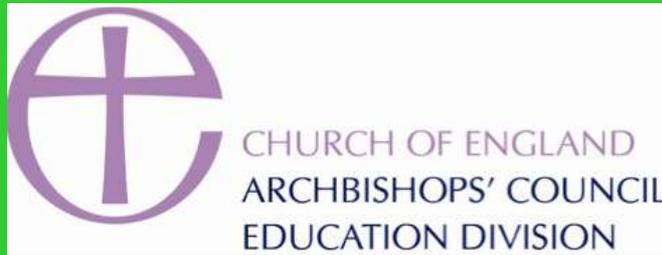


RE News Update



July 2013

Welcome to the National Society RE News Update

In May the National Society went on the road to meet diocesan advisers in London, York and Rugby to talk about Christian concepts. We are grateful for the support of Culham St. Gabriels and the leadership of Kathryn Wright (Norwich) and Helen Matter (St. Edmundbury and Ipswich). Advisers engaged with the material and were willing to share their own experiences and resources. I have included some of the feedback and recommended resources in this issue. There will be more next term. I have reported on the secondary RE conference and the seminar at Lambeth Palace on "Church of England: Education and our Future" at the end of this issue.



It has been a busy term in schools and Dioceses and it has been good to be in touch with so many of you. I hope you all have a very restful summer and return refreshed in the autumn.

Jane

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Overall comments in May

- *More days like this please, accessible and free*
- *Very interested to view the concept tree and discuss it with colleagues*
- *Have really enjoyed today, thank you for making me think*
- *Really good to be with others passionate about the same issues*
- *Thank you for organising and sharing your hard work on concepts*
- *Really enjoyed today I found the practical ideas useful and would appreciate following through with teaching examples on core Christian concepts in a way that supports my work*
- *Challenged yet encouraged*

Individual thoughts on personal development:

- *Need to plan training in the diocese*
- *Need to attend more sessions like today*
- *Feedback to DBE and produce diocesan resources*
- *Feedback to team of advisers*
- *Need to increase confidence of teachers in teaching key beliefs*
- *Need to read more!*
- *Dig out Margaret Cooling work*
- *Work with HTs and subject leaders*

In this issue:

Please look out for the NATRE survey results on primary RE, SIAMS information regarding RE and inspection dates, RE secondary conference, APPG news and REQM updates.

Late news: Michael Gove and the seminar at Lambeth Palace

Diocesan Adviser Seminars

I would like to thank all who were responsible for the organisation of the seminars in London, York and Coventry Dioceses. Without advisers and staff in the locality the days would not have been so successful. Particular thanks go to Olivia Seymour (York), York St. John University, Lizzie McWhirter (Rugby) and the Education Division at Church House London.



Making artefacts and getting to grips with Christian concepts



John Wilson (above) is moving from Manchester Diocese to work on the family farm. We wish him well on his career move. Many of us will continue to work with him as he will remain on AREAIC as treasurer.

Primary teachers under-prepared to teach RE

The lack of time allocated to RE during initial teacher training courses leaves primary school teachers feeling under-prepared to teach the subject when they arrive in the classroom, according to a report published on June 21st by the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE). This, compounded by a lack of curriculum time in many schools and the high turnover of RE subject leaders, is leaving RE teaching in a perilous state in many primary schools.

This new research was conducted by NATRE over a period of six weeks in the Spring Term 2013 via an online data gathering tool. Replies were received from 679 individual schools in England, of different types. The views of all those who expressed an opinion include:

- 58% of primary teachers polled say that, on entering the profession, they had little or no confidence to teach RE
- 49% of primary teachers said they had received less than 3 hours training to teach RE (of these, 24% said they received no training at all)
- 82% of schools allocate less than 60 minutes to RE per week

Teachers are most likely to hold the position of RE subject leader for less than two years (40.9% of post holders) and least likely to continue beyond 5 years (only 31.3% of post holders). This highlights the need for new subject leaders to have access to high quality continuing professional development and to reliable resources to support the leadership of the rest of the team delivering the subject.

