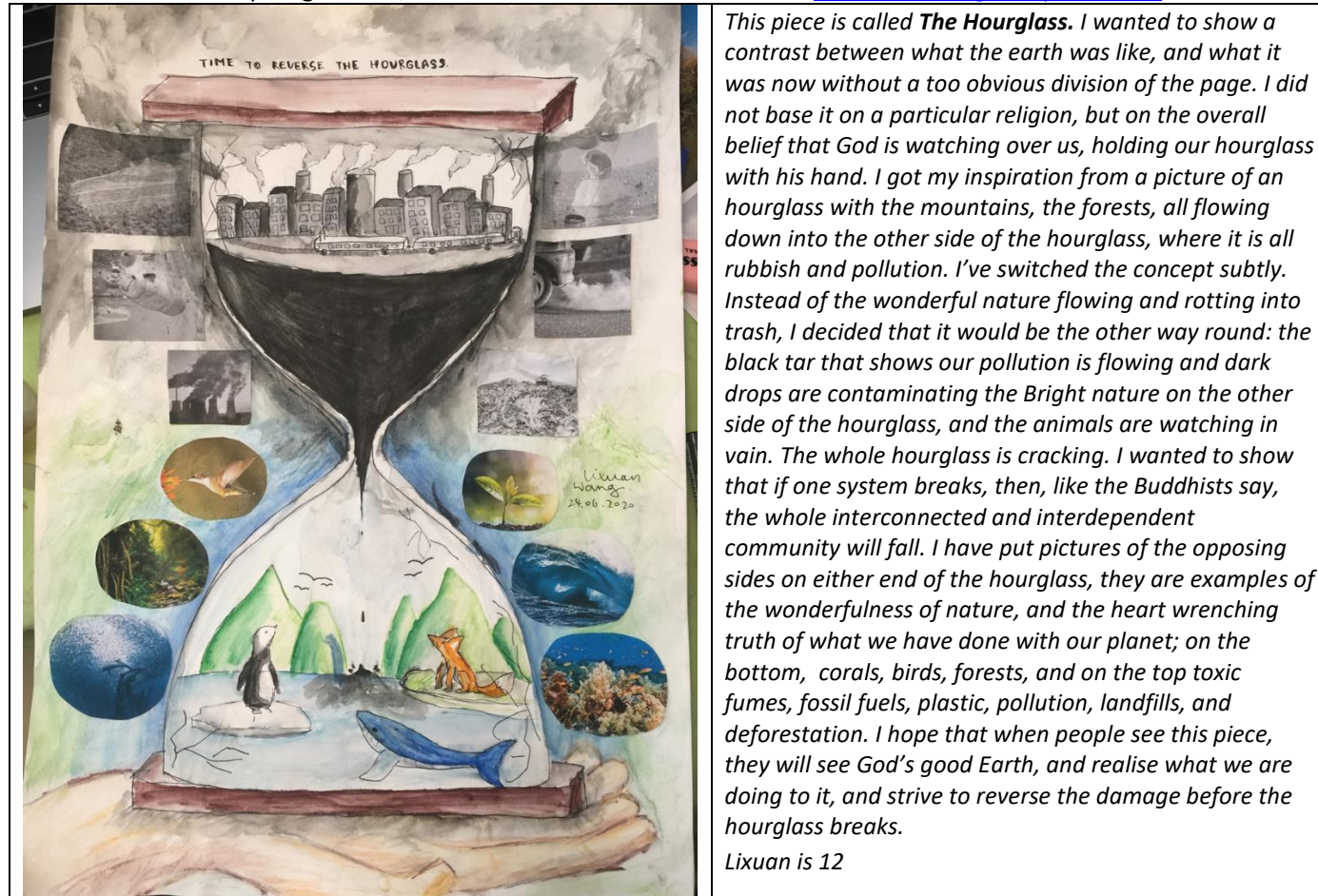


Havering SACRE: update Autumn 2020

NATRE's Spirited Arts competition: results and next year's competition

The competition has attracted record entries this year – it was a popular lockdown activity set by hundreds of teachers, and the YouTube lesson to accompany it was viewed about 14,000 times. Many of our schools have taken an interest in this competition. There are over 30 000 entrants.

Here is one of the inspiring entries, the best of which can be viewed at www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts



The competition for the next year is being launched and 5 themes are available to schools for them to engage and respond creatively.

Does Havering SACRE, wish to promote the competition to all our schools? Could we run a local round to the competition?

