



Subject Philosophy: RE and World views



Where our RE scheme comes from?

Westminster's version of *Living Difference III*, is the Agreed Syllabus for religious education (RE) in schools in Westminster. This syllabus builds on a 'concepts' approach to religious education, enriched by philosophical and theological cycles of enquiry.

The purpose of RE at Essendine

The purpose of RE is to introduce children and young people first to attend to their own experiences and then to teach children skills to understand, communicate, empathise and respect the plethora of ideas, beliefs, cultures and faiths among us, including non-religious views as children come to speak, think and act in the world.

1988 Education Reform Act & the 1996 act stated that RE is a statutory subject for all schools. It is also statutory that the syllabus reflects that religious traditions are in the main Christian in the UK but ensures to take into account other religions and non-religious views.

Living Difference III seeks 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. It recognises and acknowledges that the question as to what it means to lead one's life with such an orientation can be answered in a number of qualitatively different ways.

These include:

1. the idea that to live a religious life means to subscribe to certain propositional beliefs (religion as truth);
2. the idea that to live a religious life means to adhere to certain practices (religion as practice);
3. the idea that to live a religious life means to exist, to be in and with the world, in a trustful manner or with a particular kind of awareness (religion as existence)

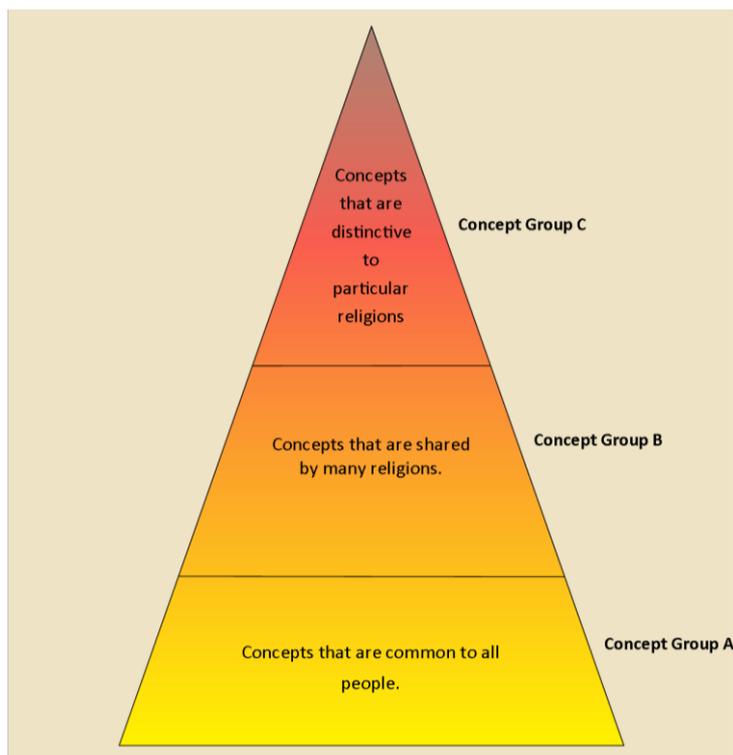
Enquiry into concepts

The *Living Difference III* approach is a process of enquiry into concepts which refers to a 'Big Ideas', for example: *love, hope, community or justice*.

The learning journey will progress through concepts. These concepts are grouped into A, B and C concepts. In Year R and Key Stage 1, children will first have opportunities to respond to their experience of Group A concepts. It is expected that as children and young people move through primary school, as they go into KS2 they will have opportunities to engage with all three groups of concepts.



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The RE Learning journey

EYFS

RE curriculum planning for Reception year children in the Foundation Stage should ensure continuity and progression in children's learning towards and throughout Key Stage 1.

Each unit of work for RE in a Reception class will be an enquiry into the children's experience of a concept and link strongly to the EYFS characteristics of learning. Concepts that are particularly appropriate for Reception children might be *belonging*, *celebration* and *specialness*.

Key Stage 1

Children in Key Stage 1 will continue to explore and reflect on their own way of life and feelings about this and also continue developing an understanding of religious and non-religious ways of living. They should continue to be encouraged to ask questions and recognise that different people may respond in different ways to their questions.

Children should be encouraged to explore and share their own experiences of the concepts studied. In this way they will begin to attend to other people's experiences of concepts found in religious and non-religious ways of life.

At this key stage the enquiry into what it means to live a religious and non-religious life will be concerned with enquiring into concepts common to all people (A concepts), where children will engage within their own experience. These concepts are also evident in religious ways of life, for example *wisdom*, *hope*, *remembering*.