There is a heavy reliance on web-based resources (67% report regular access), leaving teachers vulnerable to the use of materials that may potentially be inaccurate, misleading or even contain offensive representations of religion or belief.

In response to the survey and its findings Ed Pawson, chair of NATRE, said:

The fact that the majority of newly trained primary school teachers feel under-prepared to teach about religion and beliefs raises serious questions: how are we to expect children to become active citizens, having an understanding of, and respect for the beliefs and values of others, if their teachers are lacking in confidence themselves?

This survey raises serious questions about the time allocation for RE on initial teacher training courses and about the subsequent need for all schools to offer substantial, meaningful professional development opportunities for serving teachers.

You can read the full report here:

http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/media/file/NATRE_Primary_RE_Survey_2013_1_2_fin.pdf

John Keast, Chair of the RE Council, commented:

As society becomes more religiously diverse, children need a safe space to learn about the diversity and commonality of religions and beliefs, and their impact on the world today. The figures from the National Association of Teachers of RE show an uncomfortable truth - from reception class onwards children are losing out as many primary schools don't think they have enough time for RE and when they do teachers are not being adequately supported.

Primary school teachers have told NATRE that they feel under-prepared to teach RE. RE is a challenging and robust subject, in primary schools it takes considerable skill and experience to give a fair, considered and understandable answer to the tricky questions that young children have about faith and beliefs. By continuing to ignore RE, the current government is threatening to brush issues of faith, belief and diversity under the carpet.

The NS Christianity Project – A year on

So a year on.... And where are we now? The framework has been revised, revised... and revised again! After talking to advisors, inspectors, coordinators and teachers, I think we're *finally* at a point where we have a copy to work from. Following on-going consultations, more explicit links have been drawn both with the Trinity, with opportunities for children to investigate the worship and work of their local churches and dioceses. So whilst the project will include exemplars, these will be templates that schools could adapt in the light of their experiences.

Two central ideas underpin the framework; the idea that at the heart of Christianity is a narrative of salvation, and secondly that to understand Christianity one needs to understand key theological concepts. These are introduced in Foundation stage, and are revisited through a spiral curriculum. The core narrative is explored through the life of the church and the lives of Christians, both key figures from the past and contemporary and local examples.

It was great to be able to talk to secondary Heads of Departments at the conference in Birmingham. It was interesting to hear about the practice in their schools; having adapted the key stage 3 framework so that Years 7, 8, & 9 were together, in the light of previous feedback that for many schools year 9 marked the passage into GCSE, the need for a high degree of differentiation is very apparent if the framework continues in its current form.

The opportunity to trial the resources with Primary School coordinators was also immensely valuable; it was great to see them enthused by the idea of teaching concepts through narrative; the challenge of course is to make sure that the writing is rigorous enough so that the theology is not watered down but simple enough to ensure that all teachers can access it.

So, next steps? Over the summer, I'll be considering the links between the project and existing pedagogies, thinking about approaching the narrative based structure from different perspectives. Looking ahead, the next year will be busy with writing and piloting units of work. We're in the process of identifying pilot schools (thank you for all your offers!), and we hope to get the next phase finished by Easter next year. As the end product of the project will be a web-based resource, we'll be working with graphic designers to make sure that the materials are easy to download. Hopefully we'll be creating a resource that all schools can access and use, spreading the understanding both of what constitutes great RE, and what Christianity is all about.

RE Council Subject Review Phase 2

Phase 2 of the RE Council Subject Review is progressing. Task Group 1, led by Graham Falgate, has completed its draft materials for RE in the light of the National Curriculum Review consultation documents.

