held her traditions close. When she lost her physical possessions, she prayed that she hadn't been destroyed. By praying, and holding what she had closely, she retained her spiritual freedom.

One of the most prominent ways of retaining spiritual freedom was to explore God and what God is. Throughout the Holocaust, many Jews felt their faith in God protected them, and while some rejected their faith many felt their belief in God grew stronger.

Many people who asked questions about God came to the conclusion that there aren't any straight answers. God is a mystery, but that does not stop people asking questions.

Such people were Bibir Tauba, who had stuck with his faith asked questions, but decided that there weren't answers. Ezra Turnann came to the conclusion that there weren't any answers but Buddhism allows him to live without answers. Rabbi Les Fischer decided that he didn't need to understand how God works he just needed to believe.

These people retained their spiritual freedom through the Holocaust by asking questions and coming to their own conclusions.

Some people might say that spiritual freedom can be taken away by propaganda, making people think things, but this is just an impression. People choose in their mind what to believe, nobody else can do that.

In sharing her personal responses about hope and suffering, Angharad chose to use a creative medium to express her ideas in her poem 'The Hope of a Hat Maker'. Her poem shows how people's hopes change depending on circumstances; for example, the poem begins with hopes about lifestyle and standards of living and how these hopes gradually developed into hopes for survival.

The Hope of a Hat Maker

In the hat shop they hoped
for the ring of the till
And for the soft material to come
For Mr. Ludwig's hat,
They hoped for enough
and a little more
To keep their happiness together.

When the barbed wire came they hoped
for a misunderstanding and a gate
to let them go and be free.
Then they were scared because
the locks were on the other side
Then suddenly
The lights went out.

When the Passover came they hoped,
that they'd have their bread and wine
that the Lord would understand
Their troubled lives in daylight
and their scared minds at night.

When the trucks came they hoped
That it hadn't come for them
But there was the line
Outside the door
So they ran and hid
And were found.

When they saw the train they hoped
that it wasn't really there.

That they were in a daydream

Their minds showing dirt not gold

But they were pushed and pulled and shoved
And the lights went out again.

When they stopped they hoped
that they'd reached the destination
to leave smell and the crowd

To breathe the air that should have been there

But all they saw was snow

It was so cold

When they saw the fences they hoped
that they wouldn't stay for long.

That someone would come and find them
to tell them they could go home
and leave the enclosure behind

When the gas came they hoped

And yet they hoped, and held each others hands
And they promised that they loved each other
in simple silence.

Summary and overall judgement

Levels 6 and 7 were considered and Level 7 was judged to be the best fit.

Angharad's work demonstrates clear understanding of the links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices and how these links provide a consolidated understanding of religion (through the understanding of religious concepts, religious interpretation and moral action as a result of belief). She demonstrates this when she conveys the concept of Agape (even though she doesn't use the word), the way she interprets that the temptations story is concerned with conflicting ideas about Messiahship and the way in which she recognises that Leopold Socha's actions may have been guided by remnants of his understanding of Christianity. Through this work she is also demonstrating appropriate use of religious and symbolic understanding. In considering the fundamental questions she draws on a range of sources, particularly religious ones, which shows that she is demonstrating characteristics that are secure at Level 7¹⁹. She does begin to *explain and justify the . . . range of viewpoints held by religious people* (a characteristic of Level 7) in her interview with the good Samaritan and in her summary of Leopold Socha, but the only place where she was encouraged to express her personal opinions was in the poem about hope and suffering. Whilst the poem has qualities as a narrative poem it does not directly deal with the victims' *viewpoints* or her own *beliefs and actions* in relation to the fundamental questions raised.

Way forward

Angharad's skills in religious education are well developed. In order to make further progress, she would need to consolidate her skills, particularly in evaluating a range of possibilities by asking herself 'What if?' questions and continuing her thinking towards drawing logical conclusions. This could be supported by asking her to draw up a list of the religious concepts she has learned during the course of the key stage, to explain their meaning and then evaluate how they could be applied to the work in hand. This would keep her focused on making use of skills and knowledge that she has access to. Had

¹⁹ In the level description the phrases *variety of religious perspective* and *variety of beliefs, teachings and practices* are used. It should be noted that whilst 'variety' within each of her examples is limited, overall during the key stage she does provide a variety of religious perspectives in her work.

she carried out additional research she may have (under the guidance of the teacher) been able to apply a wider range of religious concepts to answer the fundamental questions raised; for example she could have made more use of the religious ideas discussed by the class in the 'plus, minus and interesting' exercise. Again this may have benefited from the concepts list noted previously. The teacher has little doubt that Angharad is more than capable of providing an insightful personal response, but she would have benefited from a summary of what was expected in the poem, and additional opportunities to compare her own beliefs and actions with other people.

Safia

Level 8

Safia is a 14-year-old learner in Key Stage 3.

Her teacher knows much more about Safia's performance than can be included here. However, this profile has been selected to illustrate characteristic features of Safia's work across a range of activities. Each example is accompanied by a brief commentary to provide a context and indicate particular qualities in the work.

Safia's teacher judges that her performance in religious education is best described as Level 8.

Safia's teacher planned opportunities for the Year 9 class to carry out investigations in groups and independently in relation to the fundamental question 'What is truth?'. Each topic deals with elements of the three core skills and the learning plan for the year provides opportunities for the learners to develop their skills through each aspect of the Range.

