

THE HAYLING COLLEGE

Religious Education

Religion • Worldviews • Ethics • Philosophy

Parent and Pupil Curriculum Guide • 2026–27

Happy • Healthy • High Performing

Why Religious Education matters

Religious Education (RE) helps pupils make sense of a complex, diverse and changing world. At The Hayling College, RE is not about telling pupils what to believe. It gives them the knowledge and vocabulary to understand religious and non-religious worldviews, examine ethical and philosophical questions, consider different perspectives and participate confidently and respectfully in modern Britain.

Our curriculum aims for pupils to know more about how beliefs, traditions, texts, practices and worldviews shape individuals and communities. Pupils also learn how to evaluate claims, use evidence, ask increasingly sophisticated questions and reflect on their own developing understanding.

Our Hampshire curriculum: Living Difference IV

The Hayling College is a Hampshire maintained school and follows Living Difference IV, the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education for Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

In May 2026, following its statutory review, Hampshire SACRE and the other partner SACREs formally readopted Living Difference IV. Hampshire advised schools that the syllabus remains the same for curriculum planning, teaching and assessment, with only small textual updates. Our 2026–27 provision therefore continues to be planned through Living Difference IV and Hampshire's cycle of enquiry.

Living Difference IV places emphasis on pupils engaging with concepts and words that are important to religious and non-religious ways of life, encountering lived traditions and developing increasingly thoughtful responses. RE complements Personal Development and PSHCE, but it remains a distinct statutory curriculum subject.

Our RE entitlement

RE is provided throughout pupils' time at The Hayling College. The current curriculum model described by the Humanities Faculty provides one dedicated RE lesson per fortnight at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, statutory RE continues through a planned fortnightly tutor programme.

From September 2026, Key Stage 3 tutor time will also include a fortnightly focus on religious festivals across the academic year, giving pupils further opportunities to understand the practices, celebrations and lived experiences of diverse communities.

Our curriculum journey

Year	Curriculum focus	How learning develops
Year 7	Islam and Christianity	Pupils undertake in-depth study of Islam and Christianity before applying developing knowledge to ethical dilemmas and contemporary moral questions, including consideration of Christian perspectives.
Year 8	Judaism, Buddhism, Crime and Punishment	Pupils broaden their knowledge of religious traditions through Judaism and Buddhism before exploring justice, law, punishment, repentance and forgiveness through religious and ethical perspectives.
Year 9	Sikhi, Native American beliefs, Paganism, Equality and Justice	Pupils encounter a wider range of religious and spiritual worldviews,

		including contemporary religious change in Britain, before considering equality, justice, discrimination and moral responsibility.
Years 10–11	Statutory RE through tutor time	Pupils continue to encounter religion, worldviews, ethics and contemporary issues. Recent provision includes Religion in the Workplace, deliberately connecting religious diversity, legal/social protections and respectful professional life to Year 10 work experience.

Depth, diversity and progression

Our curriculum is deliberately broader than a list of festivals or isolated facts about religions. Pupils encounter beliefs, sacred texts, practices, ethical ideas and lived experiences and are taught that there can be significant diversity within as well as between religious and non-religious traditions.

This reflects national subject evidence from Ofsted, which identifies strong RE as knowledge-rich, carefully sequenced and sufficiently deep for pupils to understand the complexity of religion and non-religion. We therefore aim to revisit and connect important ideas over time rather than treating each worldview as a disconnected topic.

How pupils get better at RE

Pupils become more successful in RE by building three connected forms of understanding: secure knowledge of religious and non-religious traditions; increasingly sophisticated ways of examining evidence, claims and interpretations; and the ability to reflect thoughtfully on how what they learn relates to their own assumptions and experience.

Teachers support progression through explicit vocabulary teaching, retrieval of prior learning, careful use of sources and examples, structured questioning, comparison, extended explanation and evaluation.

- Know and accurately use important religious, ethical and philosophical vocabulary.
- Explain beliefs, practices and worldviews with increasing depth and nuance.
- Recognise diversity within and between traditions.
- Use evidence and examples to support explanations.
- Compare and evaluate different perspectives without reducing them to stereotypes.
- Construct reasoned judgements while respecting the right of others to reach different conclusions.

Oracy, dialogue and respectful disagreement

Oracy is a distinctive strength of the Hayling approach. RE gives pupils frequent opportunities to articulate ideas, listen actively, question assumptions, consider opposing viewpoints and develop well-reasoned responses.

Structured discussion is not used instead of knowledge. Pupils first need something worthwhile to think and talk about. Discussion, debate and extended responses then help pupils apply and deepen what they know.

Our aim is for pupils to learn how to disagree agreeably: challenging an idea without attacking a person, distinguishing evidence from assertion and being willing to refine a view in response to stronger reasoning.

RE, current affairs and The Day

Pupils' exploration of religion, worldviews and ethical issues extends beyond dedicated RE lessons. Through the College tutor programme, pupils regularly engage with current affairs using The Day. Carefully selected contemporary issues provide further opportunities to encounter different perspectives, consider questions of belief, ethics, equality, justice and society, and connect curriculum knowledge to events taking place in Britain and across the world.

