

# **Religious Education Subject Leaders' Newsletter**

For Primary and Secondary Schools  
Autumn Term 2024

## **Introduction**

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to present my first edition of the RE Newsletter: an opportunity to celebrate successes and look forward to developments in the teaching of RE.

I hope the memories of the summer holidays don't feel too distant and that you've made a great start to this academic year. After a peaceful break, I have been blessed with an exciting start to my new job as your RE adviser. From visiting one school where a former year 7 tutee, now class teacher, was leading worship beautifully to SIAMS inspection preparation, from Zoom meetings to chatting with children about their RE leaning, from planning CPD to attending new resource launches, the experiences are certainly varied.

There is so much excellent work going on in our RE lessons already, I am excited to work with you to develop even further and support one another to lessen the load while improving the outcomes. The best way to stay enthusiastic about RE is to share experiences and inspire each other. I hope this newsletter, the CPD offered by the diocese and our upcoming Network Meetings will support that. I would like to remind you of a couple of upcoming training opportunities next week.

**New to Working in Church Schools, Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October.**

**Understanding Christianity Day 1, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October.**

Please contact the DBE Education Team Administrators to book this on 01604 887060 or email [education@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:education@peterborough-diocese.org.uk).

There are many things I want to achieve in this role, but above of all I want to be supportive of your planning and delivery of RE successful, engaging and thought provoking RE lessons. If you have suggestions about the kind of help you'd like to receive from me, please share.

Wishing you all the best for this autumn term,

**Ziggy Brown**

**Religious Education Adviser**

SIAMS, RE and Collective Worship Adviser - Diocese of Peterborough

E-mail: [ziggy.brown@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:ziggy.brown@peterborough-diocese.org.uk) Phone: 01604 887039

## **CPD opportunities this term for RE teachers and RE leads**

Date, Time & Venue	Title	Trainer
Wednesday 9/10/24 9.30am - 3.30pm Hayfield Cross CofE Primary School, NN15 5FJ	<b><u>New to Working in Church Schools</u></b> This day provides an opportunity for teachers new to working in Church schools whether they be Early Career teachers, or more experienced teachers. During the day we will consider what it means to work in a Church school with a special focus on RE, collective worship and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). The day will be hosted by Jane but will involve other providers with expertise in different areas of working in a Church school.	Jane Lewis
Thursday 10/10/24 9.30am - 3.30pm Hayfield Cross CofE Primary School, NN15 5FJ	<b><u>Understanding Christianity Day 1</u></b> Day 1 of the 3-day training programme for RE subject leaders who are new to the role or who would like to spend some intensive time renewing their knowledge of the resource. It is essential that participants attend all 3 days of this course. (Day 2: 29/01/25- Day 3: 06/05/25)	Jane Lewis Ziggy Brown
Thursday 7/11/24 6:30pm-8:30pm Via Zoom	<b><u>The Diverse Christian Community</u></b> This course will support those of you who want to expose children to the rich and diverse lived experience of Christians around the world. Investigating the way in which the core beliefs are understood and lived, giving you the tools to bring Christian tradition from Asia, the Americas, Oceania and Africa into your teaching.	Ian Nicholson RE Today
Thursday 14/11/24 4:15pm-5:30pm Via Zoom	<b><u>Primary RE Network Meeting</u></b> This network is for all who lead RE in primary schools. Join us for updates on national and local RE issues, opportunities to share good practice across schools and to hear from experts in the field of RE. The content of the meeting will be different each time.	Jane Lewis Ziggy Brown

For further details click [here](#)

### **EXTRA DATE**

**RE Today**  
Services

We are delighted to announce an addition to our already fantastic selection of training offered this year, through the diocesan education team. **Lat Blaylock**, known to many, and now working part time for RE Today, is bringing his course on **'Ways of knowing in RE'** to the diocese. The day course, from 9.30am – 3.30 pm will take place at Bouverie Court, Northampton on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025.

There will be a cost for teachers attending this course which will be as follows:

Gold SLA schools - £150.00/member of staff

Silver SLA schools - £225.00/member of staff

Bronze SLA schools - £262.50

Tea/coffee and lunch will be provided.

