

# Living Difference IV

Agreed Syllabus for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

## What is *Living Difference IV (updated 2026)*?

*Living Difference IV* (updated 2026) is the Agreed Syllabus for religious education (RE) in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. Informed by current educational research, as well as research into religion and worldviews, it builds on the approach to religious education used in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton since 2004. This revision demonstrates the ongoing and fruitful partnership that exists between the four authorities, ensuring a syllabus capable of securing high-quality religious education for all children and young people who encounter it, at this point in history.

## What is distinctive about *Living Difference IV*?

*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* 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 (religion as truth)
- to live a religious life means to adhere to certain practices (religion as practice)
- to live a religious life is characterised by a particular way of being in and with the world: with a particular kind of awareness of, and faith in, the world and in other human beings (religion as existence).

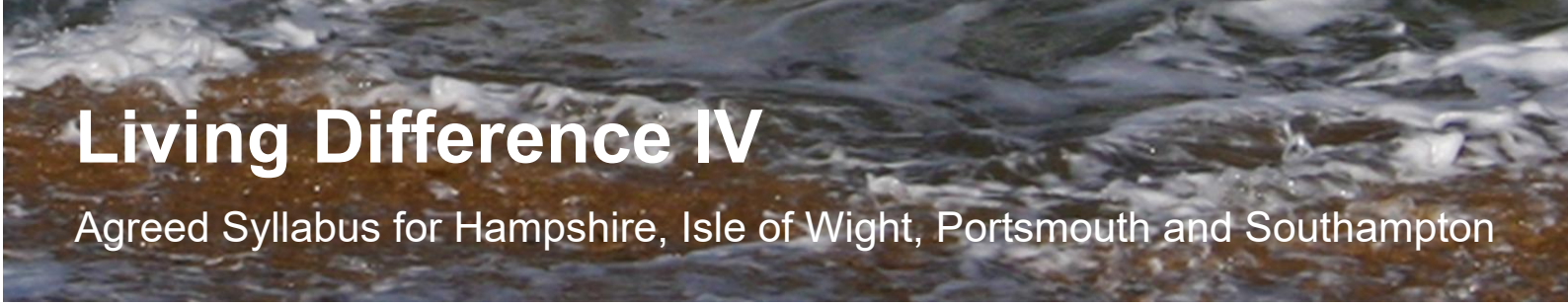
*Living Difference IV* recognises the link between religious education and rights respecting education (RRE).

## Teaching with *Living Difference IV (updated)*

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

This entails teachers bringing children and young people first to attend to their own experience and that of others, to engage intellectually with material that is new and to discern with others what is valuable with regard to living a religious life or one informed by a non-religious or other perspective.

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## Curriculum making with *Living Difference IV (updated)*

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

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

End of year expectations (EYEs) are included in the syllabus and must be used to inform curriculum making; both in terms of what should be taught, as well as to ensure appropriate challenge over time.

## Can I use *Living Difference IV* (updated)

This Agreed Syllabus is the basis on which the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) determines the effectiveness of the delivery of religious education in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. Converter academies, multi-academy trusts (MATs) and free schools in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton are welcome to use this syllabus; it meets all legal requirements for religious education.

***Local authorities (LAs), multi-academy trusts (MATs) and individual schools outside Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton that wish to adopt this syllabus will need to obtain a licence.***

Further information is available here on the HIAS RE Moodle.

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## How much will it cost to adopt *Living Difference IV (updated)*?

The price for a licence to use *Living Difference IV* will depend upon the number of schools in the LA or MAT, or upon the number of students if it is to be used in a single school. Please enquire for more information or see Living Difference IV – Purchasing a licence.

## Training and support

An extensive programme of continuing professional development for those wanting to use *Living Difference IV* is available and can be run in any part of the UK by specialist advisers. To find out more, please see Hampshire Training – RE Courses.

Further support is available from the Hampshire Improvement and Advisory Service:

Email: re.centre@hants.gov.uk (general RE enquiries)
Email: hias.enquiries@hants.gov.uk.

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