

*Bromley 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 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 when considering the question 'why are we here.'*

*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 which relate to themselves and **reflect the local community**, that are relevant to their lives and made accessible through **varied teaching activities** and using a **wide range of experiences, sources and resources**.*

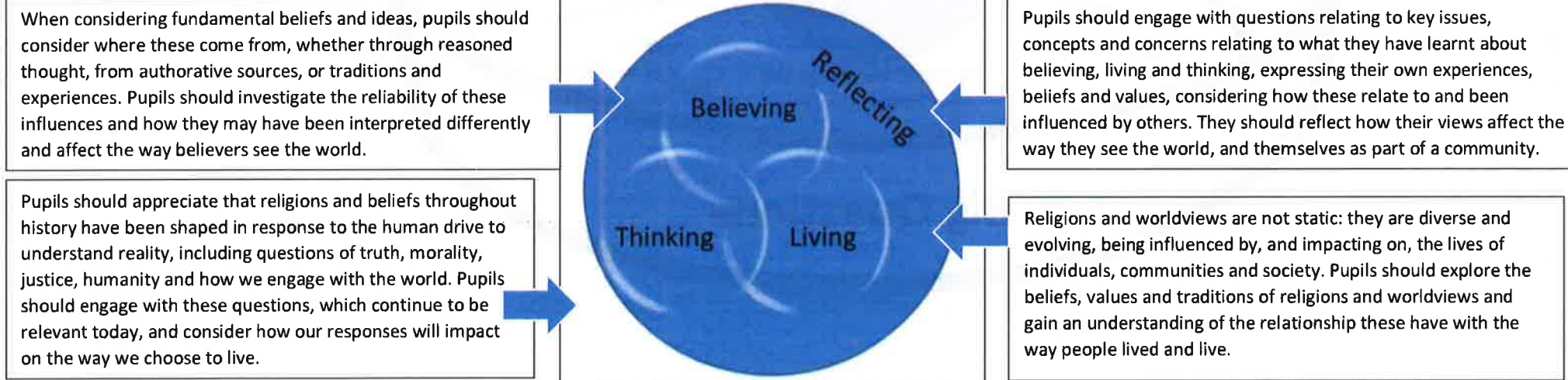
### Big Questions

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 through 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.

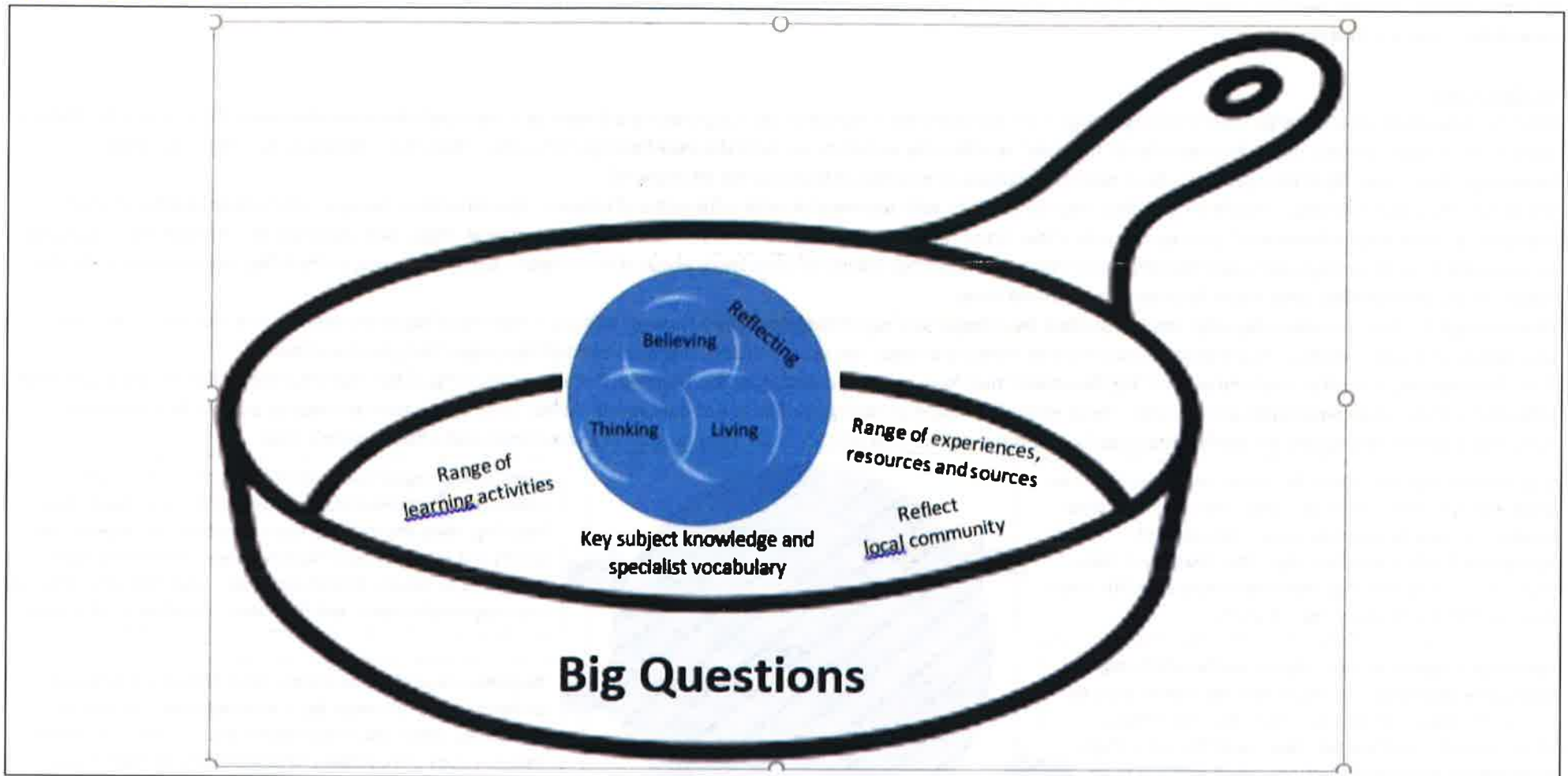
Therefore learning should be planned around 'Big Questions' that have concepts relating to the Thinking, Believing and Living of themselves, other religions and worldviews reflected in their **local community** and beyond. These enquiries should encourage pupils to not only specify 'what' beliefs, practices 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 enable **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 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.