Lat describes the course in this way:



[www.churchtimes.co.uk](http://www.churchtimes.co.uk)

***'Ways of Knowing in RE: practical approaches to RE from philosophy, theology and social sciences. This one-day course will provide 16+ practical classroom ideas which illustrate the different ways of knowing in the subject which matter in inspections and in enabling pupils in creative connections, thoughtful progress and deeper learning. Fully resourced with digital and paper resources'.***

Numbers will be limited, so please don't delay in booking a place. Bookings should be made via [education@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:education@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)



# Resources

Bible.org.uk have created new OT MINI resources. There are now 5 videos, each 20 minutes long, that cover the Old Testament storyline in an engaging and memorable format.



We provide:

- Links to all videos: OT MINI and Digging Deeper
- Downloadable Teaching Plans with Lesson Objectives and activities

And the best bit is, thanks to our continuing generous supporters, all of these resources come at **No Cost to Schools.**

For more details or to order OT MINI and/or Digging Deeper videos, visit

[https://www.bible.org.uk/wtb\\_schools-OT.php#OT-MINI-section](https://www.bible.org.uk/wtb_schools-OT.php#OT-MINI-section) or call us at 01255 871000.

## Understanding Christianity

OT MINI is an accredited resource for Understanding Christianity, fitting perfectly with the 'People of God' unit for upper Key Stage Two.



### Lesson 1 – Beginnings

Creation of the world – Noah and the Flood – Abraham, Father of many Nations – Joseph and his coat of many colours.



### Lesson 2 – Moses

The first Passover – 10 Commandments  
Spying out the Promised Land.



### Lesson 3 – Promised Land

Joshua conquers Jericho – Gideon puts out a fleece – Samson the strong man – Ruth, Great Grandmother of David.



### Lesson 4 – Kingdoms

David and Goliath – David the Psalmist – Solomon the 'king with 1000 wives'  
– Prophets begin to speak.



### Lesson 5 – Exile

Jewish exile in Babylon – Temple rebuilt after return from exile – God makes them wait... ..one day the Messiah will come.



## Christianity as a Global World Faith

A brand-new resource that aims to work together with Understanding Christianity to challenge the Eurocentric vision of Christianity and celebrate the infinite translatability we can find in the diversity that exists within the Christian Faith.



Those who have trialled the scheme, both in primary and in secondary shared their delight at the impact on their pupils, the depth of their understanding as well as their increased capacity for courageous advocacy.

This inclusive resource is rooted in ***ubuntu***.

Ubuntu is an Nguni Bantu term that is usually translated as 'A person is a person

through other people' or 'I am because we are.' In this worldview we can only understand who we are in relationship with other people; only achieve our full potential through that 'tender network of interdependence'.

*'We don't come fully formed into the world. We learn how to think, how to walk, how to speak, how to behave, indeed how to be human from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human. We are made for togetherness... to exist in a tender network of interdependence. That is how you have ubuntu – you care, you are hospitable, you're gentle, you're compassionate and concerned.'*

*Desmond Tutu as quoted in Battle 1997:35*



Paul Fidler, RE Subject lead at Tanworth-in-Arden CoE Primary school, shared that the resource offered a wide range of videos, stories and suggested activities with common threads, but different perceptions because of the different worldviews encountered. Gemma Hathaway, Assistant Headteacher at Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College, who used the resource with KS3 and KS5 students noticed their high-level conversations about specific concepts found in sacred texts. She went on to explain that the multidisciplinary approach of the tasks provided led her students to explore the diverse ways people worship or interpret scripture through their different worldviews and experiences.

It is very pertinent to find resources such as this when the latest National Director's SIAMS Annual Report names "Christianity as a global faith" as the most cited development point in this year's inspection reports.

Full of authentic case studies from all around the world, these resources will be free to access after a proper training has been completed by the school (at a small fee). The team is finalising the logistics of the training delivery (including its timing, cost and integration with wider approaches to RE training). We look forward to sharing the details with you as soon as they are available.





Dance with heart and soul.

We are a professional dance company, working in theatre, church, school and community settings for more than 40 years.

## A Christmas Story: Refugee

**A Christmas Story: Refugee** workshops will guide pupils on a journey of dance, drama and discussion inspired by Anne Booth's Christmas story *Refuge*.

Through learning, creating and performing movement children will explore themes of welcome and showing kindness.



Children can make connections between Mary, Joseph and Jesus' first journey together and the many journeys of refugees taking place across our world today.

Delving into these rich depictions of character and events, pupils can investigate the implications the story could have in their own lives and the wider world.



