



RE News

Empowering Voices

Welcome to this spring term edition of RE News. I hope the term has gone smoothly for you and you are looking forward to the Easter holidays. In this edition of RE News, we explore the new *Empowering Voices* resource and hear about some teacher researchers carrying out action research on assessment and RE. We also hear from some teachers and pupils who have been celebrating amazing RE in their schools and academies.

As ever, if you have anything to share in the next edition of RE News, please do get in touch. I look forward to hearing from you!

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Inside this issue

Empowering Voices.....	2
Using Case Studies in RE	3
Strictly RE 2023.....	4
RE in our region	5
Upcoming RE training.....	8

Special points of interest

- Celebrating excellent practice in RE
- The latest news and views from around the country
- Exciting new resources to support you in the classroom

Empowering Voices

Since 2015, the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education has been running the REConnecting Lincolnshire project. This work grew out of some incidents of religious hatred and concerns about the teaching of particular religious worldviews in schools across the region. Key to the work was bringing together pupils, teachers and local community members with those who are part of religious and non-religious worldviews. **In the first phase of work**, pupils from three schools performed stories from the Bible and the Qur'an as part of a narrative rooted in a child witnessing an incident of Islamophobia whilst travelling to school. **In the second phase of work**, pupils across six schools contributed to writing and performing *Our Place*, a play telling the story of three young people exploring their own worldviews in a time of change. This phase of work also resulted in [teaching resources](#) that explore beliefs, identity, futures, disagreeing well and respecting difference.

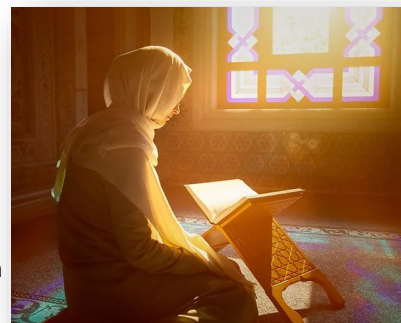
During each phase of work, we have carried out qualitative and quantitative evaluation to better understand the impact of our work. As a result of this, we decided that our third phase of work needed to move beyond our region in order to increase the impact for other schools and academies around the country.

This third phase of work is called *Empowering Voices*. We have continued to work with schools to engage with religious and non-religious worldviews through creativity. In this phase of work, these schools have been located in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Hertfordshire and Bristol. The project is creating eight podcasts with associated educational materials aimed at upper KS2 and KS3. Each podcast comprises a ten-minute audio play on a particular worldview written by pupils and a professional writer, a ten-minute 'in conversation' involving members of that worldview and experts engaged with it to discuss the themes from audio play, and a five-minute immersive soundscape to enable pupils to experience something of this worldview.



Thus far, **we have launched our first two podcasts.** The first explores the experience of a white British woman from North Lincolnshire who decides to join a Muslim worldview. Students from Huntcliff Comprehensive in Kirton in Lindsey worked with Laura

Turner and members of the Scunthorpe Islamic Centre & Mosque and the Scunthorpe Ahmadiyya Muslim Community & Mosque to create *Coming Together*. You can listen to this podcast [here](#). You can also access the associated teaching materials on this site so that you are able to use the podcast in the classroom as part of your RE curriculum. The second podcast explores the interaction between two families in Bristol—one white, non-religious family and one black, Evangelical Christian family. Students from City Academy, Bristol, worked with Jenny Davis and members of the Woodlands Church to create *True Colours*. You can listen to this podcast and access the associated teaching materials [here](#).



Podcasts on Sikh and Humanist worldviews are due to be launched by September 2023, with other podcasts coming during the coming academic year.

We are really excited about these resources, not least because they have been created with the worldviews approach to RE in mind. Each podcast offers a particular lived example of a worldview as a way in to learning more about that way of believing, living and thinking. The associated teaching materials focus on helping pupils engage with the ways in which context affects people's beliefs and experiences, as well as supporting them to ask disciplinary questions and critically analyse their own personal worldviews.

