

## **Adviser Report to Havering SACRE**

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

### **Havering Primary Network Meetings**

This term's network meeting took place at the end of September and was kindly hosted by Drapers Brookside Infant School. There were a number of subject leaders in attendance who have been to meetings in the past, but there were several new faces too.

The meeting opened with a focus on raising the profile of RE within schools and ways of doing this were introduced. Subject Leaders tried out a task that can be used at inset sessions prompting members of their staff teams to discuss the importance of RE and were provided with resources to carry this out in their own schools. Attendees shared their own ideas about how they have raised the profile of RE in schools and could continue to do so in the future.

This was followed by local and national updates including NATRE's national conference 'Strictly RE', Inter Faith Week, the interim report of the Commission on RE and #REchatUK. Contact details were given out for Havering Inter Faith Forum so that schools can make links for Inter Faith Week and beyond.

The meeting finished with a focus on twelve new films that have been developed for RE by BBC Teach. The group looked particularly at the two films based around Autumn term festivals as these are likely to be used in schools this term. Teachers were provided with notes on how to use each of the two films in class.

The next meeting is on 30<sup>th</sup> January and is likely to be held at Upminster Junior School. It is looking at the good use of visitors and a brand new resource for primary schools focusing on places of worship.

## **National Updates**

### **A Level Entries**

23 856 Religious Studies A level entries were recorded in 2017. This is a decrease of 4% on 2016, but much of this reduction is explained by a decrease in 1.7% of 18-year-olds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

There were 16 308 AS level entries, which is a decrease of 54% on 2016 and reflects the decline in AS level entries across all subjects.

The Russell Group of top universities has made it clear that RS A level provides suitable preparation for University generally. Both Oxford and Cambridge Universities include RS in the top level list of generally suitable A levels. Almost 21% of students admitted to Oxford University to study English and 13.5% admitted to study History in 2015 had an RS A level.

### **GCSE Entries**

The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen for the first time in more than a decade, down 4.6% against 2016 to 269,839.

In addition, the number of pupils in England and Wales taking the short course GCSE in Religious Studies has fallen even more sharply, down 24.6% from last year to 53,071.

The decline is driven by a fall in entries in England where the number of entries for GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen by 5.2% to 256,729. In contrast, the equivalent figures for Wales are up by 8.5% to 13,110, a record high, so the results in England may be in part as a result of the EBacc.

## New Films for Teaching RE

BBC Teach have produced a 'Religions of the World' series, which consists of twelve new, animated short films for primary level (ten films for four to seven year olds and two films for three to five year olds). The topics of the films can be seen on the table below:

Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Sikhism
1. Two Buddhist stories: Siddhartha and the Swan, The Monkey King	1. Two Christian stories: The Good Samaritan and The Lost Sheep * 2. The First Christmas * 3. Easter	1. Rama and Sita	1. The Five Pillars of Islam 2. Two Muslim stories: The Prophet and the Ants, The Crying Camel	1. The Story of Moses 2. The Story of Hanukkah	1. Two Sikh stories: The Milk and the Jasmine Flower, Duni Chand and the Silver Needle

\*=a simpler version of this film has been produced for three to five year olds.

To see the films, please go to:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1pYRg2f202rqWHrp3ywhTyX/religions-of-the-world>

For KS3, there are 26 new films in the 'A-Z of Religions and Beliefs' series. These start with A is for Atheism and end with Z is for Zoroastrianism and cover diverse subjects along the way including religious clothing, distribution of wealth and philosophical themes. They have had input from faith leaders and teachers to ensure they will be of maximum benefit in the classroom and meet the different curriculum requirements of RE teaching.

You can find the films here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3IKZp31jBVJ2v3C2h1V03kz/a-to-z-of-religion-and-beliefs>

## **Time Given to RE in Schools**

News reports in September showed that after an analysis of figures including data from the School Workforce Census, GCSE figures and survey responses for 790 secondary schools 25% of schools are not making a weekly RE lesson available to their students. In Academies and Free Schools, the number rises to 34% for students aged eleven to thirteen and 44% for those aged fourteen to sixteen.

Although the statistics show that the majority of schools are delivering an adequate amount of RE, they also highlight the serious lack of compliance in the delivery of Religious Education across many schools.

## **Commission on Religious Education**

The Commission on Religious Education has produced its interim report entitled Religious Education for All and it will be helpful if SACRE members comment, giving their views about it. The commission has made initial recommendations in four main areas:

**1 A National Entitlement to RE** for all pupils in state-funded schools and maybe independent schools too. This would set out the aims and purposes of RE and what pupils should experience during their study of this subject.

**2 Holding Schools to Account for the Provision and Quality of RE** which would include a requirement to publish details of how they meet the National Entitlement on their websites and inspection frameworks being revised so that inspectors can monitor whether schools do so. Also, a form of accreditation for studying RE at KS4 for those pupils not taking the GCSE is being suggested.

**3 A National Plan to improve teaching and learning in RE.** This will seek to improve teachers' subject knowledge and confidence.

**4 A renewed and expanded role for SACREs** Please see below for the statement on SACREs from pages 6-7 of the report:

The evidence we have received suggests that SACREs can have an important role in promoting and supporting RE and in promoting good community relations more broadly, but that their capacity to deliver this role fully has been diminishing in many local authorities. The Commission's suggested recommendations, which are consultative at this stage, call for consideration to be given to adding the promotion of improved community relations to the remit of SACREs and make proposals for the securing of resources for their work. There are also recommendations that seek consideration of the composition of SACREs with a call to ensure that they are fully representative, with representatives of non-religious worldviews as full members.

The full report can be found at:

<http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/religious-education-for-all-commission-interim-report/>