The workshops can explore:

- Mary, Joseph and Jesus' flight from Herod
- Family and strangers
- Expressions of love - Finding and extending shelter and friendship
- Fear and hope

Springs Dance Company delivers RE and Citizenship through dance, creative exploration and discussion.

Our workshops support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and link to British Values.

Our workshops are a great way to utilise your Sports Premium Funding.

Other popular workshops include: *The Easter Project*, *Parable*, *The Magic Paintbrush*, *Exploring Values*, *Stepping Out* (for big changes), *You Are Special* and *The Life of Jesus*.

Springs can also bring magical dance theatre to you, saving you a coach trip and transforming your school into a theatre. To find out more about our literature linked, professional productions, please contact the office.

**"Outstanding!! Our schools have had the most amazing time."** C Hutton, Church Schools Worker, Earsham

The story:

- Looks at the nativity and beyond at the wider story of Christmas
- Gives cultural and political context to the world Jesus was born into
- Richly describes the haven found both in extending and receiving shelter and warmth; allowing for children to relate and be inspired



We are flexible as to how our workshops fit into the school timetable.

To book or for a friendly chat about what we can do for your school, call us on 07775 628 442 or email:

[touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk)

A Christmas Story: Refugee workshops are part of *Leap into RE* supported by The Jerusalem Trust

SPRINGS  
DANCE COMPANY

**Want to try something different this Advent?**

**Tired of the same old Nativity Play?**

Our professional dancers can do the work for you and create a unique performance to share with parents and carers.

Our Nativity brings to life the traditional, much-loved scenes of the Christmas story, and then continues after the birth of Jesus, to a part of the story less often told. We follow Mary and Joseph as they journey to Bethlehem, celebrate the birth of baby Jesus, and then witness their escape from the tyrannical leader King Herod, into the safety of Egypt. There this new family of refugees find welcome and shelter.

Tailored to your school, the presentation also allows you to insert your favourite songs and readings to make a bespoke performance that truly reflects the children involved.

★ Watch our workshop video here: [https://youtu.be/5oXbD4U\\_rzs](https://youtu.be/5oXbD4U_rzs) ★

## Nativity Dance Project



[springsdancecompany.org.uk](http://springsdancecompany.org.uk)



Our Nativity Project is a series of workshops best taught over six days. We can work with either one or multiple class groups. Alternatively, one-off workshops can be arranged to explore key parts of the story through theatre and dance.

Scenes could include:

- An angel visits Mary
- Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem
- Mary and Joseph arrive in Bethlehem, are turned away and then finally welcomed
- The kings follow the star
- The kings arrive at Herod's palace
- Angels appear to the Shepherds
- The kings present gifts and celebrate Jesus' birth
- The new family dream of danger
- Escape to Egypt
- Jesus and his family as refugees receive welcome and refuge

The fee for a full day of workshops is £450 plus travel expenses.

**"The dancers were fantastic with the children - very clear and patient. They took time with each group and gave great feedback to the children. Lovely link with the Nativity and modern day refugees!"**

Emily Woodward, RE Coordinator, St Andrew's & St Mark's, London (A Christmas Story: Refugee workshops)

To book or for a friendly chat about our work, please call us on 07775 628 442 or email: [touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk)



The Diocese of  
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SPRINGS  
DANCE COMPANY

# EASTER PROJECT

*"From the first few minutes of the workshop I knew that Springs had something special about them. They just had a way of engaging every child with enthusiasm, passion and hard-work. It was faultless"*

*Head Teacher, Easter Project at  
St Andrews School, Streatham.*



**The Springs Easter Project leads pupils through a series of dance workshops that help them engage with the Easter story.**

Children will learn and create movement in response to the story. There is opportunity for spiritual development and the children will use their imaginations and creativity, growing empathy, self knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

The workshops can culminate in an informal sharing or performance of the Easter story by the pupils, which can be shown to the school and parents through either a live or filmed presentation.

The project can be anything from one to six days, and can be split into workshops looking at different sections of the Easter story. For example:

- Palm Sunday
- Washing of the feet
- Last supper
- Garden of Gethsemane
- Trial
- Crucifixion
- Rolling away of the stone
- Mary at the Tomb
- Resurrection

The project can be adapted to suit the school.

Many schools choose to use the company one day a week leading up to Easter. Some schools prefer to fit the workshops into an intensive week or another format.

Please call us to discuss the best option for your school.