### **Progression**

As pupils' progress through their Religious Education pupils should be looking deeper into spiritual, ethical, moral and social issues and in increasing breadth across different religions and worldviews through time and around the world. Units/schemes of work within a Religious Education curriculum should not be stand-alone 'topics', disassociated from each other. Rather, learning should be planned and sequenced to support pupils in building an ever-increasing picture over time, constantly building their knowledge and understanding of key subject knowledge and specialist vocabulary around concepts about Believing, Living and Thinking, so that the investigation, exploration and reflection of their own and others' responses to 'Big Questions' can continuously increase in depth, breadth and complexity.

*For example, let us consider another example 'Big Question' such as 'why do some Muslims believe that certain people may go to Heaven when they die?'*

In order for pupils to be able to meaningfully and eloquently respond, they will need to have a solid understanding – not just a superficial recall – of certain concepts, such as good and bad, life and death, beliefs about heaven and hell and the soul, as well as Muslim beliefs about the five pillars, Allah as Judge and Creator. They will need to have informed understanding of how these concepts relate to the Thinking, Believing and Living of Muslims, and Reflecting how these not only affect each other, but how they compare with other religions and worldviews, including their own. This cannot all be achieved within a single unit/scheme of work, but as part of a carefully planned and sequenced learning journey.

Naturally, pupils' learning based on Big Questions should be constantly monitored to ensure that understanding of the concepts beyond the simple recalling of key subject knowledge and specialist vocabulary is secure, before progressing on further or expanding enquiries.

Throughout enquiry learning pupils will need to develop skills to be able to:

- build and use a specialist vocabulary to communicate accurately and respectfully their knowledge and understanding of what others believe and practise, how these differing belief systems relate to each other and may affect a way of life
- apply their broad specialist vocabulary to access, interpret, analyse and reflect on a range of written and spoken and non-religious sources and texts when investigating beliefs, values and traditions of others, their teachings, practices and forms of expression and ways of life
- apply, interpret, analyse and evaluate what they have learnt about other religions and worldviews in relation to spiritual, ethical, moral and social issues
- develop, communicate, reflect on, apply and evaluate their views and beliefs, particularly in relation to **'Big Questions'** such as identity and belonging, truth, morality and justice, the environment and humanity.

