



Southampton Agreed Syllabus conference

November 8th 2021

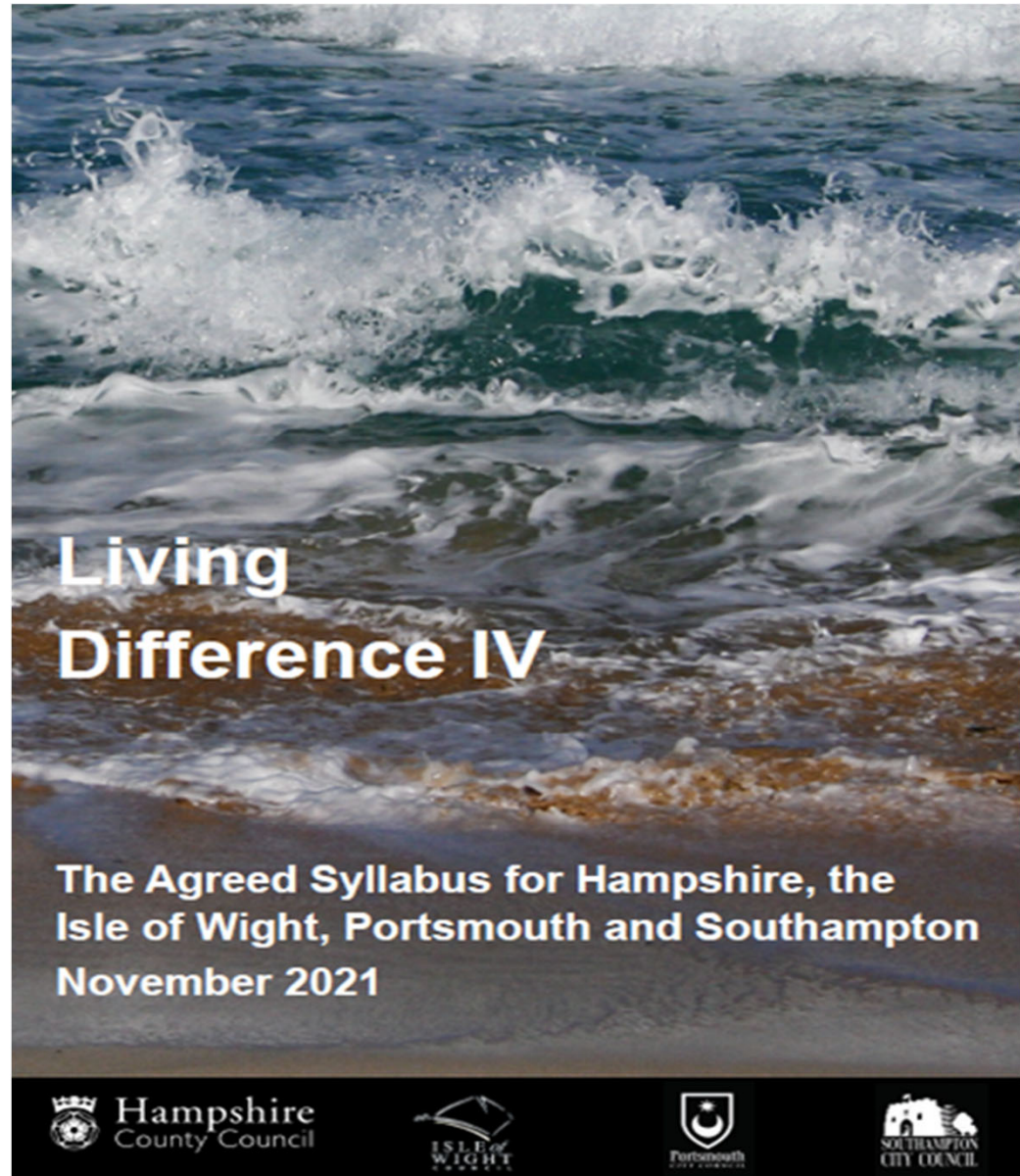
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“A chance to take stock of what has been achieved through LDIII and to take further steps to develop a Locally Agreed Syllabus that can respond as best as possible to the challenges of our times”

Review of Living Difference III



Each LA must:

- establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE). LAs must appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:
 - Group A: Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
 - Group B: the Church of England
 - Group C: teacher associations
 - Group D: the LA
- establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC) to review the agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the LA. This may have common membership with the SACRE but is a separate entity and must therefore be separately convened.
- The ASC was convened in September 2020 in Southampton.