Next year's closing date is 31st July 2021.

Themes for the coming year:

- "We have far more in common with each other than that which divides us."
- God's good earth?
- Where is God?
- Healing
- Inspiring!

Farmington Scholarships

Farmington Scholarships for Academic Year 2021-2022 are now open to

- Head teachers
- UK secondary and primary school teachers
- Teachers of RE to children with Special Educational Needs

The aim of the Farmington Institute is to support and encourage Head teachers working on values and standards, and teachers of Religious Education in schools. The Institute awards Scholarships to UK Head teachers and teachers of Religious Education in schools and publishes discussion papers and arranges conferences.

The Scholarships are divided into two types: university-based and school/home-based. Teachers who live within a reasonable distance of one of the selected universities or colleges may be awarded a university-based Scholarship. The academic facilities of the colleges and universities are available for Scholars.

Find out more [here](#).

Literature relating to Farmington Scholarships has been uploaded onto the RE page of Havering's portal.

Should SACRE encourage teachers to apply for one of these scholarships. If so, what would the best means of doing so?

Anti-racist RE

NATRE and RE Today, working with the Free Churches Group and Methodist Schools, are launching a project to help teachers tackle racism in RE lessons. The project aims to:

- Enable a team of 60+ black, Asian and minority ethnic teachers of RE and members of different communities to articulate perspectives on the contributions of RE to anti-racist education, accessible for all teachers of RE
- Provide challenging and well planned resources, case studies, plans and lessons for teachers of RE in both primary and secondary schools to use in RE that challenge and confront racism and are also good RE, mounted and free from web platforms hosted both by RE Today and by the Free Churches Group and the Methodist Schools.
- Create a forum for teacher education and development in relation to anti-racist RE, recognising that practice in RE in this area is patchy and inconsistent (also online)
- Disseminate better practice in anti-racist RE widely, using the wide range of contacts and networks available to RE today

Wide partnerships to maximise the impact of the project have been used, including for example with NATRE and the Jo Cox Foundation. Teachers can access a planned unit of six topics for primary and of 8 topics for secondary RE, including ready to use resources and a wide range of support materials.

www.natre.org.uk/anti-racist-RE

Can our SACRE publicise this to schools? Would we like to invest some of our budget this year in primary and secondary online CPD for schools in this area?

GCSE Results

The number of pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies in England and Wales has remained stable in 2020 despite ongoing challenges, reflecting the relevance of the subject and its popularity among young people.

Until this year, there has been a gradual decline in full course RS GCSE entries since a peak in 2016, when 269,839 entries were recorded in England. Full and short course entries reached a high of 461,795 in 2011 but declined

rapidly as schools in England opted not to enter pupils into the short course following Government policy changes, despite a requirement among all schools, including Academies, to provide Religious Education to all pupils at all key stages. In Wales however, the short course entries have not declined at the same rate and fell by just 3.74% (from 6,198 to 5,966). In England, short course entries fell by more than 16%. In general, these figures should be interpreted in the light of government policy – they don't indicate much about the popularity of the subject with students.

This summer's figures, however, provide some optimism that the decline may be levelling off. The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at Key Stage 4 in 2020 are as follows:

- There were 225,719 entries in England and 10,037 in Wales for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of less than 1% from 2019 (227,913 England and 10,129 Wales).
- There were 18,067 entries in England and 5,966 in Wales for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 16.1% in England and 3.74% in Wales from 2019 (21,530 and 6198 respectively).
- There were 243,786 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) in England, a decline of 2.3% from 2019 (249,443).
- Despite a decline since the peak in entries, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies in England in 2020 (225,719) is still 32% greater than in 2010 (170,767).

How is this reflected in our area? How should we be engaging with schools about these figures?

Changes in RS examinations for 2021

Ofqual released their decisions on 3rd August regarding the cohort of students who will be taking their GCSEs, AS or A levels in 2021. There are a few headlines to report. *Obviously, these decisions could change as the response to the pandemic develops but this reflects the current information that schools are working with.*

1. No change to the assessment arrangements for Religious Studies.

The report stated that there will be no change to the assessments in Religious Studies for the GCSE (short and full course) AS or A level. Thus, students will be assessed in the same manner as previous years.

Ofqual did recognise that:

"Many respondents were concerned about covering all the content, given the lost time and difficulty of covering it in a normal year. This was raised for most subjects at GCSE, AS and at A level."