These discussions complement Living Difference IV and provide further opportunities to develop cultural literacy and spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They also reinforce our whole-school emphasis on oracy: pupils learn to listen actively, question assumptions, distinguish evidence from opinion, articulate a position and disagree respectfully.

In this way, pupils do not simply learn about religious and non-religious worldviews; they increasingly learn to use their knowledge when considering the complex questions and differing perspectives they encounter in modern life.

Religious festivals and lived religion

From September 2026, Key Stage 3 tutor sessions will include an explicit focus on religious festivals across the academic year. The purpose is not to create a superficial 'festival calendar', but to help pupils understand why celebrations, rituals and sacred times matter to people and how beliefs are expressed through lived practice.

Festival learning will be connected back to substantive curriculum knowledge wherever possible so that pupils can recognise continuity, diversity and meaning rather than simply remembering dates or customs.

RE and Personal Development

RE makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, while remaining an academic subject in its own right.

- Spiritual: encountering questions of meaning, belief, identity, purpose and different ways of understanding human life.
- Moral: examining ethical dilemmas, justice, responsibility, punishment, forgiveness, equality and competing moral claims.
- Social: learning to listen, discuss and work with people who hold different views and understanding religion and belief in workplaces and communities.
- Cultural: understanding the religious and non-religious traditions that have shaped Britain and the wider world, including the changing religious landscape of contemporary society.

RE and life in modern Britain

RE helps pupils understand the plural society in which they live. The curriculum supports informed understanding of diversity, equality and fundamental British values by giving pupils genuine knowledge of different communities and opportunities to discuss difficult questions respectfully.

Year 10 work on Religion in the Workplace is a good example: pupils consider religious diversity, inclusion and respectful professional behaviour before their work-experience placements. The Day and tutor-time current affairs provide additional opportunities to connect this learning to contemporary public life.

How we know pupils are learning

Assessment in RE should tell us whether pupils have learned the intended curriculum, rather than simply whether they can express an opinion. Teachers therefore use questioning, retrieval, discussion, written work and appropriately designed assessments to check knowledge, understanding and pupils' ability to explain, compare and evaluate.

Subject leadership will continue to quality assure the planned and taught curriculum, including statutory non-examined RE at Key Stage 4, so that learning clearly builds on Key Stage 3.

The right of withdrawal

Parents and carers have the statutory right to request that their child is withdrawn from all or part of Religious Education.

A request should be made in writing to the Headteacher. The College will normally invite the parent/carer to discuss the request so that the nature and purpose of the RE curriculum and the practical arrangements for withdrawal are understood. Parents and carers are not required to give a reason for exercising this right.

Where a pupil is withdrawn, the College will make reasonable supervisory arrangements but is not required to provide alternative curriculum teaching during the withdrawn RE provision.

At the time of the Humanities Faculty's 2026 report, no parents had requested withdrawal and all pupils were participating in RE.

How families can support RE

Families do not need specialist knowledge or a religious belief to support RE. Curiosity and conversation are valuable.

- Ask your child what question or idea they have been exploring, rather than only which religion they are studying.
- Discuss current affairs and ask: 'What different perspectives might people have on this?'
- Encourage pupils to explain the evidence or reasoning behind a view.
- Visit museums, places of worship or cultural sites when appropriate and respectful.
- Encourage reading and discussion about religion, ethics, philosophy, culture and current affairs.
- Remind pupils that understanding a worldview is not the same as agreeing with it.

2026–27 curriculum priorities

Using the Humanities Faculty review, Hampshire guidance and national subject evidence, our next stage is to make the quality and progression of RE increasingly visible and secure.

- Continue full alignment with the readopted Living Difference IV syllabus and Hampshire advice.
- Strengthen explicit progression in substantive knowledge, ways of knowing and pupils' reflective/personal knowledge.
- Ensure the limited curriculum time available is used effectively, with deliberate retrieval and connections between fortnightly sessions.
- Quality assure the Key Stage 4 statutory RE tutor curriculum so that it is ambitious and clearly builds on Key Stage 3.
- Use The Day selectively to extend, apply and connect RE knowledge to contemporary issues rather than allowing current affairs to replace planned RE content.

- Embed the new Key Stage 3 festivals programme as an extension of curriculum knowledge, avoiding superficial coverage.
- Continue developing subject-specific oracy and extended written reasoning.
- Review assessment so it checks what pupils know, remember and can do with the curriculum.
- Continue appropriate subject professional development and use of Hampshire HIAS/SACRE support.

Guidance and evidence informing this guide

This guide has been prepared from the Humanities Faculty's 2026 RE and SMSC report and The Hayling College's current Personal Development/tutor-time approach. It has been checked against the Hampshire Living Difference IV agreed syllabus and Hampshire SACRE's May 2026 readoption update, and against Ofsted's 2024 subject report 'Deep and meaningful?'.

Hampshire confirmed in May 2026 that Living Difference IV remains the agreed syllabus for planning, teaching and assessment following its statutory review. Ofsted's subject evidence particularly reinforces the importance of depth, accurate representation of diversity, clear curriculum progression, effective use of curriculum time and ambitious statutory RE at Key Stage 4.