Additional resources for this investigation included using resource sheets produced by the teacher concerned with the nature of truth, along with information and activities regarding religious beliefs, teachings and practices. Similar resources were also made available through searching the internet. Learners used additional non-religious sources such as films to draw out similarities and make comparisons between the non-religious sources and the religious concepts studied.

Investigating | What is truth?

The Year 9 teacher provided opportunities for learners to develop their skills in religious education through an engagement with the fundamental question 'What is truth?'. Learners began by physically moving around the class to respond to a values continuum which explored whether certain statements were true or not. From this activity, Safia gained an understanding of the different types of 'truth' and that finding evidence to verify her opinions would not always be easy. In this grid (opposite) Safia very simply *draws on . . . informed sources . . . to present evidence and develop appropriate responses to the fundamental question 'What is truth?'*. The outcome demonstrates characteristics of Level 6 skills development. As a starter activity it does not demand extensive knowledge or insight.

Different types of truth	Verification
Scientific truth	This begins with a hypothesis and with the scientist carrying out repeated experimentation until s/he can come to a premise on which to base a scientific theory. This is acknowledged until new evidence can be found. This truth is usually relative e.g. the 7 laws of life - that living things need oxygen and light were revised when it was discovered that animals live in the depth of the sea in the darkest places on earth without oxygen or light.
Experiential	This begins with a person having an experience that convinces that person that they have access to truth. Some experiences are easily collaborated e.g. if you put your hand in a fire experience tells you that it will burn and be painful. Other experiences, however, are more difficult to prove. For example, religious experiences give people insight into another state of being or may be other worldly and by their very nature can only be verified by people who have similar experiences or by people who implicitly trust the person's integrity.
Cultural	This begins with a person having trust in the principles on which one's culture is based. For example, Americans believe the truth as conveyed in the Declaration of Independence. In a similar way in Britain we trust the reporting of certain TV/radio channels or newspapers because they have built up our trust over the years. Popular culture on the other hand conveys ideas that people accept as true often without challenging the basis on which they are built.
Conscience	This begins with a persons developed sense of morality. Religious teachings and beliefs might have been used as the basis of the development of personal conscience. Equally society might have had an influence on what is considered to be worthy of guilt and what is not. Conscience is an instinct or feeling that tells you whether something is good or bad, but it can be flawed, particularly if circumstances confuse the issue.

To further explore the fundamental question relating to 'truth' and learners' personal responses, learners were shown excerpts from the film *The Truman Show*²⁰. They were also provided with a 'mystery' based on the early life of the Buddha²¹ to compare motives and resulting beliefs. Safia made notes of her ideas and then worked with her group to give a presentation. In her notes, Safia recorded the beliefs and resulting motives of the people concerned and explained how they could justify their actions, for example he thought 'he was improving peoples' lives by giving them positive role models' and he believed that 'terrible things can happen in life and if these can be avoided then it will lead to happiness. He believed that he could prevent suffering'. She also suggests that they might have had other motives for their actions, for example selfishness and power. In this she is *explain(ing) the relationship between other people's beliefs and actions* (a characteristic of Level 6). She goes on to explain *the relationship between (her) own beliefs and actions* (a characteristic of Level 6), by recognising that if 'something terrible eventually happened to me in the future I would not be emotionally prepared' and explains this by commenting that she 'might not become Buddhist, but I would need to take time to study the world and the suffering in the world to work out how I deal with it emotionally and socially. I'm not sure how I would deal with my anger maybe that is why Buddha needed to find calm'. In this explanation she begins to consider the Buddhist perspective, but doesn't give sufficient information to demonstrate higher level skills.

²⁰ In the film the main character is provided with a fictitious world (which he believes to be 'real') in order that the TV network can create a TV reality show.

²¹ In the story, Siddhartha (later to become the Buddha) is deceived by his father in order to ensure that he doesn't discover the reality of suffering. His father knows that if Siddhartha does, he might leave his responsibilities in the palace in order to search for the meaning of life.

Action	Motive	Belief
The producer removed Truman from reality	The reason for doing this was . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make money • become famous • feel as though he was in control • feel as though he was helping him by giving him a perfect world 	This was based on the belief that . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he was entertaining people • he was improving peoples' lives by giving them positive role models • he was saving Truman from the suffering he would endure in life
Siddhartha's father kept him away from reality	The reason for doing this was . . .	This was based on the belief that . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If he gave his son a choice Siddhartha would choose his own way and not follow the route his father wanted him to take • Terrible things can happen in life and if these can be avoided then it will lead to happiness. He believed that he could prevent suffering
If this had happened to me	I would think their motives were driven by . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selfishness because they mainly wanted things for themselves and used me to achieve their own ends • Power because they thought they had the power to fight destiny and stop bad things happening 	I would believe that . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I could never trust the people I love again • I was living a lie with a false sense of security • when something terrible eventually happened to me in the future I would not be emotionally prepared • they were thinking of themselves and not my best interests.

As a result of this experience I would have to . . .

Learn about the world from scratch because I wouldn't know about anything. I might find it difficult to trust people because I had never been told the 'truth' and I wouldn't know how to test the reliability of what people were telling me. I might not become Buddhist, but I would need to take time to study the world and the suffering in the world to work out how I deal with it emotionally and socially. I'm not sure how I would deal with my anger maybe that is why Buddha needed to find calm.

