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Inspire a love of learning, within a nurturing Christian environment

Religious Education Policy

Brockenhurst CE Primary School,
Pre-School, & Nursery

Approved by:	Board of Governors	
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2028	

Religious Education Policy

Responsibilities

The provision and development of this Policy is the responsibility of the Governors of Brockenhurst CE Primary School & Pre-School. The responsibility for delivering the aims in this policy rests with the Headteacher, the R.E. Leader and the staff.

The teaching of R.E. complies with the locally Agreed Syllabus IV and we also make use of 'Understanding Christianity' alongside this. Religious Education plays an educational part in the lives of children as they come to speak, think and act in the world.

Aims

Through R.E. and in line with the aims of Living Difference IV (Hampshire's Agreed Syllabus) we aim to

- introduce children and young people to what a religious way of looking at, and existing in, the world may offer in leading one's life, individually and collectively.

A religious life is defined as:

a) subscribing to a set of truths
b) adhering to a set of practices
c) a way of understanding existence.

Through R.E., we also hope that children will

- mature in their own beliefs and patterns of behaviour, through an exploration of religious beliefs and a questioning and reflective attitude.
- have an opportunity to reflect on what it means to live a religious life or one informed by a non-religious perspective.
- have an opportunity to learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.
- have an opportunity to meet visitors from a wide range of faiths and visit different religious settings to support children in gaining an understanding of religious traditions.

As a Church of England School, we also provide opportunities to understand the Anglican church year both at school and at the Parish Church. We welcome visitors from St Saviour's Church to share their experience of Christian belief and life at times of worship and in R.E. lessons.

As a Church of England School, we also use 'Understanding Christianity' to teach children about Christianity. It aims to provide pupils with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice as part of a wider religious, theological and cultural literacy. Doing justice to Christianity as a world faith, it aims to raise the level of pupils' religious literacy, draw pupils into deeper understanding of the Bible, provide them with opportunities to

explore how Christian belief and practice are shaped. It makes connections with other areas of belief and understanding and encourages reflection, evaluation and application.

All pupils have access to R.E., irrespective of race, gender, creed or ability. Our school curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) including the stipulation that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from R.E., but need to discuss this with the Headteacher.

Delivery

The recommended **time allocation** for RE is:

- Foundation Stage and KS1: 36 hours per year
- KS2: 45 hours per year

Depending on the topic and the teacher, R.E. will be taught either during a regular weekly session, or in a 'block' of a few days.

Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core and foundation subjects within Brockenhurst CE Primary School & Pre School.

Reflecting the school's trust deed, **Christianity will be the majority religion studied in each year group** and will be at least 50% of curriculum time.

Both **Abrahamic** (Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions in the syllabus) and **Dharmic** religions (Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh traditions in the syllabus) will be taught across KS1 and 2.

Pupils in KS1 will learn about the Christian and Hindu tradition.
Pupils in Year3/4 will learn about Christianity and one other religion, which has not been previously studied (in the case of Brockenhurst CE Primary School & Pre-School we have chosen Jewish tradition.
Pupils in Y5/6 will learn about Christianity and Islam, as well as Buddhism in Year 5.
Foundation Stage children study concepts that are within children's own experiences and are the basis of concept development in KS1.

This means that by the end of KS2, **five religions** will have been studied, with the emphasis being on Christianity.

Living Difference IV encourages **Pondering Time.** This encourages teachers in any key stage to consider building in pondering time/ opportunities to allow children, 20% of the total R.E. curriculum time to work on and explore topics, questions or themes of their choice, at their own speed alone or with others who share the interest. Whilst this is not mandatory, this is an option that we may offer children in Year5/6

All R.E. planning takes into account the **End of Year Expectations.** 'End of year expectations (EYEs)' are found in the curriculum making section of Living Difference IV. The EYEs are thought about when planning the curriculum; this to ensure that there is progression over time in the dispositions and skills of religious education.

In line with the agreed syllabus for Hampshire County Council, **'Living Difference IV'** (November 2021), an **inquiry based approach** explores **concepts** and begins from a child's experience. There is an emphasis on the curriculum over a Key Stage being seen as a whole and therefore a spiral curriculum is used to develop and revisit **key concepts**/words and other materials.