How has the review been undertaken:

This review has taken place within wider educational context and religious education context (nationally and internationally) and at a particular point in history (e.g. pandemic & climate crisis)

- **Monitoring visits since 2016 (the implementation of Living Difference III) has informed any common patterns to use and effectiveness of the syllabus**
- **CPD throughout the period commissioned by SACRE for RE leaders has also provided information as to what support teachers and new RE leaders need to implement the syllabus effectively**
- **Hampshire and IOW teacher focus groups have provided information from other areas using the syllabus to draw together common information.**
- **July 2020: Joint SACRE across area meeting, Southampton attended to observe**
- **September 2020: Southampton ASC convened**
- **July 2020-July 2021: revision process with teachers and stakeholders across all four areas, Southampton representatives from Secondary, Primary and Special schools**
- **July 2021: Joint SACRE meeting**
- **Summer 2021 finishing and completing Publisher doc.**
- **Autumn 2021: ASC to adopt Living Difference IV**

What are the five aspects remaining the same?

Purpose Statement – what we want to achieve

Process for teaching – cycles of enquiry

Process for making curriculum – with sequences of cycles of enquiry into linked concepts/words

Lists of concepts/words – three broad groups

Progress – what it means to progress in RE

**Living
Difference
IV**

Ofsted subject review – May 2021

emphasises Locally Agreed Syllabus is statutory for LA maintained schools and other schools who choose it

reiterates the legal requirement to teach RE across all key stages and the significance of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

[Ofsted publishes research review on religious education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-reviews/religious-education)

LDIV emphasises teaching and making curriculum

LDIV better links curriculum making with the purpose statement

Foreword (extract)

This syllabus confirms our commitment to an education that takes seriously the importance of children and young people exploring their own lives in relation to what it can mean to live a religious life and other ways of life; including those informed by a non-religious perspective.

Living Difference IV, rather than being a precise prescription, offers a set of principles for teachers to make their curriculum to ensure religious education is open to the plurality of ways in which people live in our local, national and international communities.

Living Difference IV describes an approach for teaching seeking to explain the educational value not only of children engaging with new material intellectually, but also of them becoming better able to discern what is desirable for their own lives, and with others, for the world.

Living Difference IV therefore recognises the link between religious education and rights-respecting education (RRE).

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Living Difference IV:

Religious education in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton intends to play an educative part in the lives of children and young people as they come to speak, think and act in the world.

The syllabus has:

Clear purpose statement

Clear process for teaching RE

Clear explanation how to make curriculum

Clear advice to teachers how to ensure children *progress* over time

- ***Living Difference IV* 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 :

- the idea that to live a religious life means to subscribe to certain propositional beliefs
- the idea that to live a religious life means to adhere to certain practices
- 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.

Review outcomes:

Title: Living Difference IV

Cover: The waves – symbolising new approach to progression

Takes new legislation into account : e.g. EYFS framework

Religion-specific material discussed/checked with scholars and plans to update exemplar cycles of enquiry

Better coherence and progression between KS1/2 - KS3:

Overall better Primary – Secondary transition

Progression – End of Year Expectations (EYEs) link to purpose statement.

Checked existing, and developed new, appendices

Articulated position in relation to ‘Religion and worldviews’ debate

Option for 20% pondering time for children and young people to explore own interests

Golden thread concepts/words

Widening out the approach to studying religions

Contents

Foreword

Section 1: Teaching religious education

The purpose of religious education

The legal requirements

The status of religious education within the whole school curriculum

Time for religious education

Religions and other traditions to be engaged with at each key stage

Teaching with Living Difference IV

Introduction

Concepts/words

The cycle of enquiry

Classroom dialogue

Examples of questions teachers may ask at each step of the enquiry cycle

Teaching religious education in EYFS

Teaching religious education in Key Stage 1

Teaching religious education to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Teaching religious education in Key Stage 2

Teaching religious education in Key Stage 3

Teaching religious education in Key Stage 4

Teaching religious education in Key Stage 5 and post-16

Section 2: How to make the religious education curriculum for your school

Introduction to making a curriculum with *Living Difference IV*

Pondering time

Making a curriculum to ensure progression over and across key stages

Introducing end of year expectations

Exemplar curriculum maps for each key stage

Exemplar concept maps for religions and other traditions across key stages

Buddhist traditions

Christian traditions

Hindu traditions
Humanist approach to life
Muslim traditions
Jewish traditions
Sikhi faith traditions

Section 3: Lists of concepts/words

A concepts – examples of concepts/words shared within as well as outside of religions and religious traditions

Golden thread concepts

B concepts – examples of concepts/words shared across religions and religious traditions

C concepts – examples of concepts/words distinctive to particular religions and religious traditions

The Bahá'í faith
Buddhist traditions
Christian traditions
Hindu traditions
Humanist approach to life
Muslim traditions
Jewish traditions
Sikhi faith traditions

Appendices

Living Difference IV and the local and national context

Living Difference IV – what's different?