To further explore how the Buddha came to discern the 'truth'²², Safia carried out further personal research. In the extract from her extensive summary of Siddhartha's life, she identifies that 'maybe if he had not been sheltered from the truths in the world then he would not have gone to such drastic measures to find enlightenment. If he had know the suffering the world . . . he may have just realised from the start that you should follow the middle path and he would have known about the two extremes'. In this response *she draws on . . . informed sources* (from the Buddhist teachings) *and (her) own experiences in order to present evidence and develop appropriate responses to fundamental questions* (a characteristic of Level 6). She draws on a further informed source when she identifies Occam's philosophy, but does not use this to support her argument in order to draw reasoned conclusions; indeed her use of non-Buddhist ideas could be more in line with expectations of Level 5 where she *expresses and justifies ideas and opinions about fundamental questions in the light of investigations and experiences*.

²² In a subsequent lesson, learners were given the opportunity to view the film *Little Buddha* which helped them to contextualise some of his teachings and the impact that his 'truth' had on his followers.

There are different ways of finding truth. If you experience something then you know it is true. But experience is not always fool proof as you can't experience everything in one lifetime. You can ask questions and get answers, but then if the truth isn't based on a fact or an experience, then how do you know if the answer is correct? You can believe the opinions of those whom you trust and respect, friends and family. You can use your own judgement and decide on truths based on the facts that you are presented with. This might be difficult though, as our feelings and thoughts can sometimes cloud our judgement. You can research topics using books or the internet and be sure to find factual information that will claim to tell the truth.

William Occam, a philosopher, once said that the simplest explanation to something is often the most accurate.

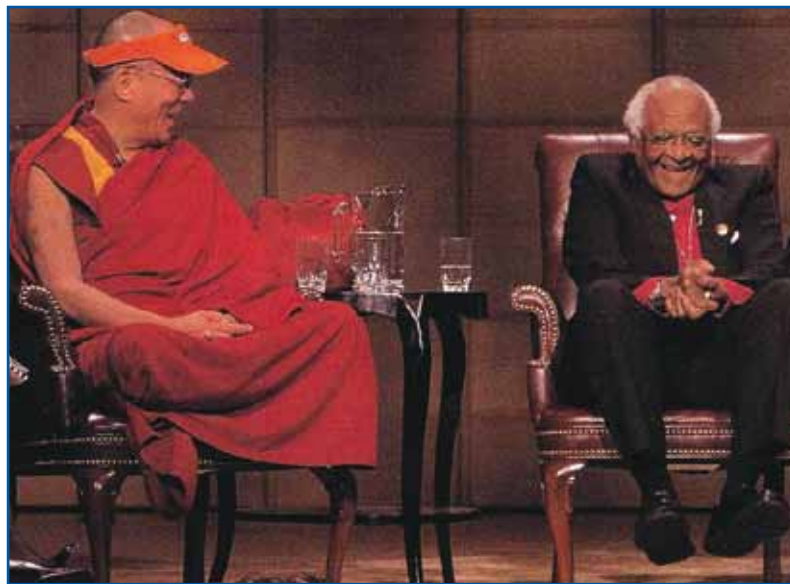
People are prepared to go to different lengths to find the truth, depending on what truth they are looking for. If the truth you are looking for affects you greatly then you are going to go to any length to find it.

. . . After 49 days meditating, at the age of 35, Siddhartha attained enlightenment. At this point, he is believed to have stated that he had realized complete awakening and insight into the nature and cause of human suffering which was ignorance, along the steps necessary to eliminate it. These truths were then categorized into the four Noble truths; the state of supreme liberation- possible for any being- was called Nirvana.

Siddhartha believed strongly about what he was doing, he knew why he was doing what he was doing living his life as an ascetic, who is to say that he was wrong and he wasted his effort and time trying to find the truth. He was focused entirely on finding enlightenment and gained enlightenment by his experiences. But I think that he didn't think out what he was doing properly. Maybe if he had not been sheltered from the truths in the world then he would not have gone to such drastic measure to find enlightenment, If he had know the suffering the world had then he may not have had to have experienced the two extremes; going from riches, living his life in luxury to living his life in complete poverty. He may have just realised from the start that you should follow the middle path and he would have known about the two extremes.

Investigating | How do religions convey truth?

Unlike many of the other learners in her class when considering the fundamental question of 'truth', Safia directly uses a range of religious beliefs, teachings and practices that exist, particularly within Christianity and Buddhism as the basis of her evaluation of absolute and relative truth.



Safia begins by exploring a key belief to be found in the Apostle's Creed, i.e. that Christians believe in one God. In this exploration, she demonstrates an understanding of a range of concepts such as the spiritual nature of God, the image of God and eternal life. Within her exploration of beliefs, she refers to teachings about judgement and about metaphorical punishment and reward. The fact that she is using concepts accurately, and in relation to the religious beliefs and teachings promoted in the Apostle's Creed, demonstrates that her work is showing characteristics of Level 7 because she can *apply a wide range of religious concepts to a variety of beliefs, teachings and practices*.

This is the Apostles' Creed. It basically tells you the main beliefs that Christians have about God and Jesus.

There are several branches of Christianity, whose beliefs vary in detail. However one standard that is accepted by most of them is the "Apostles' Creed." I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of Heaven and Earth. Christians believe in one God, who created and sustains the universe and all that is in it.'

God is a person, but of a somewhat different type than human beings. While humans have both physical and spiritual elements, God is entirely spiritual. That is, he exists in a sphere outside the normal physical universe.

Human beings are created in the image of God. What we share with God is the fact that we are rational beings, capable of making responsible decisions, and capable of relationships with each other and with him.

'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of Heaven and Earth and in Jesus Christ, His only son.'