A first draft Purpose of Study and Aims for RE was considered by the REC AGM in May and further electronic consultation took place from mid June for 4 weeks on the full complement of draft materials. The government continues to withhold financial support for the RE Review, even though a grant of £100K was made available to PSHE colleagues for their guidance materials. The RE Council are pleased to see PSHE supported in this way and hope a similar sum of money might be forthcoming soon for our subject! In the meantime, further meetings have been arranged with members of the NC Review team; these have already been helpful to the parallel RE process.

Task Group 2, led by headteacher Hazel Henson, is continuing to act on proposals to emerge from Phase One of the Review concerned with the wider context in which RE operates, including examinations and ways of harnessing the collective

energies of those involved in RE to most productive effect.

Public consultation on the RE review took place electronically during a four week period from Friday 7th June – Friday 5th July 2013

<http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/about/news/2013-05-24/re-subject-review-phase-2-continuing-progress>

NATRE's 2013 secondary school RE survey. Please ask your schools to complete this:

<http://www.retoday.org.uk/news/natres-2013-survey-is-launched>

RE Quality Mark and APPG

Have your schools applied for the REQM? Some SACREs and Dioceses are supporting schools financially with grants towards schools. See the website for current awards:

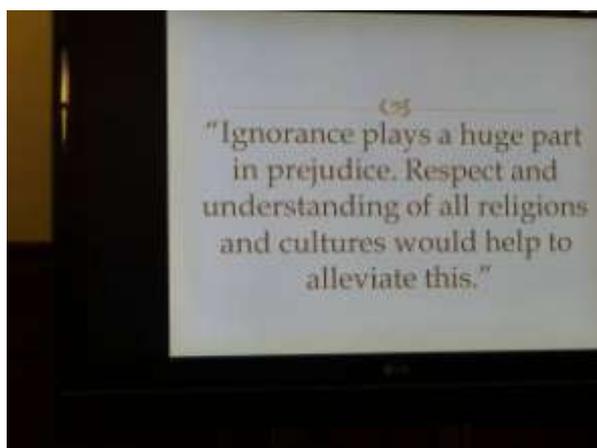
<http://reqm.org/award-winners>

The RE All Party Parliamentary Group met on Monday 24th June with REQM award winners and RE ambassadors.

There will also be a new RE and tolerance Early Day Motion set up by Stephen Lloyd. Do keep your eye on this and advertise it/write to your MP.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2013-14/272>

APPG June 24th with MP Stephen Lloyd



Presentations from REQM award winners and RE Ambassadors



Westhill Seminars

<http://www.retoday.org.uk/news/westhill-seminars-new-series>

RE Today Vo 30 No 3 Summer 2013

RE-ROUTE: An active Multimedia Resource for RE at KS3

Dave Francis and Tina Ward, 2012
Interactive CD, £20 + VAT

This excellent interactive CD provides teachers with all they will need to teach a unit of work on belief, based around the enquiry question, 'What do people believe about life and the place of religion and belief in it?' The resources on the CD are based around Christianity and Buddhism but provide ideas and stimuli for pupils enquiring into different religions and beliefs. The resources are suitable to use with students with all types of learning needs due to the thoughtful integration of 'Writing with symbols'.

The CD contains teachers' notes, lesson activities, structured teaching and learning points. The scheme of learning included on the CD supports students, through games and other engaging learning opportunities, in exploring ideas of truth, promoting thinking skills and looking 'beyond the surface' at the practices, customs and words of Buddhists and Christians.

Students explore such concepts as 'Belief', 'Trust', 'God', 'Life after death', 'Religion' and 'Revelation'; and develop their own ideas on questions such as, 'What do I believe/not believe about the world?'

There are illustrated resources for a scale of belief activity, visual place mats and excellent PowerPoints with hyperlinked visual images, allowing students to work in groups. The learning activities are engaging and thought-provoking.

This well-planned and thought-out resource will save time, engage students of all levels of ability, promote enquiry and provide the teacher with a wealth of resources.