Living Difference IV and education

Living Difference IV and religion

The contribution of religious education to the whole school curriculum

Religious education and rights respecting education

Promoting spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development through RE

Religious education and personal, social, health and economic education, relationships and sex education, and health education

Religious education and citizenship education

Bibliography

County RE Centre publications for sale

Acknowledgements

Notes

Significant addition:

Pondering time

The qualities of attentiveness, interestedness, curiosity, as well as independence in the way children and young people engage with study, and think about the matters teachers bring to them in the cycle of enquiry, cannot be forced or compelled. A content-heavy course of study, driven hard by the teacher and tested for what can be recalled alone, seems hardly likely to enable children and young people to think, speak and act attentively, with interest and curiosity, as well as independence of thought in the world. Rather such qualities are far more likely to grow over time with a well-planned curriculum that takes approaches to teaching into account.

Living Difference IV therefore encourages teachers responsible for making the religious education curriculum at any key stage, to consider building in opportunities for up to 20% of curriculum time to be given to children and young people to direct their own enquiry and investigations. Whilst this is not mandatory, the idea is simple. This is to allow students 20% of the total 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.

This amounts to about half a term of time in the secondary school each year and one unit of study in the primary school each year. However, the time can be spread over the course of study and in a number of different ways. It can replace half a unit of study, or be included within a unit of study, or extend a cycle of enquiry by a number of lessons.

Practical worked examples from different key stages including those undertaken in special schools, with feedback from young people, of how this has been undertaken is available on the open area of the Hampshire RE Moodle (<https://re.hias.hants.gov.uk/>).

Process for teaching in Living Difference IV

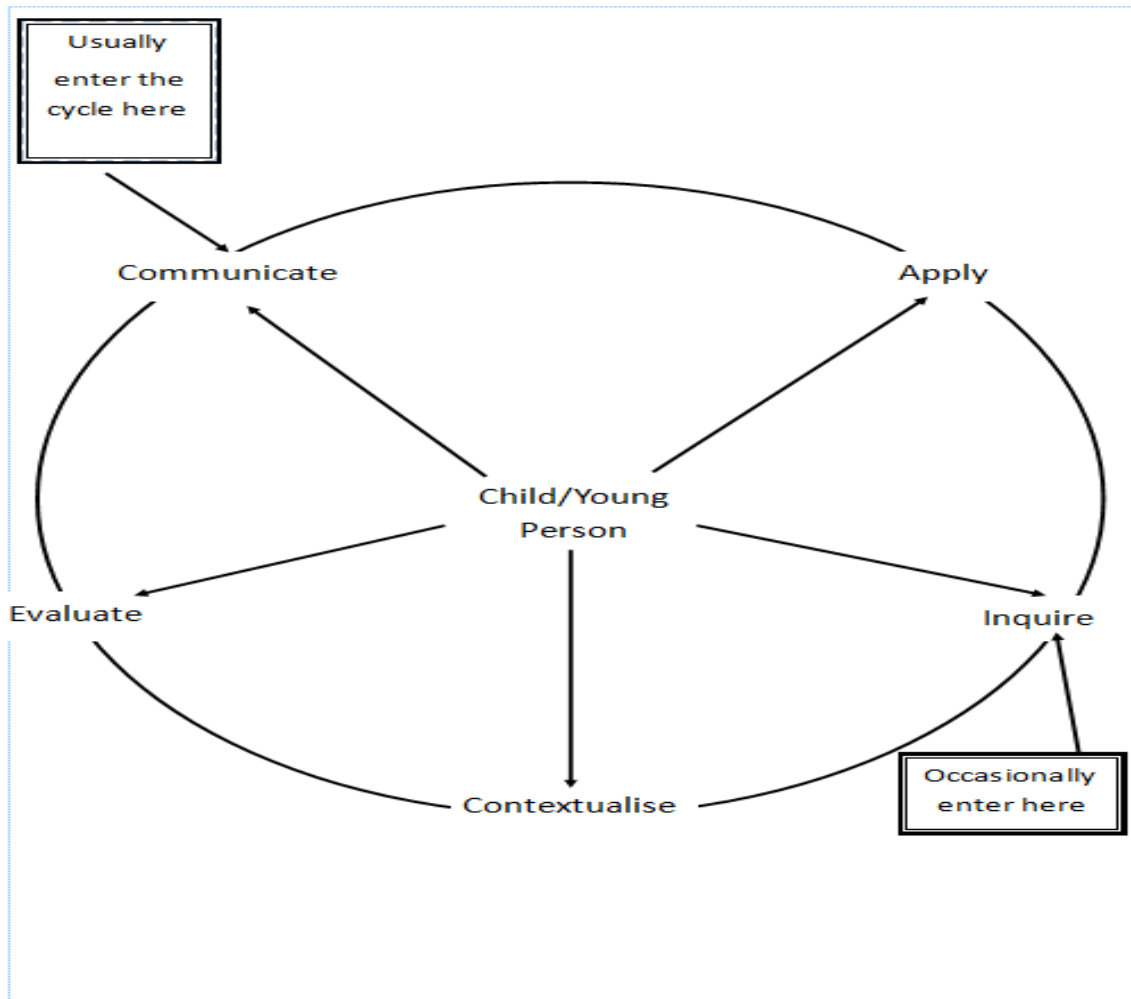
A sequenced approach - with 5 key steps taught over a series of lessons :-