"Respondents often suggested this could be addressed through question optionality, which was discussed further below. In some subjects, for example, GCSE Religious Studies and GCSE English Literature, parallels were drawn with GCSE history and respondents urged that similar arrangements were made to enable content sampling in their subject."

However, Ofqual decided against making changes to Religious Studies.

2. No decisions have been made about the dates for the examinations.

Update 12th October - Today (12 October), the government is announcing the summer exam series will start on 7 June and end on 2 July for almost all AS/A levels and GCSEs.

Results days are Tuesday 24 August for A/AS levels and Friday 27 August for GCSEs so students will start the following academic year as normal.

3. There will be further information on how student outcomes (i.e. grades) are to be protected.

Ofqual are currently considering how the grades or outcomes of students taking the examinations in 2021 can be protected. They have said:

"The Secretary of State has asked us to advise him in the coming months how we might ensure students' outcomes are protected through our approach to grading next year, as we did to protect the interests of students who took the reformed qualifications for the first time. Our approach- using statistical predictions to guide the first awards of reformed qualifications- worked well to protect the interests of students taking the reformed qualifications and we will consider its use next year. We did not consult on proposal for grading in summer 2021, but we will provide further information in due course."

Here is a copy of their [statement](#) and [decisions](#) document on the changes that will be made.

Other related issues:

At the end of July, the Department for Education announced that from September all pupils should return to school. The guidance sets an expectation that *“the curriculum should remain broad and ambitious: all pupils continue to be taught a wide range of subjects, maintaining their choices for further study and employment.”*

The DfE have advised that when planning for pupils’ return to school in September, subjects should not be removed from the curriculum. In relation to Key Stage 3 the guidance states, *“the curriculum should also remain broad from year 7 to year 9 so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including...[.] Religious Education.”* Indeed, the suspension of subjects should only occur in *“exceptional circumstances”* and if this occurs, a school must be able to demonstrate that this is *“in the best interests of these pupils and should be subject to discussion with parents during the Autumn term.”*

For key stage 4 and 5 the guidance states that, *“the vast majority of pupils in year 10 and 11 are expected to continue to study their examination subjects.”* A year 11 pupil should only be advised to discontinue a subject in *“exceptional circumstances”*.

The DfE documentation can be consulted [here](#).

The NATRE summary of the implications of this guidance can be found [here](#).

Nick Gibb's written answer to a Parliamentary question on this subject can be found [here](#).

How much of this information has already been shared with Havering secondary schools?

All Schools have a duty to teach RE to all pupils aged 5-18 even in current times

NATRE was pleased to see that Nick Gibb MP, Minister for schools, has given a clear and fulsome answer to a question from Luke Pollard MP regarding schools and RE.

We note from his answer below that he restates that:

- State-funded schools in England have a duty to teach religious education to all pupils aged 5 to 18 years
- where pupils do not choose Religious Studies as an examination subject, the requirement to teach religious education still applies.
- An agreed syllabus can stipulate that pupils follow an accredited qualification such as GCSE

He also clearly says that in the reopening of schools:

- Religious education is explicitly stated as one of the subjects that should be taught

The Department’s guidance on full opening of schools sets the expectation that schools teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn, but that they use their existing curriculum flexibilities within subjects to create time to cover the most important missed content.

- Religious education is explicitly stated as one of the subjects that should be taught. The guidance was published on 2 July and can be found [here](#).
- The Department’s guidance on religious education is already available for both maintained schools and for academies and free schools. The guidance for maintained schools is [here](#).
- The guidance for academies and free schools [here](#).
- No additional guidance on this subject is therefore needed.
- Nick Gibb’s answer to Luke Pollard's Parliamentary question on this subject can be found [here](#).

Can this information be shared with all Havering headteachers and chairs of governors?

Do school improvement partners or similar know whether this guidance is being followed? Could they find out?

Shadow Minister for Faiths; Janet Daby MP asks a question about RE to the Minister for Education Nick Gibb MP

NATRE, the REC and RE Today had a very productive meeting with the Janet Daby MP in October 2020. They learned that the Shadow Minister, who is the MP for Lewisham East, had served on Lewisham SACRE and was fully conversant with the issues surrounding the subject. Following the meeting, she entered the ballot to ask an oral question and was successful. The exchange, as reported in Hansard follows below:

Religious Education: Maintained Schools: 12 October 2020

Janet Daby (Lewisham East) (Lab): What steps he is taking to ensure maintained schools comply with requirements to teach religious education. [907364]

The Minister for School Standards (Nick Gibb): Maintained schools are required to teach religious education to all five to 18-year-olds. Any concerns that a maintained school is not meeting that duty should first go through the school's complaints procedure, and if the complaint is not resolved, the issue can be escalated to the Department's school complaints unit.