Christianity came to regard Jesus as in some sense God's presence in human form.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. The Holy Spirit is the bond that unites us with God.

Christians believe in the idea of heaven and hell. Based on Jesus' teachings and other sources of revelation, Christians believe that God created human beings to live eternally in fellowship with him. The future as described in the Bible includes the resurrection of all people, a judgement, and eternal life in either heaven or hell. Christians believe that there will be a judgement. In this, everyone's life will be evaluated. Those who depend upon Christ for salvation can be assured that they will pass this judgement. The Bible says that there are two different outcomes for eternal life: heaven and hell. There is not a precise description of either heaven or hell, nor are we told how many people will end up in each. They are described using terms that seem metaphorical: a city built of gold in heaven, a lake of fire for hell.

Buddhism

Buddhists do not believe in any sort of God.

Buddhists believe The Four Noble Truths: (a) suffering exists, (b) desire is the cause of suffering, (3) suffering may be ended by the annihilation of desire, (d) that to end desire one must follow the Eightfold path.

The Eightfold Path: Right Mindfulness, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Understanding and Right Concentration. A Buddhist's life's aim is to end suffering through the annihilation of individual existence and absorption into "nirvana" the Real.

Buddhists believe in the "Middle Path" - living moderately, avoiding extremes of luxury and asceticism. They believe in Dharma - (the Way), Karma (cause and effect), reincarnation, the sanga (company of seekers), and the passage on earth as an opportunity to end the cycle of birth and death.

Safia similarly highlighted the main Buddhist beliefs which are held by many adherents; for example, the four noble truths, the eightfold path and the idea of the middle way.

Similarities	Differences
Both were born in a miraculous way.	A transcendent or immanent or any type of God.
Soon after their birth, their future greatness is proclaimed by a sage (Asita, Simeon).	Siddhartha Guatama never prophesied but Jesus did 300 times.
Both astonish their teachers through the knowledge they possess, though still in their early childhood.	Siddhartha never claimed to be God, Jesus did. Buddha's clear answer was: I am a man, not a god; Christ's clear answer was: I am both "Son of Man" and "Son of God."
Both are tempted by the devil before they start upon their public career.	Siddhartha performed no miracles, Jesus many.
Both walk over the water	Siddhartha died and Jesus died, and then was resurrected.
Both feed 500 and 5,000 persons, by multiplying miraculously the food available.	Jesus grew up the child of a poor carpenter whereas Siddhartha grew up a privileged prince.
Both Buddha and Jesus based their ethics on the "Golden Rule." Buddha told the Brahmins and householders of a certain village as follows: <i>"A lay-follower reflects thus: How can I inflict upon others what is unpleasant to me?" On account of that reflection, he does not do any evil to others, and he also does not cause others to do so.</i> And Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: <i>"Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.</i> Also the principle <i>"Love thy neighbour like unto yourself.</i>	Jesus was born the son of God; Siddhartha was just a human being.
- Both, setting out from the countries of their origin, have spread over large parts of the world, but in their original homelands they have scarcely any followers left. The number of Christians in Palestine is very small today, and on the whole continent of India proper, there are at present not even half a million Buddhists.	Buddhism views this world not as created by God, but as having four distinct elements, namely: earth, water, fire and wind, linked together by "Hepuprataya", or primary and secondary causes, without any plan and purpose. Christianity views the world as created by God according to His own design and purpose.

As part of an individual investigation, Safia carried out an extensive study comparing the similarities and differences within both religions, for example she identified that both religions emphasise a similar ethical basis and she quotes from the teachings, i.e. 'How can I inflict

upon others what is unpleasant to me?’ from Buddhism and ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ from Christianity. On a different issue, she compares the different ways to achieve the concept of salvation by using the teachings as a source, explaining that Buddhists believe that salvation is attained through the commandments and Christians believe that salvation is achieved through Christ. When discussing the question ‘How do religions convey truth?’ overall Safia demonstrates characteristics of Level 8 as identified through her *understanding of a wide range of religious concepts, including various perspectives on beliefs, values and traditions*. The religious beliefs are evident throughout this section and she uses appropriate teachings to verify the information provided. At one point she refers to the different traditions of Buddhism, namely ‘Pure Land’ Buddhism (she also includes evidence of different traditions in Christianity in subsequent sections). In addition, Safia also refers to the values of each religion, for example adherence to various forms of the Golden Rule, reference to various commandments, vegetarianism, etc.

Both follow paths, Buddhists follow a path to Nirvana and Christians follow a path to heaven.

A Buddhist tries to work out his own salvation by keeping the Buddhist commandments. A Christian receives salvation of God as a free gift of grace.

This is the greatest difference between these two religions. Before Gautama Buddha died his disciples dried and said: "Master, who will be our master after your death?" Gautama said: *Pratimoksa* will be your master instead of me." *Pratimoksa* means the commandments. Buddhists have many methods of self-culture, but even for "Pure Land" Buddhists who express faith in Buddha Amithaba, the first step is to keep the commandments. Gautama never said "I can save you," or "I shall forgive your sins."

A Christian knows that man cannot save himself by keeping laws. The apostle Paul said: "For no human being will be justified by His sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.... They are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood to be received by faith" (Rom 3: 30-25).