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Towards the end of the key stage 1 children should begin to explore concepts that are shared across many faith narratives (B concepts) for example *faith, angels, God symbols*.

Children will be introduced to terms specific to religions (e.g. Shabbat) but the focus for enquiry into concepts will be rooted in their own experience (for example, *celebrating* is the focus concept but Shabbat is a Jewish example of this).

Key stage 2

During Key Stage 2 children will develop their dispositions and skills for enquiry further, which enables them to have a more mature understanding of different religious traditions. They should now be able to identify and make their own responses to some of the issues that arise in terms of their own experiences in regard to living a religious or non-religious life. They should be encouraged to develop their ability to ask and pursue more perceptive and complex questions e.g. where does wisdom come from?

The focus on B concepts will increase as pupils progress through Key Stage 2. There will continue to be some cycles of enquiry beginning with children's experiences of A concepts, although these enquiries will usually become more complex and sophisticated in terms of engagement with the concept from the perspective of a religious or non-religious person outside their experience, as the children get older.

In Year 5 and 6 some children will have the opportunity to enquire into C concepts. As Key Stage 2 progresses, children usually have a broader range of experiences to draw on for their enquiries. They will continue to engage with concepts that are common to all people (A concepts), for example *freedom, authority, sacrifice*, as well as investigate concepts that are shared by many faith narratives (B concepts), for example *holiness, pilgrimage* and *rites of passage*. Through their enquiries children will also encounter concepts distinctive of particular religions (C concepts), for example *Trinity, moksha, mitzvot*.

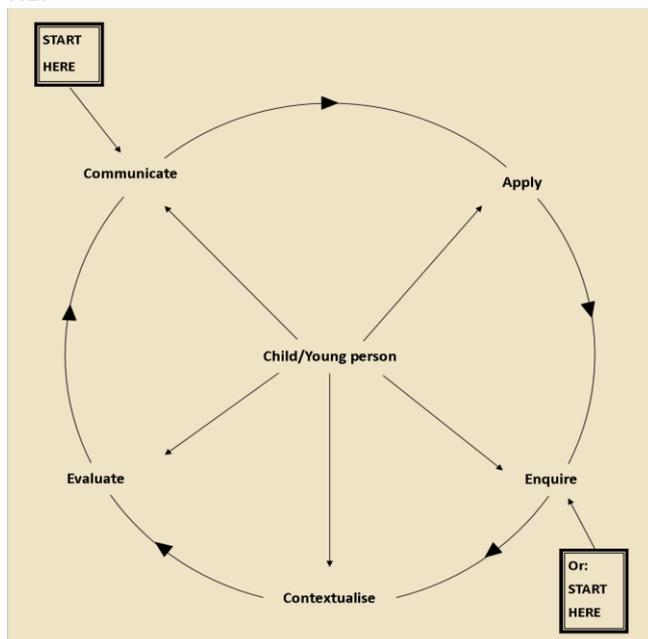


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How is it taught?

This approach to enquiry has five key stages. We focus on 5 key skills when learning about RE:



1. Communicating

Here, the teacher will bring the child or young person to attend first to their own experience of the concept through an activity, before exploring their own responses in relation to others' experience.

2. Applying

Children and young people become even more aware of others' responses and might give examples from their own experience of the concept in different situations. The enquiry has now moved on because children and young people have come to see challenges and complexities existing in the range of experiences and different situations. However, the enquiry is in general still working with ideas familiar to those in the class.

3. Enquiring

Here, material that is new to the children and young people is introduced in varying complexity, usually depending on the age of the children. Children may also reflect collaboratively, for example in a community of philosophical enquiry, becoming more intellectually humble or self-effacing, recognising that there are many different ways of looking at things. This could also be an appropriate starting place for pupils in Year 5 and 6.

4. Contextualising

Children examine the concept in specific context, for example through investigating the activities of a local religious community, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, etc. A non-religious context may be used if it enhances the enquiry. An effective Contextualise step allows children and young people's enquiry to deepen intellectually with increasing openness to the plurality of ways it is possible to be religious. The context may be, for example, a bible story (primary), a



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case study, news article, artefact, visit, visitor, video or dramatic scenario, but always a real situation which raises issues and invites questions. Children and young people will be able to appreciate.

5. Evaluating

At this stage children are given the opportunity to weigh up their experience of the concept in two ways. First from the viewpoint of someone living a religious (or non-religious) life, as in the context studied. Secondly, the children and young people will be enabled to discern what may be of value in the religious (or non-religious) experience of the concept for them, from their own point of view. This should involve collaboration and dialogue.

Timetable

R.E is taught once per week -

Reception classes: approximately 36 hours per year

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year •

(This does not include collective worship)