Fiona Moss

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Resilience website

The REsilience for England website has been completely rebuilt. All resources and documents are now openly available:
<http://resilience-england.recouncil.org.uk/>

REC 40th anniversary sponsored walks

<http://sponsoredwalk.recouncil.org.uk/local-walks>

Teams across England and Wales have been organising sponsored walks to draw attention to the 40th anniversary of the REC's establishment and to raise much needed funds. A dozen walks took place in May and June, some focussing on people and places visited and others on public awareness raising about the importance of RE.

Congratulations to Professor Robert

Jackson who has been awarded the prestigious William Rainey Harper Award by the Religious Education

Association. He will receive the award formally in Boston in November. The news is reported on the [Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit](#) website.

Southwell and Nottingham Open Churches Project

The Open Churches Project has been running in the diocese of Southwell and Nottingham for nearly 5 years. It is a project funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by Nottingham University as well as the diocese. The aim of the project is to bring together

three strands of Toursim, Education and Heritage for all the Anglican churches across the diocese. Extensive research has been carried out on churches across the diocese with training for researchers being provided by Nottingham University. The entries can all be found at www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk

The purpose of the tourism strand is to enable churches to open their doors to the public. 'Open Churches' weekends have been held as well as a number of trails being produced that mean people can visit the churches along the Great North Road or discover churches in the vast mining heritage areas of Nottinghamshire, and of course there is a trail in the steps of Robin Hood!

The education strand has produced a number of free resources that have been made available to all community and church schools in the city and county. Diocesan advisers have been sent the resources but if colleagues would like any further copies then please contact us.

The purpose of the education resources is to open up our church buildings to children and young people in schools so that they see them not just as historic buildings but as essential places of learning and faith today. The education resources available are:

A primary pack for use mainly by churches to run activities when a local school visits.

A DVD 'The History and the Life of Churches' with a booklet containing classroom and worship ideas. The DVD glimpses the worshipping life of 2 different churches in the diocese.

A reflection pack for use in Collective Worship or RE. A sample pack is available but the resources are available on the website and are free to download. The pack takes aspects of a church building e.g clocks, doors etc and around those creates reflection opportunities.

An on-line secondary cross curricular resource using the churches on the open Churches website.

For further copies of any of the resources or for more information please contact

Jane Lewis

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Religious Education at the heart of the curriculum (taken from a Church Times article June 7th 2013)

THE Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd John Pritchard, in his capacity as chairman of the Church of England's Board of Education, has recently pointed to significant changes in the part played by Churches, in relation to sponsorship and governance of church schools, and the support available to them from diocesan boards of education and local authorities.

The exclusion of religious education (RE) from the core curriculum is but one feature of this changing landscape, and churches will need to be increasingly smart and creative if those dimensions of school life associated with RE - such as collective worship and Christian ethos - are to be of influence and significance in the future.

These are the issues that John Saxbee sought to address in the annual Keswick Hall Lecture, at the University of East Anglia, in 2011, and has now published as a Grove Education Series booklet: *Religious Education at the Heart of the Curriculum* (Grove Books, 2013).

He says that if the curriculum is "everything we do". you can come up with as many cross-cutting themes as you like, but there is nothing else that can inform a holistic approach to the curriculum in the same way as faith-focused RE can.

This is because it rises above the constraints of naturalistic psychology, and secular ideology, to open up a vision of day-to-day reality transcended by values and virtues, aptitudes and attitudes that are rooted in the great world faiths, and yet not constrained by them.

RE must always be an open-ended exploration of meaning and truth, even if

it is most effective when it operates within a specific religious tradition.

Such an exploration, which, when it comes to children and young people's achieving their full potential, goes deeper in order to build higher, cannot be contained within one subject silo called RE - especially when the content of that silo is restricted to acquainting students with the various forms and formalities of the great world religions, and their impact on current affairs.

We need to enable RE to spill over into how the whole of life is lived, including the whole life of the school, which provides the setting for the RE adventure.