At the Communicate and Apply steps the teacher brings the child to attend to their own and others' experience

At the Inquire and Contextualise steps to engage intellectually – with substantive knowledge and vocabulary

At the Evaluate step to discern value in all that has been studied for others and themselves

“Why does this matter?”



Year 1

**Discernment/
E-evaluate**

Why are special places important to Jewish people/Christians?
Why are special places important to me?

**Bring the child to attend/
Communicate**

What is the experience of being in a special place like?

Special places

Contextualise

Finding out about Jewish and/or Christian special places

Apply

Do you have a special place?
Is your special place always the same? What if there were none?
..reasons?

Inquire

What do we mean by special places?
Why do people need a special places?



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Year 8

**Discernment/
E-evaluate**

Why are special places important to Jewish people/Christians?
Why are special places important to me?

**Bring the young person to attend/
Communicate**

What is the experience of being in (a) community

Community: Sangha

Contextualise

Finding out about Jewish and/or Christian special places

Apply

Do you have a special place?
Is your special place always the same? What if there were none?
..reasons?

Inquire

What do we mean by special places?
Why do people need a special places?



Hampshire
County Council

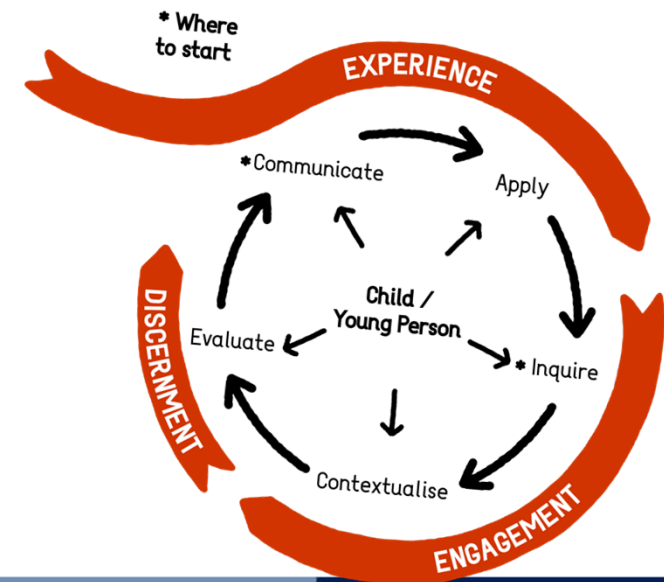


A way of teaching across a sequence of lessons

At Communicate and Apply teachers bring children to attend to their own and others' experience

At Inquire and Contextualise children engage intellectually with material provided by the teacher or researched or brought about from initial steps

At Evaluate children discern value for their own and others existence in the world.



Concepts- words and phrases

Living Difference IV uses three broad, and at times overlapping, groups of concepts/words which assist with the making and organising of a spiral curriculum.

This is so that the material encountered and studied by the children and young people through the teaching activities are well sequenced, connected and revisited over time.