Janet Daby: Religious education helps children to grow up with an understanding of and respect for people from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It is also a statutory requirement, but the Religious Education Council tells me that 40% of all schools give no hours to RE in year 11. Does the Minister agree that the Department needs to better support schools to ensure that they are meeting their obligations to teach RE?

Nick Gibb: I agree with the hon. Member. Good quality religious education can help to develop children's knowledge of the values and traditions of Britain and other countries, and foster understanding among different faiths and cultures. At a national level, the proportion of time secondary schools spend teaching RE has actually remained broadly stable. It was 3.2% of all teaching hours in 2010 and 3.3% in 2019.

Source: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-12/debates/D4C4FA2A-9950-4149-B266-6CAEEA74DFFC/ReligiousEducationMaintainedSchools>

SACRE members should note that the figure of 3.2% (about 50 minutes per week) is distorted by the inclusion of schools with a religious character who typically allocate more time to RE than other schools. According to the school workforce data which includes 85% of schools. The average hours offered by all schools (2941) is 3.1% but schools including academies with a religious character (546) offer 6.9% whereas Academies without a religious character (493) offer 2.2% - only about 33 minutes

How is this reflected in our area? How should we be engaging with schools about timetable time for RE?

A parental complaint about RE in an academy leads to a school reinstating the subject

The minister for schools; Nick Gibb MP has repeatedly suggested that people concerned about the level and quality of provision for RE to use the statutory school and academy complaints process. NATRE was approached by a parent who was dismayed that discrete lessons in RE were being replaced by a combined life skills style programme and wanted to challenge the academy about it. The document below sets out the two-year journey towards the re-establishment on RE at the academy. We hope that it demonstrates that it is possible to take action when pupils are not receiving their entitlement to RE and secure a change.

Read about the complaint [here](#)

Should Headteachers and Governors be made aware of this case?

Theos' latest report 'Worldviews in Religious Education launched on 21st October

Theos' aim is to stimulate the debate about the place of religion in society, challenging and changing ideas through research, commentary, and events. The notice for the launch event explains the context for this new report as follows:

How RE is taught in schools is a central pillar of any society's religious literacy, challenging false assumptions and expanding young minds to consider the role of religion and belief in a modern world. In 2018, the Commission on Religious Education launched new proposals for a paradigm shift in the subject, broadening the focus of RE in English schools to a consideration of "Religion and Worldviews". However, while many RE professionals have embraced the proposed changes, including the focus on worldviews, the proposed shift generated considerable debate and has not yet been adopted by the government.

The event was held on Zoom and you can listen to a replay [here](#)

Do SACRE members feel that they have sufficient understanding about the concept of worldviews? Should we place the subject on the Agenda for a future meeting?

Increase in the number of secondary trainees

The number of **trainee teachers for RE is increasing**, with the provision for Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses proving to be a real help to those entering the profession with degrees in other Humanities subjects. While it is good to see this increase, these trainee teachers will need to spend time in schools with good RE teachers in order to develop their own practice and become good RE teachers themselves. This year RE has recruited almost 100 extra trainees and exceeded the government's target.

Removal of the bursary for those training to be secondary teachers of RE

The table below shows the changes to the availability of bursaries for those training to be teachers (announced on 13th October 2020).

Subject	2020-2021		2021-2022	
	Bursary	Scholarships	Bursary	Scholarships
Art and Design	£9,000	£0	£0	£0
Biology	£26,000	£0	£7,000	£0
Business Studies	£9,000	£0	£0	£0
Chemistry	£28,000	£26,000	£24,000	£26,000
Classics	£26,000	£0	£10,000	£0
Computing	£28,000	£26,000	£24,000	£26,000
Design and technology	£15,000	£0	£0	£0
English	£12,000	£0	£0	£0
Geography	£17,000	£15,000	£0	£0
History	£9,000	£0	£0	£0
Languages	£28,000	£26,000	£10,000	£0
Music	£9,000	£0	£0	£0
Physics	£28,000	£26,000	£24,000	£26,000
Primary with mathematics	£6,000	£0	£0	£0
RE	£9,000	£0	£0	£0
Secondary mathematics	£28,000	£26,000	£24,000	£26,000

www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-initial-teacher-training-itt/funding-initial-teacher-training-itt-academic-year-2021-to-2022

What are the implications of this decision for Havering Schools? Can we discover how many teachers of RE have post-A level qualifications in the subject? (School workforce)

Materials available for self-isolating pupils, socially distanced RE and any future lockdowns

To help teachers during this difficult time, RE Today is working hard to support NATRE by producing resources that ALL teachers can use and share with pupils and parents in order to support with home learning and also socially distanced RE in schools.