We would love to hear from anyone who uses the *Empowering Voices* podcasts as part of their RE curriculum; your feedback will help us ensure that future materials are as useful as possible to you.

You can find all the *Empowering Voices* information and resources here: <https://www.reconnectlincs.co.uk/empowering-voices>.



“We have continued to work with schools to engage with religious and non-religious worldviews through creativity...”

Using Case Studies in RE

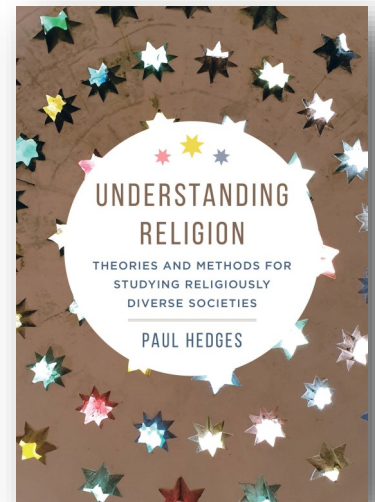
The *Empowering Voices* project is rooted in case studies—particular, real-world experiences that provide a platform for pupils to engage with and critically analyse religious and non-religious worldviews. Starting with the particular is a key feature of a worldviews approach to RE, as is the emphasis on exploring the impact of context on worldviews. Although this approach is not yet embedded in RE teaching around the country, there is an awareness that teachers need access to a wide range of case studies to support teaching about religious and non-religious worldviews.

What is a Case Study?

- ⇒ Originated in law and business contexts as a way of exploring possible solutions to particular issues
- ⇒ A detailed real-world situation (real or fictionalised), not an abstract or generalised example
- ⇒ Something that can be used in the RE curriculum to explore, critically analyse or reflect on a religious, non-religious or personal worldview

Why use a Case Study?

- ⇒ Provides an active learning process: pupils are not being told the answers, but are supported to carry out a process of investigation of key concepts
- ⇒ Shows the application of key concepts or beliefs to real life
- ⇒ Supports pupils to engage with a range of different perspectives
- ⇒ Allows pupils to explore how their personal worldview influences their engagement with the case study presented



Where can I find a Case Study?

- ⇒ [Empowering Voices](#)
- ⇒ [The Pluralism Project](#) (Harvard University)
- ⇒ [Justice in Schools](#) (Harvard University)
- ⇒ [Everyday Muslim](#)
- ⇒ [Inclusive Judaism](#)
- ⇒ [RETOPEA](#)
- ⇒ Create your own! (Root it in a real story/experience—it can be fictionalised, but not fictional)

Many of these case studies are pitched at secondary or higher education settings; however, it will be possible to adapt these for use in primary settings.

Paul Hedges is based at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He has written extensively on using case studies to support pupils to engage with religious and non-religious worldviews.

**STRICTLY RE 2023:
ASSESSING PROGRESS IN RE**

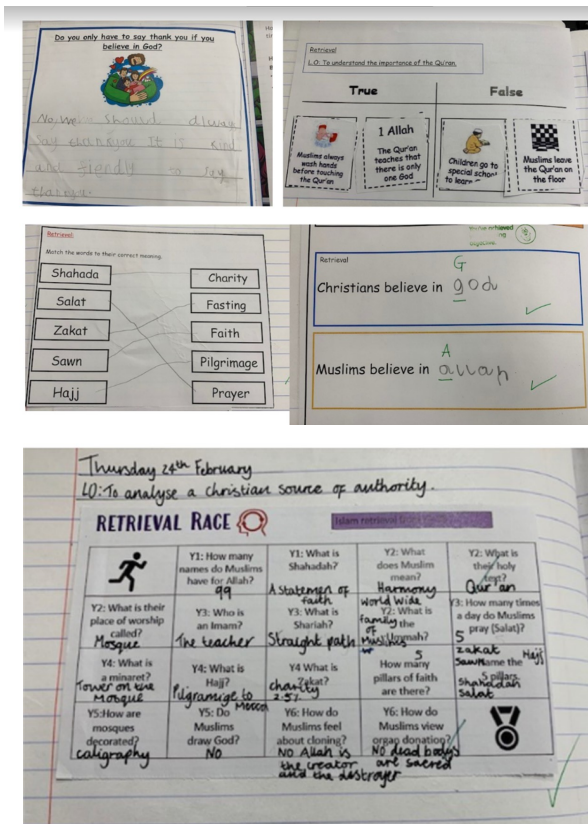
Every January, the RE community across the country meets at Strictly RE. This is a fabulous opportunity for RE teachers, leaders, advisers and researchers to get together and explore the latest thinking and resources for RE.