Four Group A concepts have been identified as the **Golden thread concepts**/words that weave through our whole curriculum enabling links to be made with other more complex concepts/words over time. The **Golden Thread Concepts** are **'community, belonging, special and love'.** They are all concepts from Group A below.

Group A Concepts are concepts which are common to all people e.g. celebration, remembering, peace

The four Golden Thread Concepts are visited in each of the following 3 phases.

- Y1/2
- Y3/4
- And Y5/6
- Year R will visit one of the Golden Threads.

In addition to this, Group B and Group C concepts are also covered.

- Group B Concepts are concepts which are shared by many religions e.g. worship, pilgrimage and
- Group C Concepts are concepts which are distinctive to particular religions (or non-religious traditions) e.g. Umma, Trinity

R.E., taught through an **inquiry based approach**, uses a process that has come to be known as **the 'Cycle of inquiry'. See Appendix 1.** Within the inquiry based approach, the following five **skills** of religious education in *Living Difference IV* are focused on*:* **Communicate**, **Apply**, **Inquire**, **Contextualise** and **Evaluate**.

The five key inquiry steps allow the teacher to bring the child:

- at the **Communicate** and **Apply** steps to attend to their own and others' experience
- at the **Inquire** and **Contextualise** steps to engage intellectually. The **contextualise** step is when the children explore the concept in a particular religious context e.g. the concept of special places through the context of the synagogue or church.

When using **'Understanding Christianity'**, core concepts are selected, which reflect a view of biblical Christianity as following a salvation narrative. The 8 key concepts focused on within Understanding Christianity Units are God, Creation, Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and Kingdom of God.

A **'spiral' curriculum** allows pupils to revisit core Understanding Christianity concepts in different contexts as they move through the school, deepening their understanding of the meaning of the overall 'big story' of the Bible.

Understanding Christianity, contributes to 'religious literacy, by helping pupils develop 'theological literacy'. We interpret this as enabling pupils to grasp the meaning and significance of core theological concepts within Christian belief and practice, as part of a coherent understanding of living Christianity.

Foundation Stage

As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation stage profile for children aged three to five. In Reception Class we encourage the use of a 'Big Book' to capture pupils' comments and learning.

RHSE

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as looking after the environment, recycling etc. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by being taught what is fair and unfair, right and wrong, and being encouraged to share their opinions
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by being taught about religious and non-religious perspectives on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure and relationships
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by being taught about the diversity of different ethnic groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (including British values and Prevent)

R.E. provides opportunities to promote children and young people's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

R.E. can therefore be understood as **promoting spiritual development** through:

- discussing and reflecting upon key questions of meaning and truth, such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, the being of God, and values such as justice, honesty and truth

- learning about, and reflecting upon, important concepts, experiences and beliefs which are at the heart of religious traditions and practices
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity
- considering how religious and non-religious ways of life perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and perhaps with God.

R.E. can therefore be understood as **promoting moral development** through:

- valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust
- exploring the influence on moral choices of family, friends and the media, and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious and non-religious leaders

- considering what is of ultimate value to all people through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religious and non-religious ways of life, on values and ethical codes of practice
- studying a range of moral issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote racial and religious respect and the importance of personal integrity.

R.E. can therefore be understood as **promoting social development** through:

- considering how religious and non-religious ways of life lead to particular actions and concerns
- investigating social issues from religious and non-religious perspectives, recognising diversity of viewpoint within and between religious and non-religious ways of life.

R.E. can therefore be understood as **promoting cultural development** through:

- promoting cultural understanding from a religious and non-religious perspective through encounters with people, literature, the creative and expressive arts, and resources from differing cultures
- considering the relationship between religious and non-religious ways of life and cultures and how religious and non-religious ways of life contribute to cultural identity and practices
- promoting racial harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society.

Teaching R.E. to children with special needs

In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Assessment, Recording and Reporting RE.