In this way, RE moves from being a Cinderella subject - in the sense of being left behind, as other subjects get called to the National Curriculum ball - and becomes a servant subject, informing, inspiring, interrogating, and celebrating that living organism, which is a school community fully alive.

The Rt Revd Dr John Saxbee is a former Bishop of Lincoln and formerly chaired the Church of England's Board of Education.

An Educational Tour to Israel 14th – 22nd February 2015

I will be coordinating an educational tour of multi faith and spiritual sites in the Holy Land for advisers, teachers and headteachers from all phases of education in 2015. The Tour is organised by ITS, based in Manchester, with the Israeli office in Tel Aviv.



Details:

- Stay in kibbutz hotels on half-board
- All entrance fees included
- Estimated all-inclusive price per person sharing a twin-bedded room: £1,341 (single room supplement £293).
- Price based on known prices of 2012 and subject to seasonal increase and currency fluctuations
- Airport taxes just under £260.00
- Air Passenger Contribution £2.50

Please email or phone if you are interested in joining this tour.

Jane Chipperton 07776142741

jchipperton@stalbens.anglican.org

Inspection News

FEEDBACK NEEDED

If you are involved with SIAMS inspections please feed back to Martin Andrews as soon as possible.

GRADES

Has there been any impact from the revised Schedule on the range of grades given to schools?

Of the four core questions have any shown particular change in grades given?

CORE QUESTIONS

How well reported were the following 'new' features in each core question?

- **Core question 1:**
The way achievement, progress and attendance are promoted through the school's Christian character.
- **Core question 2:**
The distinctively Christian character of worship.
- **Core question 3:**
The teaching of Christianity.
The contribution RE makes to the Christian values of the school.
- **Core question 4:**
The articulation of a distinctively Christian vision for the school by leaders.

What has been the impact of the guidance in the denominational appendices? How useful has this been?

INSPECTION PRACTICE

Please comment on any feedback received **from schools** inspected on the impact of the Revised Schedule.

Please comment on any feedback received **from inspectors** on the impact

of the Revised Schedule on the inspection process (e.g. the use of data in evaluating the way the Christian character of the school impacts on pupils; the uses of the Summary Judgement guidance).

Martin Andrews

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FAO Advisers who schedule S48 inspections: important update

1. S48 Inspections are not linked in any way to the school's Ofsted inspection timing or grading.
2. The scheduling of S48 inspections must be on the following basis:
 - For a school previously inspected for S48 as 'good' or 'outstanding', a full 5 academic years has to elapse before it can be re-inspected, eg:
A school inspected as outstanding in June 2010 would be re-inspected in academic year 2015/16
A school inspected as good in September 2010 would be re-inspected in academic year 2016/17
 - For a school previously inspected for S48 as less than 'good', a full 3 academic years has to elapse before it can be re-inspected, eg:

A school inspected as less than 'good' in June 2010 would be re-inspected in academic year 2013/14

A school inspected as less than 'good' in September 2010 would be re-inspected in academic year 2014/15

Scheduling Converting or New Academies

For existing CofE schools converting to Academies, these should be scheduled on the same basis as non-converting schools, ie on the basis of their previous inspection judgement.

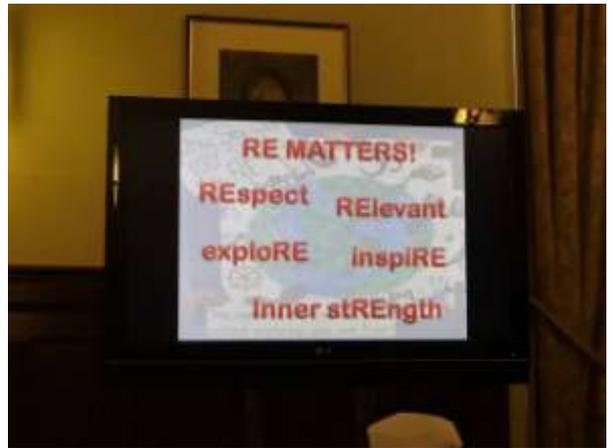
For new academy schools (ie brand new academies where no previous CofE school existed, or community schools converting to CofE Academies) the diocese is the scheduling authority in terms of when to conduct the first inspection. As these schools will not have had a previous S48 inspection, please treat them as 'Satisfactory' in the first instance, so the first S48 inspection should be after 3 full academic years from opening.

