

SACRE National Update in Religious Education Spring 2019

Withdrawal information

Across the country, withdrawal from RE has become a more frequent and tricky issue for schools to deal with.

NATRE have written guidance and have made this available, jointly with the NAHT, for all schools. The guidance document is available for free to schools who register with their details at <https://www.natre.org.uk/membership/guidance-on-withdrawal/>

This guidance has been endorsed and shared by the DfE.

NATRE primary survey results: what would be the response from your schools?

This survey of over 500 primary teachers from across the country has revealed some worrying truths about the provision for RE in primary schools. A quarter of teachers report that colleagues within their schools have a lack of confidence in teaching RE, both in terms of what to teach, but also how to teach RE.

The survey found:

- Nearly half of trainee primary teachers have had between zero and three hours of RE training
- 30% of primary RE teachers have had no subject specific training in the last year, not even in a staff meeting
- 1/3 of teachers who started teaching in the last 5 years have no qualification at all in RE, not even a GCSE.
- Over 50% of schools have a HLTA taking some of their RE lessons
- Many primary schools do not give adequate time for RE

These findings demonstrate the need for teacher training in line with recommendation six and seven of the Commission on Religions Education report '*Religion and worldviews: The way Forward – A national plan for RE*'. <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Final-Report-of-the-Commission-on-RE.pdf>

To read the survey results go to www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202018%20final.pdf

How does the national picture compare with schools in Havering?

New secondary survey

A secondary survey is now underway to obtain information about the current state of RE in all types of secondary schools so that NATRE can continue to support the teacher in the classroom by raising awareness of the impact of government policy on RE. As a thank you to you for taking the time to complete this survey, schools will receive a £5 voucher code to use on all RE Today publications at the end of the survey.

Information from previous surveys has been used with the DFE, OFSTED, MPs, quoted in parliament and by unions. This is the best opportunity to show decision makers what the picture is in schools. All responses are treated with complete and absolute confidentiality.

Closing date: Friday, 12th April 2019

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JY9WMWW>

OFSTED Draft inspection framework

Ofsted have brought out a new draft inspection framework which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772065/Schools_draft_handbook_180119.pdf

At first sight the new framework could be good news for RE with a clear focus on a broad and balanced curriculum. Page 13 will be of interest to schools and SACREs as it refers to RE and Collective Worship. The new framework warns against curriculum narrowing, and a statement on curriculum flexibility on page 41 reads:

‘All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the national curriculum subjects, religious education and age-appropriate sex education. Academies are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar in breadth and ambition to the national curriculum, including the requirements to teach English, mathematics, science, and religious education.’

NATRE are meeting with the deputy director of OFSTED and RE HMI to discuss this in detail in early February.

Year of Belief and values BBC resources for schools

This year the BBC has set out to produce a whole series of programming across its platforms on religion and belief that may prove supportive to RE teachers. There will also be new animations on a series of religions for Primary schools on BBC Bitesize. For secondary schools there will be new programmes for KS3 RE and extensive information for students studying GCSE on BBC bitesize.

Primary 1000

This is a new national project to help primary schools who recognise the need to improve their RE provision. This project responds to a very significant need in RE: that thousands of primary schools struggle to provide good RE for all pupils. The project will enable 1000 primary schools to improve the RE opportunities they give to pupils.

Schools who get involved will be able to register as project members with the support of their senior leaders and a named teacher (usually the RE Subject Leader) who will champion RE in the school.

Primary 1000 will give schools targeted help and practical support, an online RE resource pack which includes a plethora of high-quality resources including practical lesson ideas, planning guidance and support with subject knowledge, a sample policy statement, an audit

tool and numerous ready to use learning ideas. The aim is to connect all schools involved to their local teacher group. Years two and three of this project will see regional RE conferences for the teachers involved.

Which schools could we nominate? We need to know a named RE subject leader.

National infrastructure project

This two-year long project looks to ensure that structures are in place to support RE in all schools, regardless of where they are located in the country.

At the end of October 2018, Naomi Anstice was appointed the National Ambassador for Religious Education Networks. She is an Assistant Head Teacher in Cheshire where she teaches RE to the whole school as part of the PPA provision. Naomi is also the RE Primary adviser for Cheshire West. She will be working on this project a day a week.

Here Naomi explains the project she will be leading and introduces the regional ambassadors who have now been appointed:

The aim of this project is to build a long-term sustainable structure to provide local support for RE teachers.

- *Connecting teachers to other teachers, local groups, hubs, advisers, SACREs and to a range of available opportunities and RE initiatives.*
- *Connecting teachers to both classroom-based and academic research*
- *Connecting teachers to regional and national CPD opportunities as well as resources which will inspire their classroom practice*

This will be done through the creation of ten regional areas, each of which will have its own ambassador. These ambassadors will be developing, creating, co-ordinating local RE structures. Areas which already have strong support structures will be embraced and promoted whilst others may need creation and development according to local need.