Living Difference IV have published **End of Year Expectations** to provide a basis for making judgments about pupil's performance to assist teachers with their planning, assessments, recording and reporting to parents, as appropriate. Evidence of children and young people's progress will be captured in a number of ways, for example

through speaking and listening, drama, dialogue and discussion, as well as through a variety of different written activities. End of Year Expectations can be found within Living Difference P:38.

The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

It is hoped that in a Church of England School it will not be necessary for any pupils to be withdrawn from RE. However, we recognise that this may sometimes be necessary. The school policy should therefore state clearly how that withdrawal will be managed. At Brockenhurst C of E Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children form religious education on the grounds of conscience.

However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history and citizenship. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at our school.

Managing the Right of Withdrawal

- The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs.
- Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 18 or over), and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated.
- If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.
- If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA SACRE (VC schools) or diocese (VA schools) is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

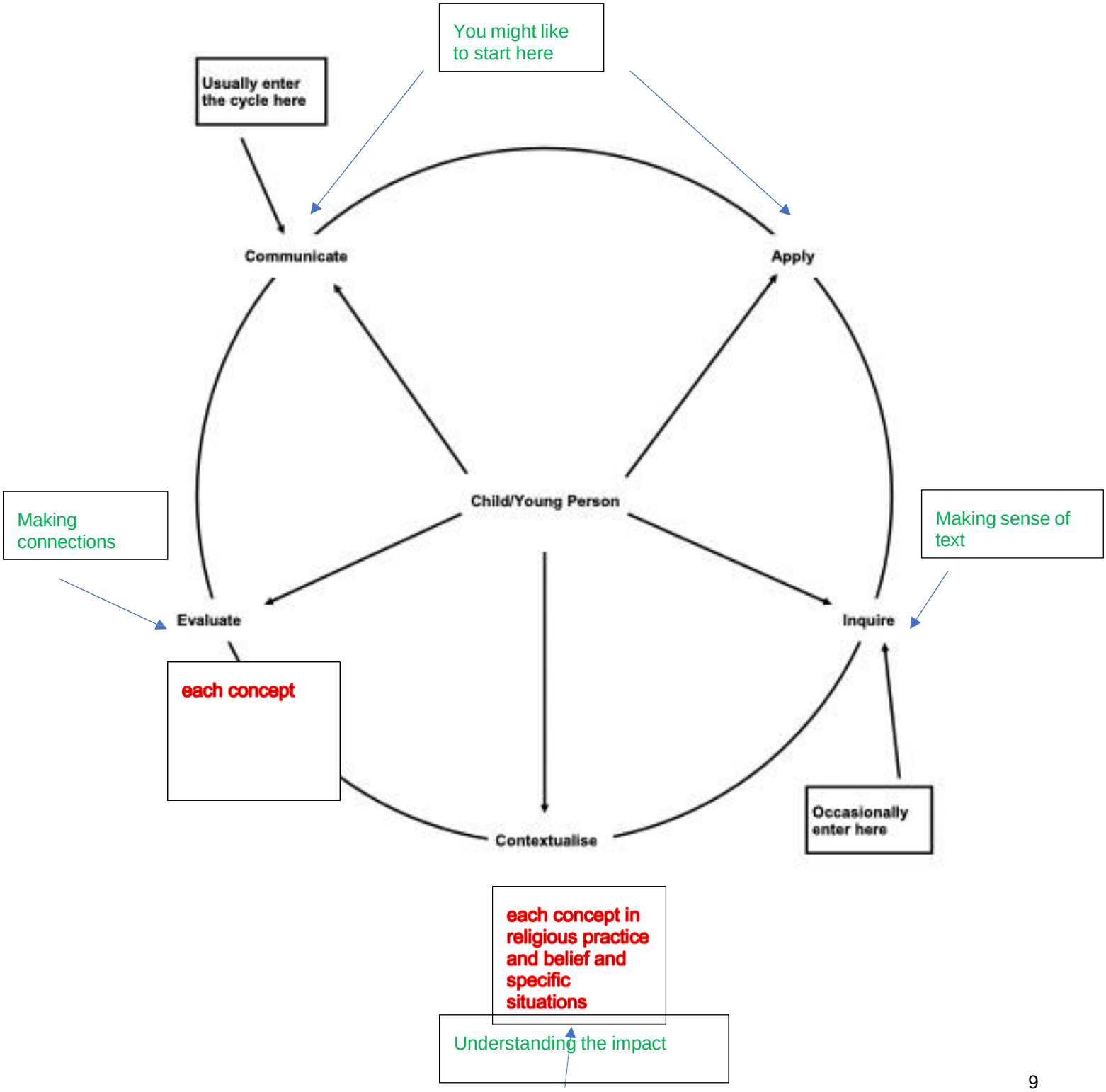
Resources

- Living Difference IV and concept planning from the HIAS RE website and on the Hampshire Moodle
- Books in the library & RE Curriculum Centre @ Falcon House, Winchester
- Resource boxes containing books, posters and artefacts specific to each religion studied
- Occasional visits both to and from the school
- internet research e.g. BBC my life/my religion and Let's Celebrate, Request, TrueTube

Monitoring

The R.E. Leader is responsible for the monitoring of RE across the school.

Appendix 1 – The Cycle of Inquiry in Religious Education



Appendix 2

Examples of questions teachers may ask at each stage of the cycle to advance dispositions and skills of inquiry in religious education

Step of the inquiry	**Examples of questions the teacher may ask**	**Children and young people will be able, in increasingly complex ways, to, for example:**
Communicate	What do we notice? What do you see here? Can you/we draw/paint/make what you/we see here?	Describe and put their experience into words or put what they notice into colour or line or installation. Do this in different ways alone and with others.