This year, I was lucky enough to deliver a seminar on the action research we have been carrying out in this region over the last year. This research has been looking at how we assess progress in RE. It is rooted in some questions about the current models used in schools that rely heavily on end-of-phase expectations. These questions raise concerns about identifying *what* we are assessing in RE and acknowledge that progress does not happen in neat, tickable, incremental steps, as end-of-phase expectations assume. (See our 2021 assessment guidance [here](#).)

We will be providing some training on assessment in summer term (see p.8) and writing up the action research project in the near future, but we wanted to share some of the amazing work being carried out by teacher researchers across Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. A huge thank you to everyone involved!

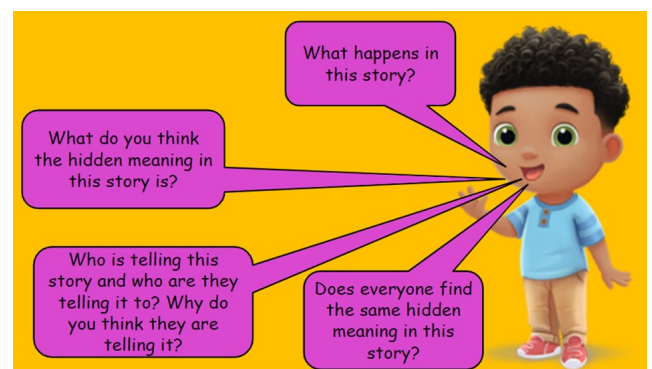
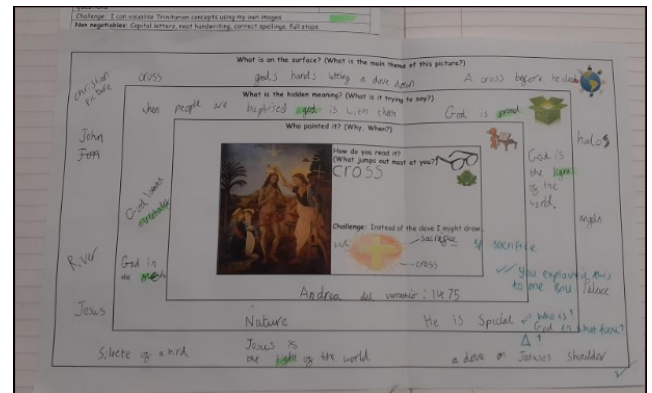
Assessing Substantive Knowledge

Using regular recall and retrieval activities to check that pupils know, understand and remember core knowledge content as a result of the RE curriculum.



