

Teaching Differently: Enriching the curriculum with spiritual wisdom

A story of churches and schools working together to enlarge student's vision of the world and one another.

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Purpose of a community- integrated approach to Religious Education, Personal Social Health Education and Sex and Relationships Education. Also connections with Careers Education and Citizenship.

- **Enriches the curriculum with visitors who have a 'lived experience' of faith**
- **Educates students with a deeper and broader understanding of faith in all its diversity and unity**
- **Effective in engaging students' attention and curiosity, invites questions, improves attendance, behaviour and attainment**
- **Endorsed, celebrated and recognised as outstanding by Ofsted and SIAMS**

Thereby supporting the whole school community including staff, students, parents and carers whilst fostering community links and spiritual moral social cultural education.

Practice

Important relationships are with headteachers and coordinators and heads of RE, PSHE and SRE.

Support and partnership with ALL local churches and church leaders and church based youth leaders in a town, city or rural area.

Training of all involved essential.

Links, partnership, and support from local Christian school's initiatives are also helpful.

Start small and develop over time, building trust and recognition with all stakeholders.

Key Stage 1 and 2

Since September 2023 we have been pioneering a variety of opportunities whilst responding to felt needs at Duchy Primary Community School, Bradninch, Devon.

An after school club Kidzone, Open The Book Assemblies and a range of interactive, visual aid based, age appropriate RE Lessons have been developed.

Foundation Year Christmas, Church, Easter church visit.

Year1 Forgiveness, thankfulness

Year2 Advent, Easter then and now

Year3 Creation, Christian values

Year4 Trinity, why Good Friday

Year5 Holiness and Love of God, belief in Jesus as Messiah, impact today: inspirational Christian's

Year 6 Creation and science, salvation, Scripture Union 'it's your move' lesson booklet focused on the transition between Yr 6 Primary School and Yr 7 Secondary School

In the pipeline: Children's Good News Bibles as a resource for RE with introductory lessons and assembly. Offer of Youth Bibles to Year 6 leavers, Prayer Spaces for schools.

Key Stage 3

Since September 2024 we have been pioneering a variety of opportunities at Cullompton Community College for Key Stage 3 including visits to a set of 5 Year 7 RE classes on 'Christian Practices,' This included short PowerPoint presentations from a range of church leaders or church youth leaders eg Anglican, Baptist,

Catholic to illustrate basic differences in worship, (liturgical and non liturgical) communion, baptism, prayer, use of the bible etc., followed by Q and A from students which was very probing and always is. CCC has School Pastors which is excellent and they also have been involved in the lessons and are also on site regularly which is brilliant.

In the pipeline: Key Stage 3 lessons on Holy Books, the Bible, Church crawl around 4 different churches around Cullompton.

From Previous experience:

Visitors invited to give their understanding of Jesus and take questions from students

Visitors invited to give their understanding of Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and take questions from students

Visitors invited to answer students' Big Questions eg suffering, the afterlife, Jesus, morals and values, purpose and meaning, science and faith, evil, the environment, etc

Key Stage 4

Since September 2024 we have been pioneering a variety of opportunities at Cullompton Community College for Key Stage 4.

This included visits to Yr 11 non exam RE lessons on 'Christian Perspectives and Responses to Abortion.' I introduced a general Christian perspective on the sanctity of life and Christian beliefs about when life begins and the infinite value of all human life. I introduced an Anglican view in the context of a range of denominational views. I interviewed a local retired senior nurse and there was a presentation from Caroline White, manager of Exeter choices pregnancy centre, Caroline@choicespregnancycentre.co.uk <https://www.choicespregnancycentre.co.uk/> . This was a great example of a supportive and non-judgemental Christian response to crisis pregnancy situations, baby loss, and abortion, and it also supported PSHE AND SRE.

I also recommended Rephrase South West www.rephrasesw.co.uk to the Assistant Head and Head of PSHE and SRE and PJ Livett pj@rephrasesw.co.uk delivered sessions for all of year 10 and 11 in the Autumn Term 2024 and is now booked annually. Rephrase has been pioneered by an Exeter based Christian PJ Livett since lockdown but originated from a teenage vision to develop and deliver healthy Relationships and Sex Education. It has become a big hit nationwide already and Rephrase has received many awards including a letter from the Queen.

In the pipeline: visitors to all non exam and GCSE RS Topics.

From previous experience:

GCSE AQA Syllabus A Religious Studies (All RS syllabi are similar and have to teach the same content)

Christian Beliefs Teachings and Practices

A range of Christian visitors to 4 RE lessons per class eg Orthodox Catholic Anglican Pentecostal to briefly introduce their particular beliefs teachings and practices and then take questions. Or a range of visitors in one lesson on one topic eg worship or baptism or communion and questions.

