

Enquiry in Religious Education

Hackney SACRE firmly believe that through Religious Education all pupils are taught to develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and morally in a way that enables them to understand and value themselves and others and to better cope with the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of living in a rapidly changing, multicultural world. Therefore, this syllabus has been designed to support the creation of a Religious Education curriculum that incorporates opportunities for pupils to develop and build academic skills and specialist vocabulary that help them learn about the beliefs, values, thinking and ways of life of others and to reflect upon their own as they explore their community and their role in it.

Religious Education must be **inclusive** and relevant to all pupils and therefore be planned for pupils to engage through **enquiry** that concern issues and concepts that relate to themselves and **reflect the local community**, that are relevant to their lives and are made accessible through **varied teaching activities** and by using a **wide range of experiences, sources and resources**.

Enquiry Questions

Religious Education should not be merely regurgitating or recycling key information or simply providing a distant or superficial opinion or comment. Simply recalling the life story of Jesus does not help pupils to understand Christians' relationship with him, nor how this relationship might affect their lives. They may be able to recall this knowledge, but a superficial engagement will be quickly forgotten, and repeated learning will be required.

We believe Religious Education should be an active enquiry process, with meaningful, well-informed and balanced conversations, using a variety of disciplines to apply, interpret, analyse and evaluate what they have learnt about other religions and worldviews in relation to spiritual, ethical, moral and social issues. Through enquiry, pupils should build their knowledge and understanding by forming a relationship with what they learn about other religions and worldviews, so that they can consider and reflect meaningfully on what they have learnt to create an informed view.

Only building a relationship with this **key subject knowledge and specialist vocabulary** through enquiry, understanding its importance and meaning to believers and making stronger connections and links with their other learning or experiences, will ensure this is embedded into pupils' long-term memory.

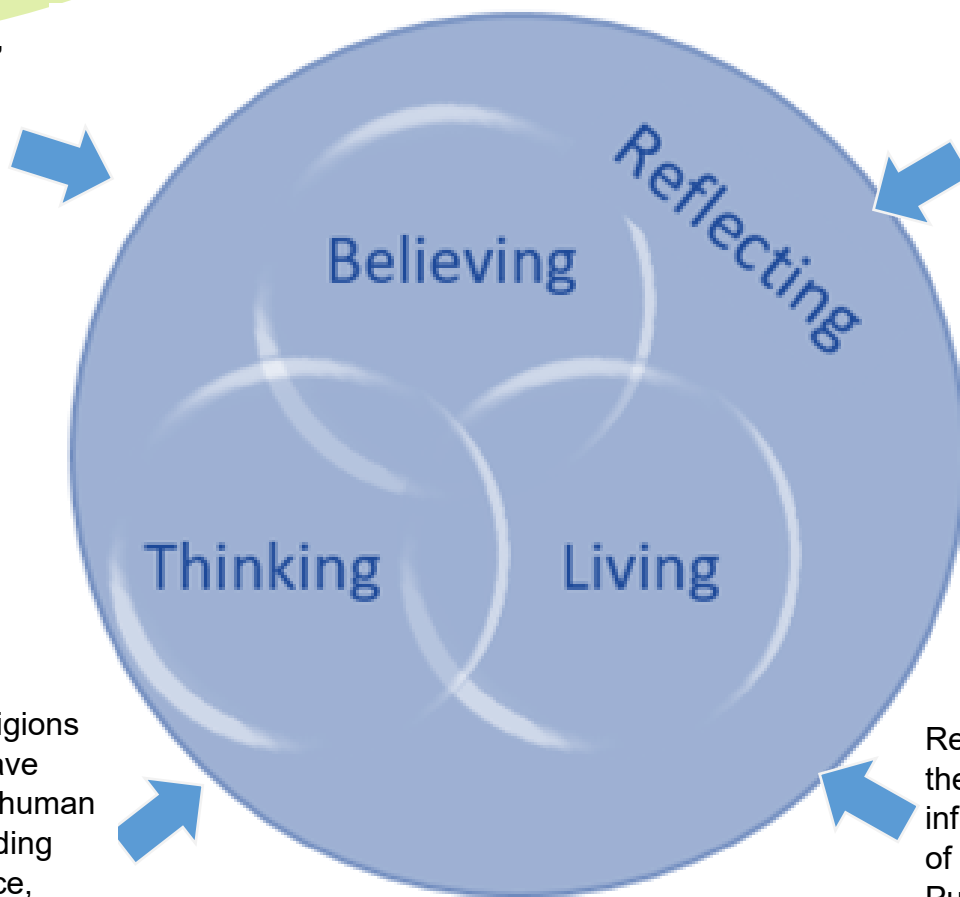
Therefore learning should be planned around 'Big Questions' that relate to the Thinking, Believing and Living of their own and other religions and worldviews reflected in their **local community** and beyond. These enquiries should encourage pupils to not only specify 'what' beliefs, practices and values are, but to also suggest 'why' these beliefs and values are held or expressed in a certain ways and to identify 'how' they may be interconnected and affect people's lives.

For example, pupils knowing 'what' the Shabbat (Sabbath) rituals are is different to them having an appreciation of 'why' they might be important for Jewish people. Exploring relevant values about family and their beliefs about God and Creation are necessary before pupils can fully consider 'how' these Shabbat rituals may make a difference to those who complete them. Pupils can then begin to have meaningful conversations about Jewish **Believing, Thinking and Living** and to approach **Reflecting** on how this learning may impact on their own beliefs, values and lives.

This deeper learning takes time. However, it is more important that this learning is done effectively rather than ensuring wider coverage of only superficial learning, which would need to be constantly repeated.

These 'Big Questions' should encourage meaningful conversations that are **inclusive** and accessible to all pupils, and teachers should use a wide range of learning activities, **experiences, sources and resources** to help pupils use key knowledge and vocabulary to engage with the 'Big Question' being explored.

When considering fundamental beliefs and ideas, pupils should consider where these come from, whether through reasoned thought, from authoritative sources, or traditions and experiences. Pupils should investigate the reliability of these influences and how they may have been interpreted differently and have affected the way believers see the world.



Pupils should engage with key issues, concepts and concerns relating to what they have learnt about believing, living and thinking, expressing their own experiences, beliefs and values, considering how these relate to and have been influenced by others. They should reflect how their views affect the way they see the world, and themselves as part of a community.

Pupils should appreciate that religions and beliefs throughout history have been shaped in response to the human drive to understand reality, including questions of truth, morality, justice, humanity and how we engage with the world. Pupils should engage with these questions, which continue to be relevant today, and consider how our responses will impact on the way we choose to live.

Religions and worldviews are not static: they are diverse and evolving, being influenced by, and impacting on, the lives of individuals, communities and society. Pupils should explore the beliefs, values and traditions of religions and worldviews and gain an understanding of the relationship these have with the way people lived and live.