Assessing Disciplinary Knowledge

Asking disciplinary questions of the knowledge content being studied and using appropriate methods/tools/skills to answer them



Sapheron Shaw, St Thomas CE Primary, Boston

Anna Crosby, Barton St Peter's CE Primary

Georgina Foxcroft, St Peter at Gowts CE Primary

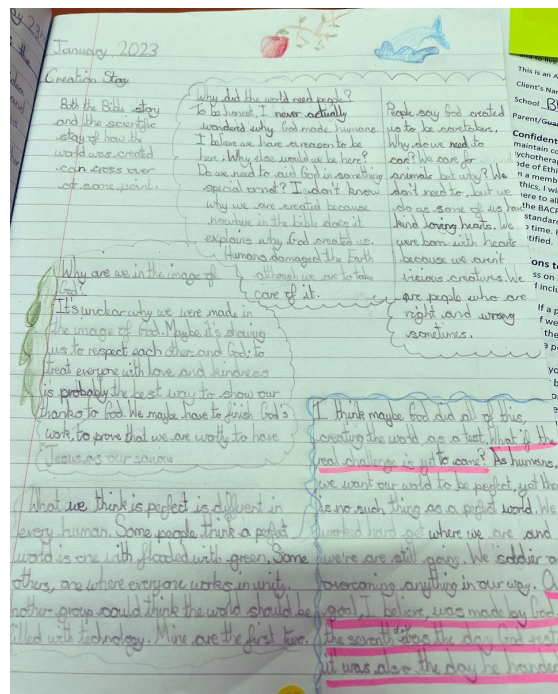
INTERPRETING TEXTS IN RE

Blyton Cum Laughton Church of England Primary School

We are working hard to encourage pupils to critically analyse their own worldviews in RE and to use disciplinary methods as part of their learning. Previous editions of RE News have looked at some of this in practice, including the use of hermeneutics, or textual analysis.

Pupils from Blyton Cum Laughton Church of England Primary School have been using their hermeneutical skills to ask challenging questions of the texts they are reading in RE.

Many thanks to their headteacher, Karl Duke, for sharing their work.



RE QUALITY MARK

William Farr Church of England School

Earlier this year, William Farr Church of England School was assessed for the RE Quality Mark. The assessor met with the RE leader, RE teachers and students to find out more about the teaching and learning, curriculum and leadership of the subject. Students felt that RE “opens your mind up” and “relates to real life”. The assessor noted that RE is at the core of what the school seeks to be about, and that the subject is taught by “a passionate and highly committed team”. Congratulations to the whole team!

If you would like to find out more about the RE Quality Mark, please visit their website at <https://www.reqm.org/>.



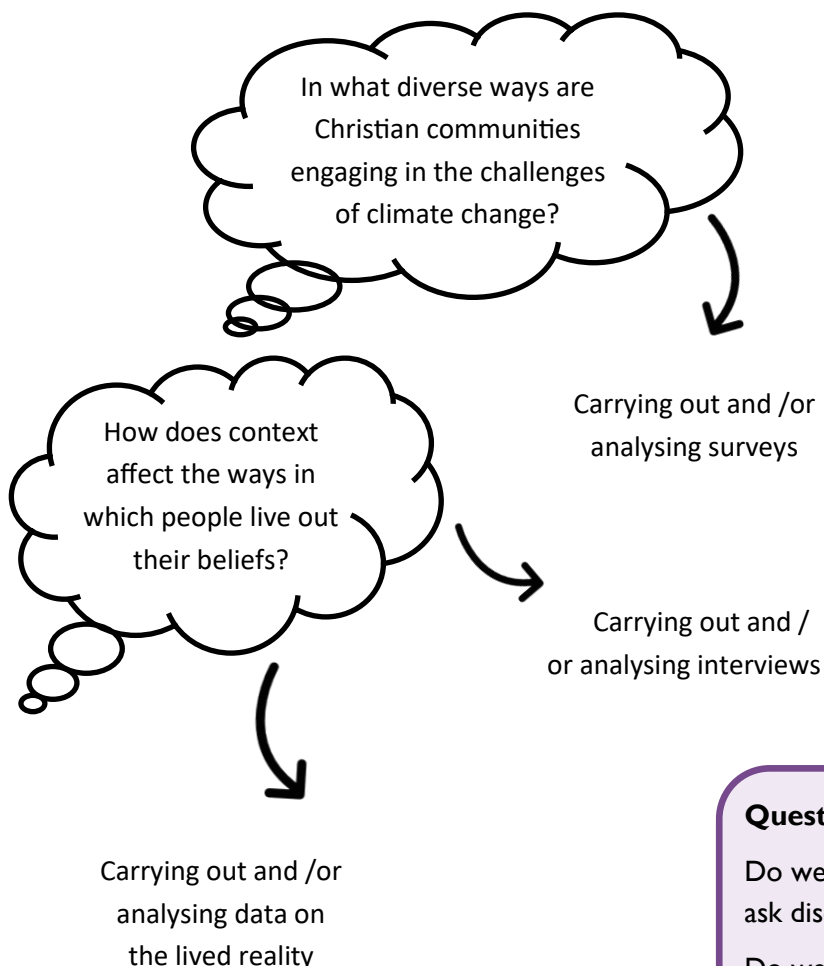
CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEWS AND ADVOCACY PROJECT