A Trip investigating two contrasting churches eg RC Sacred Heart, South St Exeter and Rediscover Elim Pentecostal Church (then) Northernhay St Exeter, plus place of worship of the second religion.

Street Pastors or chaplains or Foodbank or CAP or other **local community action charities** explaining their work and taking questions.

Alpha or similar courses represented by someone who runs them and other examples of **mission and evangelism** through the local church and questions.

Charities of ecumenical local initiatives, Open Doors or Christian Solidarity Worldwide or Barnabas fund local representation and questions for the **persecuted church**. Local representatives for **Christian Aid**, Hannah Richards hannah.richards@cccexeter.org is a leader at City Community Church Exeter is both ecumenical officer and Christian Aid Representative for Exeter area and has a history in schools work with Exeter ICE Trust. Representatives from **Tearfund and CAFOD**. Some different experiences of **Pilgrimage**.

Thematic Studies

Different perspectives within Christianity or between Christianity and the other faith studied. Schools choose 4 out of 6 themes to study.

Relationships and families

Different Church leaders or youth leaders questioned on views.

Various Christian couples questioned on their partnership and the difference faith makes to it.

Caroline White, manager of Exeter choices pregnancy centre,

Caroline@choicespregnancycentre.co.uk

<https://www.choicespregnancycentre.co.uk/>

Religion and Life

Different views from different churches and medical staff (often retired, eg palliative care and hospice care), hospital chaplains. Hilary McKegney is a retired palliative care and hospice care nurse hilarymckegs@gmail.com. Christian Environmentalists and Christian Environment Charities www.arocha.org.uk and representatives, also ecochurch leaders.

The existence of God and revelation.

Q and A to different Christians about how they know God is real, and special revelation eg dreams, visions, seeing Angels, gift of tongues, receiving and giving prophetic words, revelation whilst reading scripture, how we see the bible, our beliefs about it.

Religion Peace and conflict

Hear from Pacifists locally, eg from Quakers or Methodists or Anglican Pacifist Fellowship. Visits from Just War Proponents eg Forces Chaplains eg Rev. Simon Talbot former Vicar of Uffculme Willand and Kentisbeare, now army Chaplain simon@thetalbots.org.uk . Also Sarah.Taylor@aggies.org.uk Www.aggies.org.uk former music and RE teacher now working with all the military Chaplains at Lymington Commando Royal Marines www.royalnavy.mod.uk on pastoral support for the marines (She can connect you with all the chaplains), Q and A for all.

Religion Crime and punishment

Invite in ex offenders like Nathan Hill nathan@enc.uk.net 07956566902 from Exeter Network Church (Vicar Rev Bob Wallington bob@enc.uk.net) to tell their stories and take questions. Local Christian Police, Christian Police Association www.cpauk.net Office@cpauk.net . Prison Chaplains and representatives from prison charities like Angel Tree for prisoner's families, Sycamore Tree on restorative Justice, both are part of www.Prisonfellowship.org.uk . Tim Hurrell also from Exeter Network Church is a leader at Exeter Crossline TimHur1989@gmail.com . Street Pastors www.streetpastors.org presentation and Q and A from local teams.

Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice

Interview some female church leaders or homosexual Christians about their experiences and take questions.

Presentations from Open Doors www.opendoorsuk.org or Christian Solidarity Worldwide www.csw.org.uk or Barnabas fund www.barnabusaid.org local representation and questions about the persecuted church.

How do Christians challenge racial prejudice and discrimination?

What is a Christian's attitude to wealth? Charity representation eg CAP www.capuk.org and Foodbank www.trussell.org.uk .

People trafficking charities.

Useful Contacts

**Understanding Christianity is a great resource for all teachers teach Christianity
Key Stages 1-3**

<https://understandingchristianity.org.uk/>

National Association of Teachers of RE

<https://natre.org.uk/>

**RE Hubs resources and training, source of speakers for RE and free online training
to be one.**

<https://www.re-hubs.uk/>

Latimer Blaylock National RE treasure and guru.

lat@retoday.org.uk Lat was editor of RE today mag for 20 years and meets about 3-4000 teachers of RE at his practical and inspirational training conferences each year. He initiated and runs the annual 'Spirited arts' competition, which has attracted about 3/4 million entries from young people over the last 20 years.

Ed Pawson

National RE Guru based in Exmouth, former head of RE, former head of NATRE, former Diocese of Exeter Chief Education Officer, really keen on this kind of RE enrichment and always loved what I developed at St Peter's where he was my advisor.

Educational Adviser and Consultant. Adviser to Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and S Glos SACREs, Learn Teach Lead RE Programme Lead

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