Scheduling Deadlines

Also, a reminder that your schedules / nil returns should be sent to Peter Churchill peter.churchill@churchofengland.org by:

Autumn Term: by the preceding July 1st
Spring Term: by December 1st
Summer Term: by March 1st

More photos from the All Party Parliamentary Group meeting on 24th June



Draft list of resources used across the Dioceses

In May I compiled a list of resources used by the various Dioceses as follows:

List of Christian resources used across C of E Dioceses

Festival Matters

<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/publications/festival-matters>

Values for Life

<http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/jumping-fish>

Pause for reflection

<http://www.imaginer.co.uk/jumping-fish-publications/>

Diaries of reflection

<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/collective-worship/diaries-of-reflection>

Stilling

http://www.ely.anglican.org/education/schools/collective_worship/documents/Stillin_g.pdf

Journeys

<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/re-resources/resource-files/teaching-units/dorset/the-journey/view>

Let the children come

<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/publications/let-the-children-come>

Easter experience etc

<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/gallery-1/easter-experience-shaftesbury>

<http://www.imaginer.co.uk/jumping-fish-publications/>

The Lord's Prayer

<http://www.stedmundsbury.anglican.org/index.cfm?page=cyp.content&cmid=454>

Bible story bags

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/9780857460738/>

Blackburn's poster

<http://www.bdeducation.org.uk/shop/communion-confirmation/last-supper-poster-bdbe001s.html>

Picturing Jesus

<http://shop.retoday.org.uk/9781905893195>

Flippin Praise

<http://www.churchschoolseast.org.uk/documents/A4FlippinPraisetouse.pdf>

Diocesan scheme of work on website

<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/re-resources/resource-files/teaching-units/wiltshire/foundation-stage/wilts-foundation-stage-sow.doc/view>

Revised Northamptonshire scheme of work for RE includes CD and resources

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/services/sacre/Documents/PDF%20Documents/SEF%20etc.pdf>

The parables project

<http://www.exeter.anglican.org/index.cfm?page=ccyp.content&cmid=329>

Guildford

<http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/school-life/religious-education/>

Big Crib Advent 2013

<http://www.ely.anglican.org/mailings/Aug11/BIG%20Crib%20clergy%20update.pdf>

Values website NS

<http://www.christianvalues4schools.org.uk/>

Proost website useful films etc

<http://www.proost.co.uk/>

REonline <http://www.reonline.org.uk/>

CLEO website <http://www.cleo.net.uk/>

CMS Christ we share <http://www.cms-shop.org.uk/mall/productpage.cfm/CMS/W-Pack004/>

[The%20Christ%20we%20Share](http://www.cms-shop.org.uk/mall/productpage.cfm/CMS/W-Pack004/)

Friends and heroes

<http://www.friendsandheroes.com/uk>

BBC The Nativity/The Passion

<http://www.bbcshop.com/history/the-nativity-dvd/invnt/bbcdvd3499>

Chelmsford Website syllabus and resource lists

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/schools/re>

Norwich: The Promise (Pentecost)

<http://shop.dioceseofnorwich.org/products/the-promise>

RE Today Bible the Big Story

<http://shop.retoday.org.uk/9781905893454>

Fischy music <http://www.fischy.com/>

Barnabas in schools Where in the world?
<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/where-in-the-world-support-material/>