These ambassadors bring a wealth of experience with them from a range of educational settings and will be working to network across their own areas, looking to support the creation of local groups where there are currently gaps. Each region will have web provision, so you can see what is happening in your area and to keep in touch with others in your area.

The regional ambassadors are allocated a day a month to support their region, so we will need to be realistic about what can be achieved in this time!

The areas and their ambassadors are as follows:

London – Claire Clinton

North – Katherine France

North East – Suzanne Tomlinson

North West – Joanne Harris

East Midlands – Julie Childs

West Midlands – Chris Giles
South Central – Sarah Payne
South East – Justine Ball
South West – Laura Harris
East Anglia – Revd. Kate Moore

Read more about the Regional Ambassadors [here](#)

Central to the success of the project is increasing teacher involvement with a range of RE organisations (including AREIAC, NATRE, The REC, NASACRE and local SACREs) through both membership and engagement.

You can follow and contact Naomi through twitter [@naomianstice](#) or email naomi.anstice@natre.org.uk who will pass on emails to the regional ambassadors.

Annual NASACRE Conference

This year's conference will be on the theme of Cohesive Communities and Effective Partnerships; RE near and far (local, national, global). It will be held on 22nd May in Manchester. For more information, please follow this link:
<http://www.nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2019>

Commission on RE: A response from Damian Hinds

The secretary of state for Education recently replied to the Commission on RE report. The letter can be seen [here](#), along with the RE Council response. So far, the report has led to the introduction of 8 week Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses for those applying for secondary RE PGCEs with a £9000 bursary for all secondary RE PGCE students who achieved a 2:2 or higher in their initial degrees. The DfE has also endorsed the guidance on withdrawal from NATRE and NAHT.

It is clear that there will be no legislative change in the current parliament, but that does not mean there will not be further smaller scale support for instance on training or withdrawal.

A recent meeting of the APPG for RE heard from teachers about the view from the classroom and the need for change. There have been a whole host of questions in the Commons and Lords. There have also been a series of letters to MPS. One letter from sixth form students to Nick Gibb, Schools minister elicited this reply:



This is what Minister for Schools; Nick Gibb MP wants your Headteacher to know about RE provision. Are they "acting unlawfully"?

It is compulsory to teach RE in state funded schools at all key stages up to age 18, even if pupils have not chosen to study religious studies at GCSE or A level. Schools that are not teaching RE are acting unlawfully or, in the case of academies, are in breach of their academy funding agreements. Where the Department is informed that a school is not fulfilling their legal duty, they will investigate accordingly.

With best wishes.

Your minister
Nick



SACRE Local Update in Religious Education Spring 2019

Primary network meetings

Many thanks to Lisa Briton and Jordan O'Meara who have hosted the meetings of this academic year at Branfil and Scott's Primary Schools respectively.

The Autumn term meeting focused on teaching RE creatively through learning outside the classroom. The meeting in Spring term looked at celebrations in general and how to teach some of the celebrations that take place during this term. Staff looked at the categories for the art and poetry competition, mapping them to their schools' medium term plans. The categories are:

Pilgrimages and journeys

Questions, Questions

Where is G-d?

Windows on the soul

Mysteries of life!

More information about each can be found here

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Spirited%20Arts/Spirited%20Arts%202019%20entry%20form%20final.pdf>

Schools who are entering the Havering competition now need to know where to send their entries to.

Next term's meeting will be held at Ardleigh Green Junior School on 2nd May. It will be a chance for teachers to share and discuss work from their schools this year linked to the systematic units in Havering's syllabus:

KS1: Who is Christian and what do they believe? Who is Muslim and what do they believe?

KS2: What does it mean to be Jewish? What does it mean to be a Hindu? What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be a Muslim? What does it mean to be a Sikh?

This should provide staff with many ideas for these units to try in their own schools next year.

Year of Beliefs

Primary schools have been introduced to the competition at the Subject Leaders' meeting and it is being advertised on the portal. Any other methods of advertising would be useful. There are some final details to be decided such as where to send entries to, when judging will take place and who will make up the final panel.

The UR Churches have expressed an interest in having a stand at the event at the Green at the Queen's Theatre. We now need to fill in an event application form (please see appendix) and discuss logistics including proposed dates, administration etc.

Locally Agreed Syllabus

SACRE has a duty to review the Agreed Syllabus every five years, so Havering SACRE need to start this process in 2019. As a first step, an online survey has been set up to collect teachers' views about the current RE syllabus in Havering with some additional optional questions about RE in general in Havering schools. It has been advertised at the RE Subject Leaders' meeting, via email, via the portal and at the EAL Co-ordinators network. Due to the dates of meetings, the survey will now formally close on March 31st. How else should SACRE be publicising this?

Website monitoring

Most of the schools monitored during last term's meeting have now been checked. Two had not published their curriculum at the last meeting, but have now done so. A third school has changed its curriculum online to be in line with the Agreed Syllabus since the last meeting. A letter has been drafted for a school where the curriculum is still not evident online.