In order to reflect and respond to these questions effectively, pupils will additionally need to demonstrate the attitudes of appreciation and respect for all, open mindedness and curiosity. Pupils will also develop a wide range of skills, including literacy, problem solving, team-work, self-awareness, imagination, ICT and language and literacy. \* see 'why teach RE?'

Teachers can refer to the **'Religious Education Skills Spectrum'** to monitor that pupils are **Reflecting**, both for themselves and others in their local community and beyond, to 'Big Questions' relating to:

- What people believe and do (**Believing**)
- How people respond to big questions and issues (**Thinking**)
- How beliefs and values make a difference to lives (**Living**)

As pupils move through the Religious Education curriculum and the 'Big Questions' increase in complexity, depth and breadth, so too must the expectations of pupils to explain 'what' the beliefs, practices and values are and the relationships between them, as well as explaining 'why' these are important and may make a difference to people, and 'how' they relate, change or impact on a wider world view. Therefore, the enquiry learning should continuously build on the skills in accordance with the **'Religious Education Skills Spectrum'**.

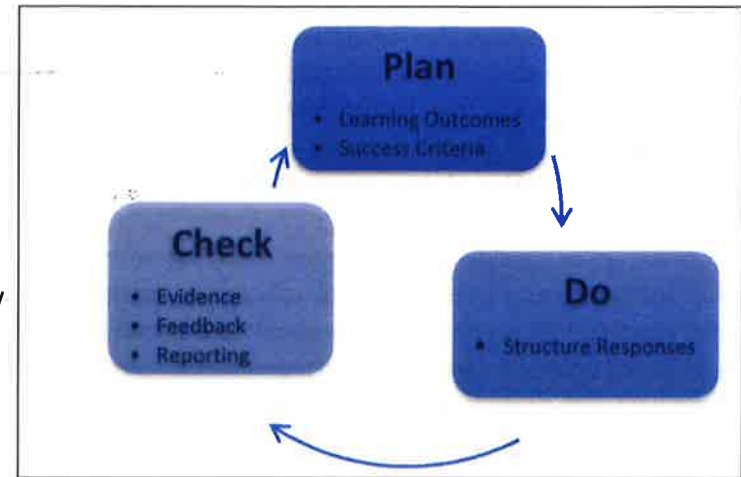


### Assessment

It is important for pupils to also be able to identify how they are learning and progressing in Religious Education and to know to improve their work. This Spectrum can be used to derive learning outcomes to specify the intended learning, as well as to provide guidance for pupils on how to structure and improve their responses in their Religious Education work. The language has been structured so that pupils and teachers will be more able to engage and use the Spectrum as a reference as they plan, create, check and feedback on their own and others' work.

It is a legal requirement that schools report to parents on pupils' progress in Religious Education annually and in accordance with the Religious Education Skills Spectrum in this syllabus. Therefore, learning in Religious Education will need to be continuously monitored by teachers, and this Spectrum can be used as an audit tool, to evidence progression in pupils' work, and to support summative assessments and reporting. The Religious Education Skills Spectrum can be used in all aspects of Assessment for Learning.

See **RE in Bromley** for examples of how this Spectrum has been used in our schools.



### Be inclusive

This syllabus embodies an open, objective and educational approach to the subject. Religious Education should contribute to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and academic development of all pupils whatever their gender, ability, family, ethnicity or religious or non-religious beliefs. Therefore, the Religious Education curriculum provided in accordance with this syllabus should present the beliefs and practices studied as perceived by the believers, and should protect the integrity of pupils by ensuring that the teaching is not designed to promote, convert or urge a particular religion or belief.

The long-term curriculum should reflect that the religious traditions in Britain are in the main Christian. They should also take into account the teachings and practices of the other world religions and non-religious beliefs and reflect the make-up of the **local community**, as well as the wider population in response to '**Big Questions**'. Religions and non-religious worldviews should not be presented as static, and due recognition to diversity within religions and belief systems should be given. Investigations into religions or belief systems may include considering their influence and relationships with cultural traditions, but should not be confused with them or taught instead of them.