In recognition of the complexity of the nature of 'truth' (again in her individual investigation), Safia goes on to analyse how the different denominations within the Christian faith have differing interpretations with regards to the continuing debate about creation versus evolution. She recognises that for some, for example Pope Pious XII, that the 'Doctrine of 'evolutionism' (is) a serious hypothesis worthy of a more deeply studied investigation and reflection on a par with the opposite hypothesis,' a view which she states is contradicted by some fundamentalist Christians who believe in the 'inerrancy of the Bible'. In a similar way, she shows how Christian doctrine about the sanctity of human life can be interpreted in different ways when considered in relation to the arguments for and against abortion. Again, she goes on to describe the different views about the sanctity of marriage, recognising that 'these different groups tend to believe in the same Bible and the same Lord, they just mainly differ on modern ethics. Trying to sort out these issues causes problems because the opinions and views expressed by the different religions stem from the same teaching.' In her summary, she resolves the challenge of absolute and relative truth by concluding that 'Most religions believe that humans have a free will. If that is the case then we all have the free will to decide whether we believe in God, in which God we believe in and how we worship'. In this section, she again *demonstrates . . . a wide range of religious concepts, including various perspectives on beliefs, values and traditions within the religions studied* (a characteristic of Level 8). Safia also *evaluates the various aspects of religion and explains how these affect the lives of individuals and communities* (a characteristic of Level 8).

	"And you must understand, my brothers, that this is through him, Jesus Christ that forgiveness of sins is now being proclaimed to you. It is through him that everyone who has faith is acquitted of everything for which there was no acquittal under the law of Moses"(Acts 13: 38-39).
The Eightfold path tells Buddhists how to behave and Christians follow the Ten Commandments.	Buddhist doctrine teaches that man must take only vegetarian food, Christianity doctrine teaches that food is for health and does not concern the soul.
	Buddhism's ultimate goal is Nirvana, Christianity's ultimate goal is eternal life.

All religions claim that they and they alone, teach the truth. With all the religions saying that there is bound to be controversy. There is no evidence to support any of the religions, so who are we to judge which is right and wrong? There are many different groups within the Christian religion. You have the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Pentecostal, Reformed/Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and many others.

Fundamentalists and other Evangelical Christians: A key belief system of these faith groups is their belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. Since Genesis 1 describes how God created the universe, and in a certain sequence, there is no doubt that he did exactly that.

Liberal Protestant Denominations: These churches have accepted and even promoted the theory of evolution for decades. Although there are many unresolved details about the evolution of species on earth and of the matter and energy in the rest of the universe, scientists have reached a consensus on the broad mechanisms of evolution. Most researchers agree that the universe originated at a "Big Bang" some 20 billion years ago.

Mainline Protestant Denominations: Many members and their religious organizations adopt either the positions of Evangelicals or that of liberal denominations. To some, evolution is not really a religious issue. Others have adopted *theistic evolution* (a.k.a. called "*process creation*", or "*multiple creations*".) In this belief system, God originally created the universe. Later, God used evolution as the technique by which new species develop.

Roman Catholic Church: Pope Pius XII released an encyclical in 1950 titled "*Humani Generis*." It "*considered the doctrine of 'evolutionism' as a serious hypothesis, worthy of a more deeply studied investigation and reflection on a par with the opposite hypothesis.*"

These different groups tend to believe in the same Bible and the same Lord, they just mainly differ on modern ethics. Trying to sort out these issues causes problems because the opinions and views expressed by the different religions all stem from the same teaching. They have just evolved to become the expressions that they have today.

Christian belief that humans have a free will. Most religions believe that humans have a free will. If that is the case then we all have the free will to decide whether we believe in God, in which God we believe in and how we worship them.

In her investigation, she explored concepts such as creation, sanctity of life, divinity and morality and considered them from the opinion of various religious adherents. This work generally shows that she *has investigate(d) the religious concepts studied*. It also shows that she has evaluated *other people's viewpoints through reasoned argument and evidence* (characteristics of Level 8) by using the beliefs, values and traditions as the basis of the evaluation. The *evaluat(ion)* (of her *own . . . viewpoints* (a characteristic of Level 8) is quite limited, but she sums up her opinion by stating that 'all religions claim that they and they alone, teach the truth. With all the religions saying that there is bound to be controversy. There is no evidence to support any of the religions, so who are we to judge which is right and wrong?'. On its own, this very brief summary would not show characteristics of the higher level, but viewed in relation to the other extensive materials that she has produced, she is showing some characteristics of Level 8.

All religions claim that they and they alone, teach the truth. With all the religions saying that there is bound to be controversy. There is no evidence to support any of the religions, so who are we to judge which is right and wrong? There are many different groups within the Christian religion. You have the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Pentecostal, Reformed/Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and many others.

Investigating | Experience as the basis of truth

In order to share her personal response relating to truth, Safia explores the concepts of trust and relationship which might have an impact on how far learners can consider something to be the 'truth'. They carry out a class poll to evaluate whether there are 'truths' that they can all agree upon, by considering what they would consider to be absolute truth as opposed to relative truth. The comment provided by Safia (below) is not sufficiently detailed or justified to indicate characteristics of higher levels, but had she worked on this response it could have demonstrated characteristics of Exceptional Performance, for example that *fundamental religious questions are often complex and that answers are often partial and inconclusive*.

There are many world religions, each one claiming to have the sole claim on truth. This is a problem in today's society because some people refuse to accept other people's opinions and claim that their view of religions is the only view. Others claim to accept other religions as long as the other religions agree with their ideas of truth. In religious education lessons we focus on the idea of plurality i.e. that all religions have valid truth claims, but that they are only part of a much bigger picture.

Summary and overall judgement

Levels 7 and 8 were considered and Level 8 was judged to be the best fit.