Norwich Diocese materials

SMSC/Christian perspective

<http://shop.dioceseofnorwich.org/products>

[/spiritual-moral-social-cultural-development-a-christian-perspective](#)
<http://www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/Primary/ReligiousEducation/BBCActiveCD-ROMs/BBCActiveWhiteboardActiveRE/BCActiveWhiteboardActiveRE.aspx>
Songs of Praise website
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006ttc5>
BBC class clips
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/the-easter-story/7023.html>
BBC Religion and Ethics
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/0/>
Worship Workshop
<http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/>
Chester: How do I teach Christianity in my church school?
<http://www.chester.anglican.org/dev/docs/schools/TeachingChristianity%20.pdf>
Christianity through art Carlisle diocese
Graphic story bible Lion
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Lion-Graphic-Bible-Genesis-Revelation/dp/0745949231>
Bob Hartman materials
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Bob-Hartman/e/B001ITX89M>
Godly Play <http://www.godlyplay.org.uk/>
BRF resources eg Lord's Prayer
Unplugged
<http://www.brfonline.org.uk/9780857462299/>
P4C books Sarah Stanley
<http://childrenthinking.co.uk/?cat=5>
Excellent and Distinctiveness revised
<http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/assets/downloads/schools/Excellence%20&%20Distinctiveness.pdf>
Agreed Syllabus x 4 plus films
www.faithmakesadifference.co.uk
Margaret Cooling books
<http://www.amazon.com/Jesus-Through-Art-Margaret-Cooling/dp/185175119X>
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Margaret-Cooling/e/B0034PYBT4>
<http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/resource-centres/>
<http://www.beds-re-resources.org.uk/>
Agreed Syllabus joint (Luton, Bedford Borough and Central Beds), Hertfordshire, Barnet

Units of work on Christianity (RE Today/ Diocese) Website <http://www.beds-re-resources.org.uk/>
Exploring Holy Communion Eds and Ips
http://www.stedmundsbury.anglican.org/assets/downloads/children_youngpeople/WOW%206%20-%20Celebrating%20the%20Eucharist%20in%20school.pdf
SRE Salisbury
<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/publications/love-and-sex-matters>
Teaching Christianity RE Today KS2
<http://shop.retoday.org.uk/resources-for-teaching-christianity/>
Leicester syllabus and scheme
http://www.leics.gov.uk/religiouseducation_agreed_syllabus.pdf

If you wish to add to this list please email me and I will update it.

jane.chipperton@churchofengland.org

Education Secretary Michael Gove

praised the standards and popularity of church schools and urged a continuing partnership with them last week. The Education Secretary took part in a seminar at Lambeth Palace on "Church of England: Education and our Future" hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby on July 3rd

Archbishop Justin said:

"The Church of England was at the beginning of national education of this country and continues to be crucial to its flourishing.

The seminar, attended by bishops, Diocesan Board of Education chairs and other church education leaders from across the country, marked the launch of a new document; "A Diocesan Board of Education for the Future".
<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1794108/cofe%20dbe%20future%20-%20final%20version.pdf>

Professor David Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, gave a presentation on the importance of RE in Church of England schools.

In a statement released in advance of the seminar, Michael Gove said: "We would not have so many great state schools in this country without the Church of England. I know the Church does a wonderful job helping to raise educational standards and in providing a safe and loving environment for hundreds of thousands of children. However, there is much more we can do together. I want the Church to recover the spirit which infused its educational mission in Victorian times and support more new schools – especially academies and free schools – to bring educational excellence to the nation's poorest children."

Michael Gove answered a number of questions, including questions about religious education. He observed that he **had** thought RE had a special status; that it was protected because it was a compulsory subject. However he now realised that "RE has suffered as a result of my beliefand I don't think I have done enough".

Mr Gove said he wanted to work with not only the Church of England but also Roman Catholics and others to see what can be done to improve the quality of religious education and great RE teaching. Two aspects he highlighted: a) philosophy in the broadest sense and the 'eternal questions' and b) comparative religion and how that is taught in all schools. He suggested that the DfE and others should work together to exemplify good RE.