As per the General Teaching Requirements, and in accordance to the Legal Requirements for Religious Education and collective worship in special schools according to the 1988 Education Reform Act, 'so far as practicable, every pupil attending a special school will attend religious worship and attend religious education'. Therefore, teachers should create a curriculum that builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences that pupils bring, and should meet all pupils' learning needs, including those with 'Special Educational Needs,' which covers a whole range of learning difficulties, physical, emotional, or intellectual and has degrees from mild to profound. To overcome potential barriers to learning some pupils (for example, those with learning difficulties, physical impairments or EAL) may require additional resources, materials, support, varying teaching techniques to preferably access the same information, texts and activities as their peers, perhaps through differentiated audio materials, worksheets and texts in alternative languages or in large print.

### Include wide range of experiences, sources and resources

In order for pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the religions, faiths and worldviews they study, to appreciate the diversity and change within them, and to reflect and respond to their own and others' experiences and approaches to 'Big Questions' in light of what their learning, pupils should have access to a wide range of sources, experiences and resources.

By encountering people, literature, spaces and places, creative and expressive arts and other resources from a wide range of cultures, religions, faiths and traditions pupils can understand aspects of religions and worldviews from the perspective of the believers, without relying solely on the teachers' understanding or ability to explain.

The use of different media to build understanding and express meaning through a range of senses such as touch, hearing, seeing, smell and tasting, will lead to the curriculum being more accessible and inclusive of all learners, and to pupils using a broader spectrum of skills, styles and activities to engage with a wider range of sources, experiences and resources. **Teacher support notes on using artefacts**

Pupils can further develop their analytical and literacy skills when interpreting, comparing, reflecting and responding to sources and resources across a range of media beyond written text, including artistic interpretations, artefacts, buildings and interaction or dialogue.

The sharing of understanding through experiences and dialogue with others not only supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, it also promotes the British Values of interfaith harmony and cooperation and the combatting of prejudice and discrimination.

Sources, Resources, and Experiences in the RE Curriculum should include:

- a range of written and spoken religious and non-religious sources (including texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy, worship and sacred texts) in a range of styles and genres different texts, including poetry, diaries, religious/sacred texts, and extended writing
- visits and trips relating to places of worship or with special meaning/relevance for specific belief systems and religions
- artefacts, items, material sources used within religions, faiths or worldviews, that have or are used to express, special or religious values or beliefs
- sources from Christianity, the other principal religions and worldviews represented in Britain and in the **local community**

All sources and resources should:

- be presented from the perspective of the believers
- not be used to promote, convert or urge a particular religion or belief
- treated in a manner that believers would not find offensive

**\*See teacher support notes on planning learning through visits, dialogue, and the use of artefacts, religious sources.**

### Reflect the Local Community

Through encountering people, literature, creative and expressive arts and resources from a wide range of cultures, religions, faiths and traditions in order to learn about the Believing, Living and Thinking of others, pupils can appreciate and celebrate the diversity within the society they live. This will support them to value themselves and others, and develop the willingness to learn from others, even when others' views or beliefs are different from their own, and thus provide opportunities to promote "British Values" and support the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

In order to contribute positively to community cohesion and actively combat prejudice and discrimination, the RE curriculum in Bromley schools should develop pupil knowledge, understanding, appreciation, sensitivity and relationships with different groups through the exploration into their spiritual, moral, cultural beliefs and traditions.

### Varied Learning Activities

Just as beliefs and values are practised, expressed and experienced in different ways, so too are the ways pupils learn. Effective Religious Education will require a range of teaching styles and approaches to support all pupils to develop their skills in building and communicating their knowledge and understanding, and to respond to “Big Questions” with clarity, sensitivity and respect by using a wide range of sources, resources and experiences - regardless of gender, age, background or beliefs.

In particular, a wide range of teaching strategies should be employed for the development of dialogue, communication and literacy in Religious Education, both for the analysis, comparison and evaluation of spoken and written texts, sources and experiences, and also to articulate their own and others’ responses to these. There is a multitude of discussion and dialogue building techniques and activities that could be used in the classroom, and teachers should adapt their teaching to incorporate a wide range of these. \*Teacher support notes: dialogue and discussion, including philosophical enquiry

Pupils will be encountering and analysing a wide range of sources, experiences and resources in different media - including artistic interpretations, artefacts, buildings and personal interaction - in order to build an understanding of the values, beliefs and meanings being experienced, and to express their responses through a range of senses such as touch, hearing, seeing, smell and tasting. A variety of pedagogical approaches will be needed to help pupils experience and respond with skill and sensitivity. \*See teacher support notes on planning learning through visits, and the use of artefacts and religious sources