The Level 8 work is best exemplified in the way Safia uses information about the religious beliefs, teachings and practices and various interpretations of the concepts to shed light on the shades of opinion that exist within religions. She also carries out a similarly extensive survey of the similarities and differences between Christianity and Buddhism, again making full use of information about the religious beliefs, teaching and practice(s). Because of the quality of much of her later work, including language acquisition and symbolic understanding, it builds on the earlier work showing full engagement

and that progression is sequential. Safia only achieved characteristics of Level 6 in her work on Siddhartha because she mainly used the opportunity to retell the story in detail (which has not been included here). What is more important in a skills-based curriculum is how one utilizes the information. On the whole, Safia does not sufficiently do that in her engagement with either Siddhartha or Saint Thomas (evidence of which has not been included). Her personal response throughout the work was limited, but where it was present it had the potential of achieving the higher levels.

Way forward

Safia can make progress in her work by focusing on how she best utilizes the knowledge and understanding she has gained through study, and by making use of the relevant skills in using critical, creative, intuitive thinking, problem solving and simple hypothesizing. Safia is skilled in drawing out similarities and differences and providing a wealth of information to back up her research. She would benefit from including this level of detail elsewhere in her work²³, and consistently making use of analytical and evaluative skills when expressing personal responses to improve the quality of her judgements and justification further. In her personal investigation of truth, she may have benefited from researching one of the most relevant forms of validating truth for religious people (in addition to revelation through religious texts), i.e. validation through religious experience. This would have added another dimension to her study of truth, and one where she could have *considered the effect on the lives of individuals, communities and society* (a characteristic of Level 8). Safia also needs practice in *evaluating her own and other people's viewpoints through reasoned argument and evidence* (a characteristic of Level 8).

²³ She could also further develop her research skills by acknowledging resources/authors that she might have quoted and evaluated.

Appendix 1 Key Stages 2 and 3 National Exemplar Programmes of Study

Key Stage 2

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their skills, and their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions, and use these to raise and respond to fundamental human and religious questions. This should be carried out through the **interrelationship of the three core skills** of the subject.

- **Engaging with fundamental questions** – fundamental questions are human and religious questions that focus on the search for meaning, significance and value in life. They have a profundity and intensity that underpins any aspect of study in religious education.
- **Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)** – this includes exploring religious stories, sacred texts, lifestyle, rituals and symbolism, which provide insight regarding these fundamental questions and raise further religious and human questions.
- **Expressing personal responses** – this includes relating the issues raised during study to pupils' own experiences and allowing the development of personal responses to, and evaluations of, beliefs, teachings and practice(s) and fundamental questions.

These core skills inform one another and all three should be applied appropriately to the range studied.

Range

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their skills by focussing on the following contexts for study. These should not be regarded as discrete topics but rather as interwoven areas of study that provide opportunities for pupils to engage, explore, and express ideas and responses. During the course of a whole key stage it would be reasonable to expect every aspect of the range to have been embraced.

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop skills through engaging with:

Skills

Engaging with fundamental questions

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- ask, discuss and respond to fundamental questions raised by their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion
- interrogate a range of evidence from religious and non-religious sources, including other disciplines, in order to consider the issues raised
- use evidence from a range of sources effectively in order to present and support arguments and opinions
- develop alternative explanations and suggest new possibilities
- carry out investigation in an open-minded way and be prepared to accept challenge in the light of new information or evidence.

The world

- **the origin and purpose of life** – how interpretations of the origins of the world and life influence people's views, *e.g. meaning and values*
- **the natural world and living things** – how religions show concern and responsibility, *e.g. stewardship; sustainability*

Human experience

- **human identity** – the ways in which religions understand human existence, *e.g. the image of God; uniqueness; spirituality*
- **meaning and purpose of life** – how religious ideas, values and beliefs influence people's responses to life and death




Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- recall, describe and begin to explain religious beliefs, teachings and practices
- explore and make links between religious beliefs, teachings and practices
- describe and begin to explain the impact that religion has on the lives of believers
- identify the similarities and differences within and across religions
- recognise and begin to interpret layers of meaning/symbolism within religious stories, rituals, art, dance and music.

Expressing personal responses

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- express and begin to justify their own feelings and opinions in different ways, *e.g. orally, in writing, and through creative arts*
- demonstrate how what they have learned has impacted on their own views/ideas
- consider, appreciate, empathise with and respect the viewpoints of others
- recognise, explore and reflect on the spiritual side of life
- use a range of religious language appropriately
- use ICT and other means to gain access to information and to communicate religious concepts. 

- **belonging** – how local believers, through home/community celebrations, share a sense of identity and commitment 
- **authority and influence** – how different forms of authority such as sacred texts, religious leaders and codes guide and influence people's lives
- **relationships and responsibility** – how the importance of personal relationships and responsibility to others is demonstrated by religions
- **the journey of life** – how the various stages of life and natural occurrences are acknowledged, responded to and celebrated in religion, *e.g. rites of passage; challenging and inspiring experiences*

Search for meaning

- **non-material/spiritual** – how religions indicate (through stories, celebrations and activities) that life is spiritual (more than material/physical)
- **knowledge and experience regarding the non-material/spiritual** – how religious/spiritual experience is developed and understood, *e.g. relationship with God; lifestyle, commitment, worship, prayer, music, dance, meditation and fasting.*

Appendix 1 Key Stages 2 and 3 National Exemplar Programmes of Study

Key Stage 3

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their skills, and their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions, and use these to raise and respond to fundamental human and religious questions. This should be carried out through the **interrelationship of the three core skills** of the subject.