It is expected that schools will be judged on 8 subjects in the future. Michael Gove confirmed that schools do not have to count just the named E Bacc subjects. Schools will be judged on the average point score of the best 8 GCSEs from a suite of subjects including English and Maths , 3 from the E Bacc and RE,

(providing it is well taught) can be one of the eight alongside other subjects such as Design and Technology.

The Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd John Pritchard, Chair of the Board of Education and National Society said:

"I was delighted to hear the Secretary of State's enthusiasm and admiration for church schools today. He reminded us that his own two children attend one of our schools and he applauded the Church for being prepared to work in places where others fear to tread.

"At the same time he set us a challenge to raise our game. This echoes our own determination to make a real step change in the way we serve our communities, working to the highest standards.

"I was also pleased to hear his public commitment to re-opening the conversation with the Churches on the future of RE and his recognition of its importance within the curriculum."

RE Secondary Heads of Department Conference

Over thirty RE teachers and heads of department from C of E secondary and middle schools met at Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham on July 4th to hear about the latest developments in Religious Education. Chief Education Officer, Jan Ainsworth arrived in Birmingham after a day at Lambeth Palace with Michael Gove, Bishops, DBE Chairs and education leaders. Jan spoke about Christianity and the Future of RE, covering all the latest issues in schools. We were also pleased to welcome HMI Alan Brine, Hazel Henson, Dr. Janet Orchard and Deborah Weston and Derek Holloway, who spoke respectively about the quality of learning and teaching in Christianity, the Christianity Project, the REC RE Review, Exam Review and SIAMS and RE.

Several publishers sent us flyers and booklets, including Christian Aid, Prayer Spaces, Schoolsworld, RE Today, RE online, Salisbury and the South West, Holocaust Educational Trust, Truetube and REQM. The feedback from the day was very positive. Some comments from the day:

Helpful

- *A good day for meeting other enthusiastic teachers and having a 'birds eye view' of the RE situation*
- *Getting to grips with SIAMS evidence as a new HOD*
- *All of it but particularly exam reform and Christianity project*
- *SIAMS*
- *A very useful and informative day*
- *Good to hear about Chadwick and RE*
- *Colleague links - wonderful support network amongst members*
- *Information about REQM*
- *KS2/3 transition*
- *Group discussion*
- *REC Review information*

Overall comments

- *Definitely the right time of year in terms of minimal cover requirements*
- *Well organised, varied and interesting*
- *Good to hear from Deborah on GCSEs and A level*
- *Happy to travel to London*
- *Willing to pay for the conference!*
- *A helpful and positive experience*
- *Excellent speakers with good time for feedback*

Next year?

- *Ofqual. Deborah Weston was excellent!*
- *Assessment*
- *New HODs*

- *More exemplification of best practice*
- *Reflection on 8-1 levels*
- *Practical ideas*
- *Ideas for good teaching and learning in RE*
- *Thinking time*
- *SIAMS and RE schemes*

TrueTube abducts RE lessons with new film series

For RE teachers planning Key Stage 3 lessons, TrueTube has just launched its new film series, *Abduction* on 11 June 2013. The series of six short films has been created to introduce the basic beliefs and practices of the major religions.

Each of the *Abduction* films focuses on a different religion; the series covers Buddhism Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

The premise is that an alien survey ship, *Pantheon*, is orbiting the Earth and kidnapping people one by one to interrogate them about their particular beliefs. The abductees seem to enjoy the experience, despite threats of "matter dispersal" for taking too long.

The videos present a very broad outline and display key words to provide students with a starting point, from which they can explore the religion in more depth.

Stuart Porter, Innovation & Development Director, TrueTube comments; "*rather than bombarding students with information, we've ensured that each of the Abduction films provides just a quick and fun introduction - enough detail, but not too much that they'll lose interest! They're perfect for young people who don't have any knowledge about other faiths, or for those looking to refresh what they've previously studied.*"

The six *Abduction* films are available for FREE download from the TrueTube website. Please register your details at www.truetube.com.