Some A group of concepts are used as **golden thread concepts** flowing through the curriculum in all key stages

Assisting deepening and broadening children's experience of religious education over time.

A: concepts/words shared within as well as outside of religions and religious traditions.

For example, thanking, new life, welcoming, remembering, special, celebration, freedom, rights, compassion, justice

Golden thread concepts: belonging, community, love and special.

Living Difference IV identifies four A group concepts/words that will thread through the curriculum to enable continuity across key stages

B: concepts/words that are shared across religions and religious traditions.

For example, God, worship, prayer, sacred

C: concepts/words distinctive to particular religions and religious traditions. It is important to note that these words are often in the language of the communities where the traditions originated.

Although these words have specific and nuanced meanings, which are also frequently interpreted within the traditions, they can often be translatable into English and relate to A concepts:

For example, Sangha (community), agape (selfless love), Umma (community), Sewa (selfless service), Torah (instruction) (examples).

Curriculum making with LD IV :

A course of study: over a key stage

A unit of study: consists of a sequence of cycles of enquiry

Each cycle of enquiry is into a word/concept :

Sequences of enquiries into words/concepts such as love, special/sacred, community, Sangha, Umma, The Church, belonging or Justice progressively link over time

'... introduce children and young people to what a religious way of life might look like.'

As well as providing time for children and young people to consider their own thinking and develop independent skills that will enable them to increasingly make sense of the world, theirs and others place within it

Living Difference IV is an approach to teaching RE

This process supports teachers in making their RE curriculum



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Living Difference IV – what’s different?

Current educational and religious education research, as well as feedback from other consultations and investigations have led to the readjustment elements of *Living Difference IV* in the process of review.

Some changes relate directly to statutory changes outside of religious education. For example, the section on EYFS and religious education has changed to take these matters into account, and some consideration of changes to the relationship between religious education and [SMSC](#) and [PSHE/relationships and sex education \(RSE\)](#) are noted in the relevant appendices.

Five other elements of *Living Difference IV* are highlighted here for teachers and others responsible for leading the teaching and curriculum making for religious education in their school, in order to ensure that religious education taught in school can achieve what the purpose statement sets out.

- 1 The educational position of *Living Difference IV* has been clarified and is outlined in the appendix [Living Difference IV and education](#). One consequence of this is the on-going recognition of the significance of teachers and teaching in *Living Difference IV*.
- 2 What is meant by religion in religious education has been considered in light of discussions in the religious education world, especially in relation especially to religion and worldviews. These discussions were prompted by the publishing of the final report of the Commission on RE (CoRE). See the appendix [Living Difference IV and religion](#).
- 3 The process of making a curriculum with *Living Difference IV* has been reconsidered in order to ensure greater consistency between key stages. Curriculum is multifaceted and should be conceptualised in terms of a spiral where depth and breadth of understanding grows over time. Four key *golden thread* concepts/words should thread through the whole curriculum enabling links to be made with other more complex concepts/words over time. When children arrive in the secondary school, teachers should be able to *pick up the golden threads*. Children coming from different primary schools are likely to have encountered and studied different things in their primary religious educations. However, the *golden thread* concepts/words should ensure some common points can be picked up. This should be able to be done now in an informed way concerning different dimensions, manifestations, and ways of using words and concepts in the religious traditions and practices previously encountered and studied. This will ensure children and young people are able to access a broad and deep, pedagogically rich, religious education as they come to think and speak and act in the world.
- 4 *Living Difference IV* recognises the significance of the process of teaching religious education, and which has been present in previous manifestations of *Living Difference* (see 2004, 2011 and 2016). *Living Difference IV* also re-emphasises the significance of the child’s experience as the starting point for teaching religious education. This has been central to the *Living Difference* approach since 2004¹ and could be said to form part of the Hampshire religious education lineage since the first Hampshire locally Agreed Syllabus of 1978. In addition to this, the significance of the child having opportunities to discern value in what has been encountered and studied over time through single, as well as sequences of, cycle of enquiry is given greater weight in *Living Difference IV*. The teacher’s role, in developing activities and creating classroom opportunities, so children can be attentive to their experience is therefore also central in addition to the selection of materials to be encountered and studied.