- **Engaging with fundamental questions** – fundamental questions are human and religious questions that focus on the search for meaning, significance and value in life. They have a profundity and intensity that underpins any aspect of study in religious education.
- **Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)** – this includes exploring religious stories, sacred texts, lifestyle, rituals and symbolism, which provide insight regarding these fundamental questions and raise further religious and human questions.
- **Expressing personal responses** – this includes relating the issues raised during study to pupils' own experiences and allowing the development of personal responses to, and evaluations of, beliefs, teachings and practice(s) and fundamental questions.

These core skills inform one another and all three should be applied appropriately to the range studied.

Range

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their skills by focussing on the following contexts for study. These should not be regarded as discrete topics but rather as interwoven areas of study that provide opportunities for pupils to engage, explore, and express ideas and responses. During the course of a whole key stage it would be reasonable to expect every aspect of the range to have been embraced.

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop skills through engaging with:

The world

- **the origin and purpose of life** – why religions value living things and hold positive views regarding the natural world: through contemporary debates about the origin, purpose and sanctity of life and the relationship between the natural world, human beings and God

Skills

Engaging with fundamental questions

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- ask, discuss and respond to fundamental questions raised by their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion
- draw on their own experiences and on a variety of informed religious and non-religious sources, including other disciplines, in order to gather evidence and develop appropriate arguments
- use problem-solving techniques, critical, creative and intuitive thinking to explore preconceptions, possibilities/explanations
- formulate arguments and justify points of view while recognising that the conclusions are only partial, inconclusive and are open to different interpretations.

- **the natural world and living things** – why individual religions acknowledge the importance of taking responsibility for the natural world and living things and implement their beliefs through action, *e.g. life as a gift; sustainability*

Human experience

- **human identity** – why religions believe humans have a unique status amongst living things and the implications of this belief on human behaviour, values, freedom, responsibility and consciousness, *e.g. image of God*
- **meaning and purpose of life** – how and why religion is considered to provide insight into questions of truth, meaning, purpose and value, *e.g. life/death/life after death; good/evil/suffering/hope, etc.*
- **belonging** – how and why individuals, local communities and society express religious identity and demonstrate commitment through worship, celebration, lifestyle, etc.



Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- recall, describe, and explain the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated
- make and investigate the links between religious beliefs, teachings and practices to demonstrate understanding of a range of religious ideas/concepts
- describe and give explanations for the similarities and differences within and across religions
- explain how religion impacts on the lives of individuals, local communities and wider society, using a range of interpretations
- analyse and interpret the layers of meaning/symbolism within religious rituals, art, dance and music.



Expressing personal responses

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- communicate religious ideas and concepts using reasoned argument, personal opinions and ideas in a variety of creative ways, e.g. orally, in writing, and through creative arts
- explain how what they have learned about religious/spiritual experience and moral decision-making might relate to their own and other people's lives
- appreciate, respect, empathise with and evaluate the viewpoints of others, acknowledging where they are similar to and different from their own
- recognise, explore and reflect on the spiritual side of life
- use a range of religious language appropriately
- use ICT and other means to gain access to information and to communicate religious concepts.

- **authority and influence** – how religious authority conveys ideas regarding revelation, wisdom and truth/interpretation and why this influences believers, e.g. *through sacred texts and religious founders, and historical and contemporary leaders*
- **relationships and responsibility** – how religions demonstrate rules for living, advise on making difficult moral decisions, recommend ways to develop and retain relationships and provide reasons why these are important, e.g. *right/wrong; justice/equality; tolerance/respect; conflict/reconciliation*
- **the journey of life** – how and why religious people take on different roles, responsibilities and commitments at different stages of life, e.g. *becoming an adult/parent/ascetic; participating in pilgrimage, etc.*

Search for meaning

- **non-material/spiritual** – how people explore and express issues, ideas and experiences of a transcendent/spiritual nature and why this spiritual side of life is important to them, e.g. *the nature of God/the soul; religious experience/spiritual dimensions of human experience and truth/meaning/interpretation*
- **knowledge and experience of the non-material/spiritual** – how and why people develop, interpret and act on their religious/spiritual experience, e.g. *relationship with and responses to God; lifestyle/sacrifice; impact of religion/religious commitment on individuals, communities and society; identity/diversity within and across religion.*

Appendix 2 National exemplar level descriptions for religious education

The following level descriptions describe the types and range of performance that pupils working at a particular level should characteristically demonstrate. In deciding on a pupil's level of attainment at the end of a key stage, teachers should judge which description best fits the pupil's performance. Each description should be considered in conjunction with the descriptions for adjacent levels.

By the end of Key Stage 2, the performance of the great majority of pupils should be within the range of Levels 2 to 5, and by the end of Key Stage 3 within the range 3 to 7. Level 8 is available for very able pupils and, to help teachers differentiate Exceptional Performance at Key Stage 3, a description above Level 8 is provided.

All statements made within the levels should be read as they relate to Christianity and the other principal religions as identified within the specific locally agreed syllabus.

Level 1

Pupils talk about their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion. They recall and respond to some basic religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They show some awareness that these aspects of religion are special. They recognise that their feelings, actions and opinions may be similar to or different from those of other people. On occasion, they use simple religious vocabulary appropriately to express their ideas.

Level 2

Pupils ask questions about their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion, and suggest some answers. They recall and communicate simply some of the basic religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They suggest, in simple terms, why these aspects of religion are important to some people. They talk in simple terms about their own feelings, actions and opinions and those of other people. They use simple religious vocabulary appropriately.