**To book or for a friendly chat about our work, please call us on 07775 628 442 or email: [touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk)**



**SPRINGS DANCE COMPANY** delivers RE, PSHE and Citizenship through dance, creative exploration and discussion. Our curriculum linked workshops support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

\*\*\* Our workshops are a great way to utilise your Sports Premium Funding. \*\*\*

Other popular workshops available include: Creation, A Christmas Story: Refugee and You Are Special. Our **Parable Interactive Performance** is an adventurous, interactive and exciting opportunity for children to encounter and overcome creative challenges, accomplish tasks and influence the outcome of a professional performance, whilst absorbed in a vibrant world of movement, dance and theatre.

**"PROBABLY THE BEST  
DANCE I'VE SEEN IN  
ANY SCHOOL, EVER!"**

School Inspector referring to a children's performance as part of a six-week project by Springs Dance Company.

[www.springsdancecompany.org.uk](http://www.springsdancecompany.org.uk)



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# EXPLORING THE INTERACTION OF SCIENCE AND FAITH

**God and the Big Bang gives students in Year 5 to Year 13 the opportunity to discover, discuss and debate the compatibility of science and faith**



**The workshops equip students with the tools to form their own opinions on some of life's biggest questions, guided by expert scientists**

**Enquiries and Bookings  
[contact@gatbb.co.uk](mailto:contact@gatbb.co.uk)**



[www.gatbb.co.uk](http://www.gatbb.co.uk)



[@GatBB\\_UK](https://twitter.com/GatBB_UK)



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# Sharing Success and Great Ideas

## Hayfield Cross Creative Arts 'Vision and Values' Week

During the summer, we embarked on a week of child-centred, creative endeavour rooted in the Hayfield Cross School Vision and Values: **Joy, Fellowship** and **Integrity**. The children were encouraged to "**Be Brave**" and explore artistic genres and musical activities, leading to a whole-school exhibition for families and the wider community. This was an exciting opportunity to see our children producing meaningful and inspiring work of which they were proud and a chance to enable all members of our community to think deeply about our Vision and Values.





## From Stanion CoE Primary School

### OUR VISIT TO PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

When we arrived at the Cathedral, we were met by Toni and she told us that before we started our activities we would enjoy looking at the beautiful building.

*I can't believe how BIG it is! It is so big, and so beautiful!*

We have visited our local church many times and have enjoyed looking for signs and symbols. We enjoyed finding things on the Cathedral building that we had seen in St Peter's Church, Stanion- such as crosses, and the crossed keys of St Peter.

We also had the opportunity to look around the inside of Cathedral and to learn more about this amazing building. The children were definitely filled with a sense of 'awe and wonder'.

The children were encouraged to touch things, look at things and to ask questions. We all really enjoyed looking at details in the stained glass, and Toni shared her knowledge so effectively with the children.



The focus of our session was the Genesis 1 Creation story, which linked to the work we are currently doing in school as part of our RE in EYFS. The interactive approach to telling the story was so effective, and engaged our Reception children throughout. Toni had prepared a whole range of items to re-tell the story, involving every child actively within the re-telling.

*I loved looking at the windows. Toni showed us how to find Jesus in the windows. The windows are very beautiful.*



Although the children were familiar with the story, this interactive story telling experience really embedded and deepened their understanding.



Mrs Hankins commented on the inspirational approach to story-telling, which added such depth to the story of the Creation. We will definitely do this again in school!

The children really enjoyed this activity, and their responses included:

I loved it when we could all use loud voices to shout out IT IS GOOD after every part of the story.

I really loved making the story of the Creation. It was fun for all of us and we all had a part. I was lucky because I got to do my favourite part with the animals on the land.

We responded further to the Creation Story by making our own images of different parts of the story. The children upcycled CDs to create their own pictures, which are now on display in our classroom. We have also created more 'CD' pictures on returning to school, as the children loved this activity so much!

*I love my picture. It shows how God created the moon and stars to light the sky at night.*

*I love all the animals and I have put lots of animals on the picture. We must all look after the animals.*

Part of our work in the classroom has been linked to recycling and upcycling and looking at ways that we can care for our wonderful world. Upcycling CDs linked so well to this classroom work, and all of our 'wonderful world' pictures are now proudly displayed in the classroom.