Apply	Has anyone else had an experience of …? Do we see things the same way? Do you think everyone thinks/feels/sees this? Is this always a good thing? What would it be like if no one experienced this? Can you think of a situation when this may be difficult? Can you give a reason and an example to support your ideas? Do we need to find out more?	Identify issues raised in applying their responses to specific situations. Recognise there are ways of life which may be different to their own. Express how their responses may apply in other situations. Recognise and dialogue with others about some of the shared concerns involved in living a human life. Give reasons for their points of view regarding their own and others' experience and responses, and be able to make judgements discerning good from bad reasons. Be open minded and interested to find out more.
Inquire	What's the main idea here? What could we say counts as …? What do we mean by …? Do we have any questions about this idea? What can we infer from this?	Recognise key ideas/concepts. Create a working definition of the concept and frame questions. Form explanations and suggest possible inferences.

	Why might other people see this idea in this way? How might a religious person (particular example) make sense of this in their lives (upper primary/secondary)?	Recognise that, and identify how, the concept may be used by or become meaningful for people living a religious life. Be interested to enquire with others – sometimes theologically or philosophically – into other long-standing positions on or accounts or explanations of the idea/concept.
Contextualise	Are there any questions about this? How does this context help us to understand or think more about the big idea/concept? How might a (religious) person such as … (give particular example) make sense of this in their lives (context appropriate to primary or secondary students)? In what ways might this context have influenced things? Do you think this would always be the case? Does everyone agree?	Frame their own questions recognising there is more than one answer. Explore a range of interpretation of concepts in a real-life context. Recognise that differing religious and social contexts influence interpretations, sometimes raising controversial issues that demand further engagement. Express and communicate their understanding of why context influences interpretation of a concept. Build capacity to compare different interpretations of concepts by finding out about and giving more examples.
Evaluate	What do you think about all we've explored in this enquiry? Why might … be important for … ? Do you think all … would think/feel the same way? Can you give reasons for your position on this? What difference does that make? How might that help us think more carefully about these things?	Discern value for themselves and others regarding the matters explored in the enquiry. Show sensitivity to interpretations of the concept in the context. Form a judgement about the significance of the concept from within the given context and also without. Clarify reasons behind different judgements recognising the characteristics which make a difference.

	Could there be any value in this for someone who was not a …? What do you think about this? Are there any alternative views? Could there be any value in this for you/me/us? Are there any remaining questions?	Discern for themselves the possible significance of the concept, as well as for someone who is or who is not living in that way of life. Recognise and express the value the concept has beyond the context