If teachers wish to sign up for the updates to inform you of new resources, then please sign up to the mailing list on the NATRE website. We have also made further resources available for NATRE members.

Access resources

Strictly RE: Online training for teachers

Date: 30 & 31 January 2021 (PLUS additional seminars leading up to Strictly!)

Location: Online

Full price: £100* (Price includes downloadable handouts and presentations from all sessions).

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT! Book before 31 October - only £85!

Prices start as low as £45 for NATRE members*

*NATRE members discounts available on top of early bird (Bronze: £20 off, Silver: £30, Gold & Platinum: £40).

Strictly RE is back, this time NATRE will be hosting its national annual conference online to keep you all safe, whilst still giving you everything you love about Strictly RE without having to leave your home.

With 24 seminars, 4 Keynotes, networking and discussion opportunities, Saturday night entertainment, we have something for everyone. There's lots to choose from, and we hope that you will **pick and mix** from across the month and weekend to create a programme that works for you. You do not have to attend a seminar at every time slot.

Keynote speakers include Richard Kueh, OFSTED RE subject specialist, Christine Counsell on curriculum construction and progression in RE, a panel on worldviews in RE and a panel on Anti- racist RE.

NATRE will be running twilight sessions throughout January, culminating in a weekend of keynotes, seminars and networking. These will be announced soon! Delegates who have already booked a place will be the first to hear about them and book their sessions.

Book soon

[Find out full details and book here](#)

[How can we encourage teachers from our area to attend?](#)

Additional Information: Christmas Films

RE Today Services produce resources for school RE lessons and are looking to create a video library for 7-9 year olds about how people celebrate Christmas. We would be delighted if you would like to help. This resource will accompany a book we are publishing next April entitled Big Questions, Big Answers: Investigating Worldviews.

In order to do this, we are asking people to create a short video (filming on a phone is fine) explaining how they celebrate. The film should last for no longer than a minute and have one (or maybe more, if you're feeling enthusiastic) person talking to the camera. During the short talk, it would be great if you/the speaker(s) could:

- Give a friendly greeting
- Explain what you do to celebrate at Christmas
- Explain what the most important thing is to you about Christmas

- If you would like to give your first name and religion or non-religious worldview, pupils might find this helpful too.

We would love these films to reflect exactly what happens in the UK at Christmas. Therefore, we welcome films from people of all religions and worldviews, from those who do not celebrate and those who do, from those who put the birth of Jesus at the heart of the festival to those who have other foci. We are hoping to have a number of short films so that children can really get a flavour of what people do at Christmas and what it means to them.

As you will appreciate, these films are for fairly young children, so if you are happy to be involved, please address the camera as if you were addressing an 8 year old. If you are 18 years or over and send us a film of yourself, we will assume that you are happy for us to use it on our website. If you would like us to take it down at any stage, please let us know. Films of both adults and children speaking are warmly welcomed. If a film of a child is submitted, it must be sent to us directly from his/her parent or carer, alongside a completed permission form. Please contact Julia (julia@retoday.org.uk) if you need a copy of the form.

All films and forms should be sent to julia@retoday.org.uk.

Tips for filming:

- If you are using a device that has the option of portrait or landscape, please choose **landscape** as this often comes out looking more professional.
- Try to keep the recording device as **steady** as possible. Some lucky people have naturally steady hands. If not, you could use a tripod if you have one, but it is not at all necessary to purchase anything in order to create these films. Resting the camera on a tabletop or another piece of furniture can work really well.
- Try to ensure **lighting** is good enough that the person being filmed can be seen. It is often best to have any lighting to the side or in front of the speaker. A bright light behind them can put them into silhouette.
- Above all, speakers should **enjoy** chatting to the pupils, talk **honestly** about how they celebrate Christmas and **have fun!**

We really hope that you are able to help us with our video library and look forward to seeing your film!

Deborah Weston and Julia Diamond-Conway