Level 3

Pupils discuss the questions raised by their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion, giving their own opinions. They describe some of the basic religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They describe how some of these aspects of religion affect believers' lives. They describe their own feelings, actions and opinions, and in simple terms comment on the viewpoints of others. They begin to recognise that religious symbols carry meaning, and use religious vocabulary appropriately.

Level 4

Pupils discuss their own and others' responses to questions about life, the world around them and religion. They describe and begin to explain the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They give specific examples of the ways in which these aspects affect believers' lives and begin to identify the similarities and differences within religions. They explain in simple terms how their own feelings, actions and opinions differ from those of others. They recognise some religious symbols and use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately.

Level 5

Pupils express and justify ideas and opinions about fundamental questions in the light of their investigations and experiences. They make links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices studied, describing the impact on believers' lives and identify the similarities and differences within and across religion. They explain how their own feelings, actions and opinions affect their own lives, and describe how those of others similarly affect their lives. They use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate a basic understanding of symbolic language.

Level 6

Pupils draw on a variety of informed sources and their own experiences in order to present evidence and develop appropriate responses to fundamental questions. They use their understanding of the links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated to consolidate their understanding of religion and to explain differing religious viewpoints. They explain the relationship between their own beliefs and actions. They also explain the relationship between other people's beliefs and actions. They use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate an understanding of symbolism and symbolic language.

Level 7

Pupils investigate fundamental religious and moral questions from a variety of religious perspectives and begin to draw reasoned conclusions. They apply a wide range of religious concepts to a variety of beliefs, teachings and practices. They accurately explain and justify the reasons for the range of viewpoints held by religious people. They consider the implications of their own beliefs and actions, compare these to other people and draw balanced conclusions. They use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately and are able to explain the symbolic meaning of religious objects, actions and/or language.

Level 8

Pupils investigate fundamental religious and moral questions, evaluate a range of possibilities and draw rational conclusions based on evidence gathered. They demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of religious concepts, including various perspectives on beliefs, values and traditions within the religions studied. They evaluate the various aspects of religion and explain how these affect the lives of individuals, communities and society. They investigate the religious concepts studied, evaluating their own and other people's viewpoints through reasoned argument and evidence. They use a wide range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate a developed understanding of symbolic language.

Exceptional Performance

Pupils acknowledge that fundamental religious questions are often complex and that answers are often partial and inconclusive. They analyse and give reasons for the different perspectives held concerning the beliefs, values and traditions of the religions studied, recognising the differences between religions and appreciating the tension of unity and plurality within each religion. They have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the behaviour and beliefs of adherents of various faith systems. In relation to the religious and moral concepts studied, they express well-considered opinions of the viewpoints of others based on in-depth investigation. They use an extensive range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of symbolic language.

Useful resources

Optional Assessment Materials for Religious Education Key Stages 2 and 3 (ACCAC, 2004)

The Teacher's Toolkit: Raise Classroom Achievement with Strategies for Every Learner by Paul Ginnis (Crown House Publishing, 2001)

Crystal Series by Gill Vaisey (CAA, 2002)

Important Religious Questions by Gavin and Fiona Craigen (UWIC Press, 2008)

World Faiths Today (Welsh National Centre for Religious Questions, 2008)

Faith, Life, Challenge: Religious Education Key Stage 3 DVD (Tinopolis, 2010)

Philosophy for Children
Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in
Education (SAPERRE)
www.sapere.org.uk

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World Religions Photo Library (main guidance page 53)

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Please note

Section 101(1)(a) of the Education Act 2002 provides that religious education is now a requirement of the basic curriculum for all pupils at the school. There is also a duty on the local authority, governing body and headteacher to secure that religious education in all voluntary, community and foundation schools is provided in accordance with section 101(1)(a) of the Education Act 2002. In the course of providing the religious education required by the basic curriculum, teachers can teach about religion including religious beliefs, teachings, practices, the commitment of believers and impact on believers' lives. These aspects are required in locally agreed syllabuses and the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*. This will include among other things:

- studying holy books and their meaning
- studying the range of beliefs and practices that pertain to different religions and denominations
- visiting believers and/or inviting them into the classroom to share their experiences of how religion has impacted on their lives and to explain their commitment to their religion/belief, etc.

In implementing the locally agreed syllabus and the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* teachers need to encourage learners to carry out investigations in an objective, balanced way and without personal bias. To support this balance and objectivity it is helpful if learners, when referring to religious or non-religious beliefs, use statements such as 'Some Sikhs believe . . . because . . . , while others believe . . . because . . . '. This tries to ensure objectivity and awareness that similarities and differences exist within and across religions and other disciplines.

When visiting believers or inviting them into the classroom it is the school's choice who to invite and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that objectivity is retained – where believers have been invited because of a particular viewpoint it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the messages are balanced by providing further stimulus and a range of viewpoints.

The examples used in the case studies are suggestions of the type of activities that could take place. It is the responsibility of the school to check the suitability of resources and to acquire any site licences needed to make use of commercially available materials.

It is good practice when using commercially produced materials that might cause offence that parents complete a parental permission form.

It is crucial that prior to visiting any website with learners the practitioner visits the website in advance. This should be done to check that the information/material intended for use:

- supports the learning of children and young people
- is relevant to the work being explored
- is appropriate for children and young people.

We are not responsible for the content or reliability of the websites or organisations noted. Listing should not be taken as endorsement of any kind.