We also learnt more about the importance of music within church buildings in general. And everyone enjoyed identifying instruments from pieces of music. Everyone was impressed with the sound of the organ, and we learnt about how the sounds are made. Alex showed us how sound is affected by the length of the pipes. We all agreed that the one instrument that we can all use is our voice, and we sang, 'He's got the whole world in his hands' together. It felt very special to sing in the Cathedral.

As we headed outside, we were all reminded about the importance of noticing and caring for our beautiful world, and to be grateful for it. We certainly felt very



*The flowers are so beautiful. I love looking at them and all the lovely colours.*

lucky to enjoy the beautiful cathedral garden, and to have the opportunity to collect things to create our own 'sticky stick'.

The children also experienced, with Toni, the different scents of plants and herbs, and they all engaged in every part of this activity with interest, enthusiasm and excitement.



I can see so many colours! They look so pretty all together.

I liked picking the flowers for my sticky stick. It helped me to think of God's wonderful world.

All the plants and flowers are so special. I love the ones that smell, not just the pretty ones.

I loved the sticky stick! It was like a journey stick and we could collect lots of lovely things from God's wonderful world.

The whole day was a real enrichment of our RE curriculum, and will enable us to develop the unit with even more knowledge, understanding and creativity.

We would like to thank Toni, Alex and everyone involved in enabling our young children to have such a memorable experience, and we will look forward to visiting again soon. All of the activities were so well planned, organised and creatively resourced, and we all felt privileged to have this opportunity to work at the Cathedral.

We are now inspired to develop the work further in school, and we have already started a very creative 'Creation' display.



# Cathedral visits

Enhance pupils experience of RE by visiting the Cathedral. The Cathedral in Peterborough is the 'Mother Church' of the diocese. Some of you will know the Cathedral well, perhaps you have attended the annual service there for Church schools? There are many ways in which the Cathedral team offer to support the learning of pupils in RE. The brochure for their work is attached to this newsletter.

Alex, Toni and the team at the Cathedral write:

'We are delighted to share with you our updated school visits programme – a range of exciting and engaging activities using the Cathedral as an inspirational resource! Highlights for church schools include:

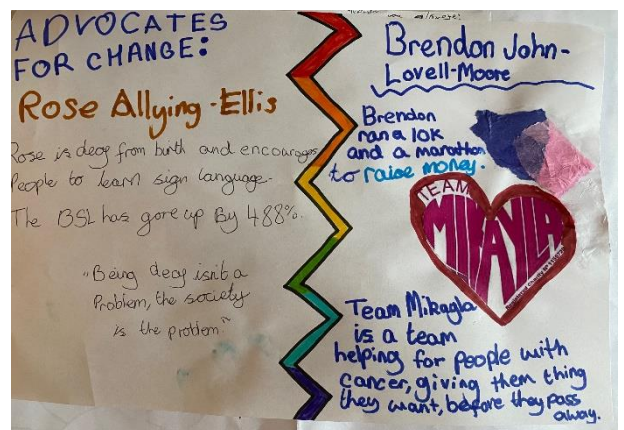
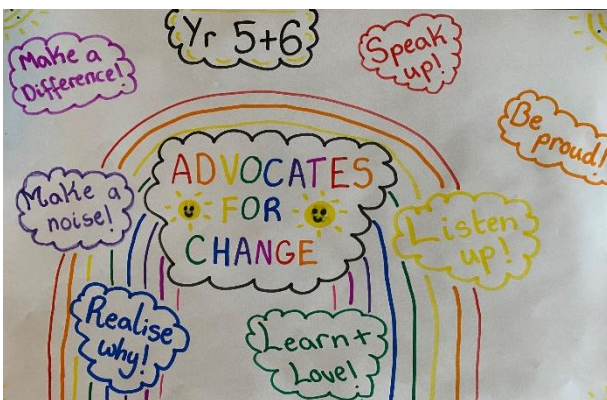
- Our 'Exploring' and 'Understanding' sessions, aimed at supporting the Understanding Christianity framework. Themes currently offered are Salvation, Creation, Incarnation and God
- Bespoke days – created with whole school visits in mind. These can be delivered on a variety of themes including 'Our Mother Church' - -getting to know your Cathedral and its part in the wider diocesan family!

