

Southampton Council of Faiths Education Project for schools, colleges and covenant organisations



Southampton Council of Faiths (SCOF) is attempting to extend its support of interfaith co-operation understanding by supporting the provision of Religious Education and literacy in schools, colleges and service providers. The project is aware of the observations and recommendations of the recent Ofsted report *Deep and Meaningful*¹ and particularly the need to tailor approaches to pupils' existing knowledge and the need for accuracy and sensitivity to nuance. SCOF is fortunate to have the support of faith communities from which it can draw believers and experts who have firsthand knowledge and the ability to communicate. The project has the support of Southampton City SACRE and is sympathetic with *Living Difference IV*, the Agreed Syllabus for religious education (RE) in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

SCOF's intention here is to act as a conduit between faith communities and educators and to then align all educational visits and sessions with best educational practice and the methodologies set out in *Living Difference IV*.

SCOF will co-ordinate all sessions using a schema set out at the end of this document.

The aims and methodology of the project are:

Aims:

To promoting mutual understanding and good relations among people of different faiths and none in the city specifically by:

- Exploring what living a life with a religious stance might offer to an individual and community²
- Promoting religious literacy³ through discussion and engagement⁴
- Following an informed and critical reflection on the role that religion can and does play in advancing the common good

Such an aim will be concerned with all aspects of the religious life including:

- belief / propositional claims
- ethical values
- religious practices / places / rites and rituals⁵
and

¹ Deep and Meaningful The religious education subject report Ofsted 17 April 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-religious-education/deep-and-meaningful-the-religious-education-subject-report#recommendations>

² Living Difference p.2 The Purpose of Religious Education

³ <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/what-we-do/our-approach/what-religious-literacy>

⁴ cf. The Bloom Report p.51 2.2 The state of faith literacy – why is it important?

⁵ Cf. Living Difference p.2 The Purpose of Religious Education

- religious experience⁶

Method:

SCOF offers three alternative experiences that can be bespoke to the needs of groups and schools.

1. **A school / group based session** in which learners will be able to explore Hampshire's Golden Thread concepts and their place in the thought and practice of a faith tradition. Such sessions will draw upon *Living Difference IV's* moments of **encounter** and **intellect** and **discernment**⁷
2. **A place of worship** visit where learners will be able to engage with the role that religious practice and place have in the lives of individuals and communities. On these visits learners will be encouraged to observe the etiquette and practice of believers in so far that this does **not** demand or imply consent to a specific religious stance
3. **Informal and unstructured critical engagement** / pondering of the religious stance and the role that it can and does play in the lives of individuals and community. The particular method here will be to treat the religious stance as a thought experiment in which learners will be encouraged to think through the connection between faith and praxis. the actions and practices that might be reasonably adopted by those who adopt a religious stance.

All experiences will be planned and directed by members of faith groups in conjunction with SCOF, RE leads and covenant organisations. Particular attention will be given to the interface between religion and learners. In this way all experiences will be tailored to the specific needs and interests of individuals, groups and covenant organisations.

It is expected that a range of resources will be available to support engagement including:

- Personal faith and faith stories
- Religious artefacts and clothing
- PowerPoint slide shows
- Food



⁶ Cf Rudolf Otto's identifying experiences of the numinous or 'other' that cannot be transferred to language

⁷ Living Difference p.8

Project schema:

- 1 Initial contact with SCOF made by school, college or service provider using the SCOF Education Project proforma
- 2 SCOF will identify suitable /available members of the project team to contact RS lead at school/college or service provider. In cases where this is the first contact with SCOF it may be beneficial for the SCOF team to make an initial visit to the school

Where necessary DBS and Risk Assessments to be completed

Permissions for SCOF to use photographs only for publicity?

- 3 Educational visit to school / college or place of worship planned and executed in line with the methodology of Living Difference IV
- 4 Exchange of reviews and feedback by both parties



Sample Proforma

School /College		
Address		
Contact	Name	email
Key Stage		
Type of Experience (see 'Method' above)		
Date of Experience		
Time of Experience		
Religion(s) being studied		
Specific areas of religious tradition for learning		
Requested resources (See above)		
Golden Thread words / concepts familiar to pupils		
A B & C words familiar to pupils		
Parking /access to school		
Available Power Point projection		
'Follow up' intended after the visit		