Coventry Diocesan Board of Education

Jen Jenkins, Diocesan RE Adviser for Coventry Diocesan Board of Education, has been working with a team of teachers, researchers and academics to produce KS2 and KS3 teaching and learning materials that explore diverse Christian worldviews, with a particular focus on the pursuit of social justice within these traditions. Advised by Tim Hutchins (University of Nottingham) and Céline Benoit (Aston University), Jen worked with a teacher group from her region to produce teaching and learning materials rooted in asking human/social sciences questions about Christian worldviews.

The teacher groups were able to engage with leading academics in this field to help them understand what it means to ask questions about religion and belief from the perspective of the human and social sciences. This included Professor Robert Beckford, Professor Anthony Reddie, Professor Abby Day and Dr Sarah-Jane Page.

The teaching and learning materials include workbooks and mood boards on a wide variety of topics relating to courageous advocacy and Christian worldviews, including climate change, human rights, digital religion, race and the human body. You can sign up to access there resources [here](#).



Question to Consider

Do we ensure pupils understand what it means to ask disciplinary questions in RE?

Do we support pupils to use disciplinary methods, tools and skills in RE?



RE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

The Faraday Institute, for Science and Religion, based at the University of Cambridge, produces classroom materials to support teaching about the relationship between science and religion; you can find out more about these resources [here](#).



The *Akedah* is the story of God's request that Abraham sacrifice his son, Isaac (the Hebrew *akedah* means 'binding' and refers to the ropes Abraham brings to bind Isaac for sacrifice). The [Akedah Project](#) is a collection of videos and resources that explore different responses to this challenging story from within and beyond Jewish worldviews.



The [RE Podcast](#), created and hosted by Louisa Jane Smith, produces regular episodes focused on issues relevant to RE teachers and leaders. These podcasts are really and impactful accessible CPD. Recent episodes include the Hindu festival of Holi, doing Philosophy in prison and Christian beliefs about salvation. *Empowering Voices* will feature on an upcoming episode.



The [Pluralism Project](#) at Harvard University has produced a series of case studies that enable students to engage in diverse responses to real-world situations relating to religion and belief. Although created for a higher education context, these could be adapted for KS3 and above.



Upcoming Courses

Date	Time	Training
20th April 2023	1pm—3.30pm	RE Cluster Meeting VIRTUAL (ZOOM)
27th April 2023	1pm—3pm	Assessing Progress in RE VIRTUAL (ZOOM)
27th April 2023	4pm—6pm	Assessing Progress in RE (repeat) VIRTUAL (ZOOM)
11th May 2023	4pm—6pm	Understanding Christianity Refresher Session VIRTUAL (ZOOM)
6th June 2023	1pm—4pm	RE Disciplinary Knowledge: Philosophy (Thinking) IN PERSON (EDWARD KING HOUSE, LINCOLN)

For further details, please email the Diocesan RE Adviser at gillian.georgiou@lincoln.anglican.org.

To book, please see our [website](#).