In addition, our fabulous History activities will support the teaching of Saxons, Tudors and Local History

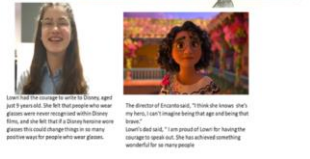
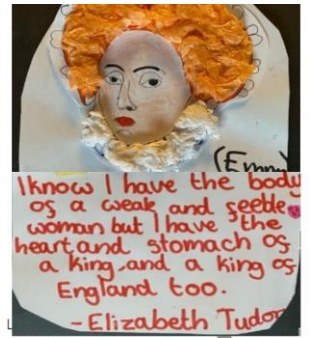
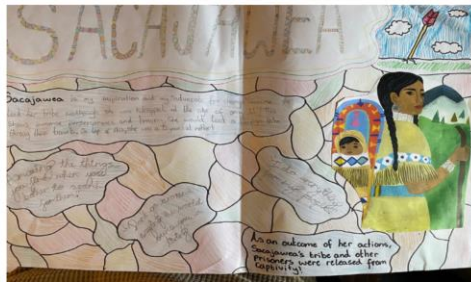
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## Responses to the project:

**"What does it mean to be a courageous advocate for change?"**







See the difference we've made!

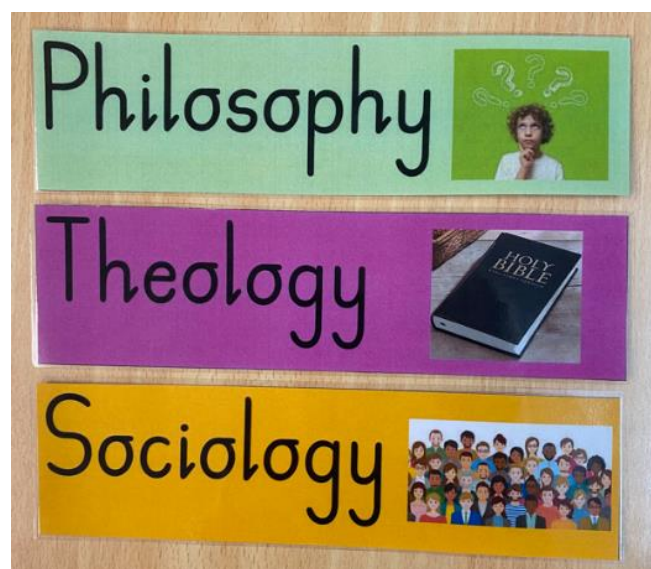
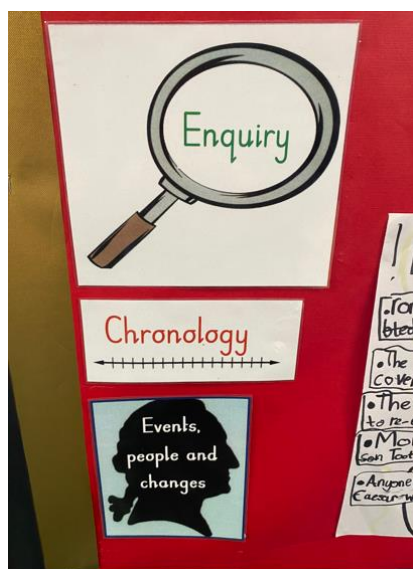


# From Brixworth CEVC Primary School

## Response to our SIAMs inspection next steps.

Our school's SIAM's inspection was very positive, particularly with regards to our vision. One of the areas of development from the final report was to: 'ensure balance between philosophy, theology and the social sciences in the teaching of religious education (RE). This is to help deepen pupils' understanding of the way thinking and belief influence the way people live'.

We already use 'skills cards' for other subjects across the curriculum such as History (see below) to help introduce the skill being used in that lesson. After careful reflection, we decided to introduce skills cards into R.E in the same way. These will live on the R.E. display board, but be brought forward to the teaching board at the beginning of every applicable lesson. By talking and explaining each skill explicitly, we are hoping that the children will be able to talk about the three strands independently when discussing R.E.



## And finally...

Please continue to share the great RE work that is going on in your schools. I would love to hear from you and to share good all our good ideas in future newsletters.

Please also send me an email about resources that you have found useful in RE in your school. Again, these can be included in the Resources section, and they might just be the resource that someone else is looking for!

I hope to see you at the next **Primary RE subject leader's network** meeting on **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November from 4.00pm**. We will take some time to discuss balanced RE and Christianity as a Global World Faith. We can also discuss anything else you'd like me to do to support your RE teaching. Please let **Alex Benoy** know if you are able to attend to be sure you receive the zoom link for the meeting.

Blessings,

**Ziggy Brown**