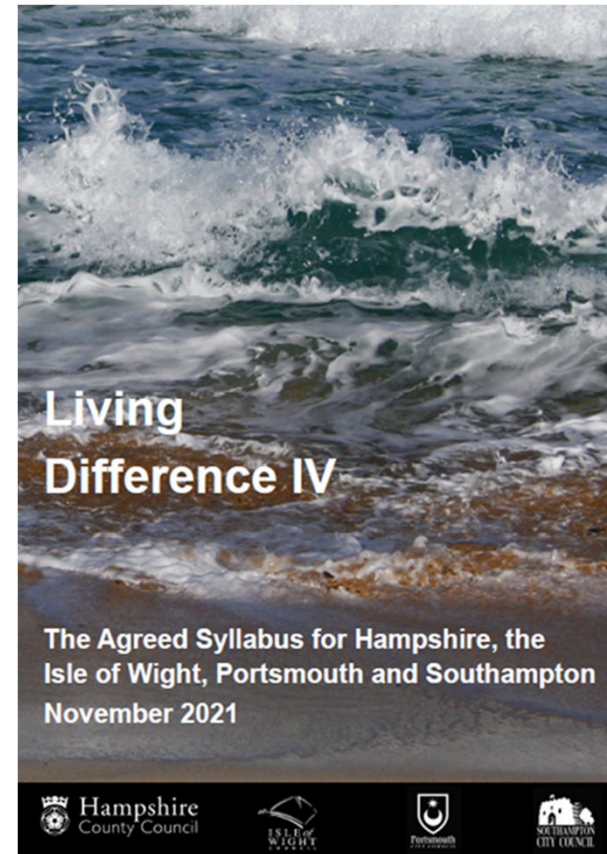
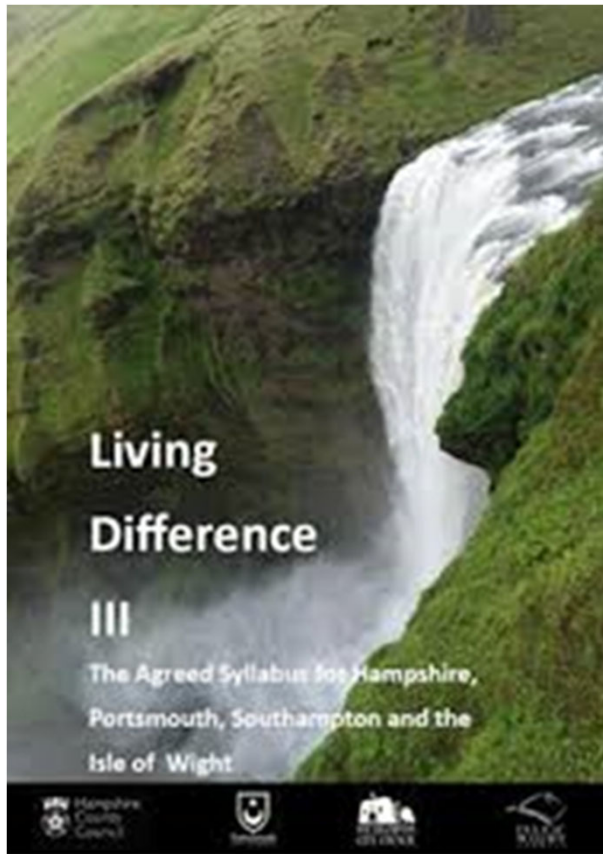
- 5 *Living Difference IV* recognises that it is not only the way the curriculum is made including the material selected for inclusion, but also the way that teachers teach that ensures a high-quality religious education. A curriculum too heavy on content can inhibit children and young people developing the qualities of attentiveness, interestedness, engagement and curiosity therefore in *Living Difference IV* teachers are given the opportunity to give over up to 20% of curriculum time in any year for children and young people to undertake a personal investigation or study which we are calling *pondering time*.

See the Hampshire RE Moodle for examples of good practice here and more information and links [hyperlink to Pondering time area of the open access area of the Hampshire RE Moodle](#)

- 6 The EYEs should inform the making of the curriculum for a particular year group, ensuring progress for all children and young people across the key stages have been established. The progression model recommended in *Living Difference IV* continues to be closely linked with the progression model available for all other subjects and in use across Hampshire schools. For more details see the Hampshire RE Moodle (<https://re.hias.hants.gov.uk/>).

1 Erricker C and Erricker J, 2000; Erricker C, 2010; Erricker C, Lowndes J and Bellchambers F, 2010.

Deepening to recalling and building



What next?

Briefing paper to cabinet (December)

Launch (January 2022)

Schools to plan for implementation by September 2022

Monitoring to re-commence Spring 2022

CPD to be provided ongoing through Spring and Summer 2022

Any questions?