

National and Local RE Updates for SACREs Summer 2020

National Updates

New HMI Leading on RE

Dr Richard Kueh has recently been appointed as the new Ofsted Subject Lead for Religious Education. Richard is well-known to the RE world through his work on curriculum.

Commission on RE (CoRE) Recommendation 8

RE Adviser, Claire Clinton has been asked by the RE Council for England and Wales to head up a pilot project to investigate Recommendation 8 of the CoRE report in partnership with NASACRE. Claire will be working with Dr Lorraine Foreman-Peck, Honorary Research Fellow at Oxford University. The following SACREs so far have expressed an interest to be part of the project: Hampshire; Barking and Dagenham; West Somerset; Richmond; Manchester; Halton and Warrington jointly; Bath and NE Somerset.

The scope of the project over the next 2 years:

1. Research all SACRE funding in terms of support and finance. This will build upon the work that was done in 2017-18 by NASACRE, and will provide statistics we can use to compare nationally what is going on for SACREs.
2. Action Research with eight SACREs from across the country who have expressed an interest in trialling work as a LANRW as action research

The findings from this work will then be shared publicly. SACREs interested in taking part should contact with Claire at claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk

Should Wokingham SACRE express an interest in being involved in the pilot?

Reminder of CoRE RECOMMENDATION 8

This recommendation regards amendments to the legislation around SACREs to change them to become Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews (LANRWs). CoRE recommends that LANRWs:

- must facilitate the implementation of the National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews in all schools within the local authority boundaries by providing information about sources of support available, and must connect schools with local faith and belief communities and other groups that support the study of Religion and Worldviews in schools
- must submit an annual report to the DfE and to their local authority
- should be made up of members from teachers of Religion and Worldviews from all phases including Higher Education, school leaders and governors, ITE and/or CPD providers, school providers including the Local Authority (LA) and Multi Academy Trust (MAT), dioceses, religion, belief and other groups that support RE in schools or wish to do so (this might include local museums and galleries as well as religion and belief groups).

National Events and CPD

National Leadership pilot for RE leaders

A new steering group for a new pilot leadership programme which builds on the AREIAC REvitalise programme which ran last year. It aims to mentor potential national leaders of RE over a programme of one to three years. This year the pilot programme has four teachers who have started Stage 1 which uses the Culham St Gabriel's **Teach:RE** course as its basis. There are nine teachers on Stage 2, further developing their leadership and understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, policy and research. As part of the programme some participants will be attending

SACRE meetings as observers. More information can be found here:

<https://www.cstg.org.uk/programmes/pilot-leadership-programme/> or email claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk

Open University course on religious literacy

Why Religion Matters: Religious Literacy, Culture and Diversity

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/why-religion-matters/> is a 4-week (12 hours) course presents some of the latest university-level thinking on religious literacy as skills and principles in a free, accessible and interactive course. It will be easy for RE Teachers to apply these principles in their presentation of curriculum and topical discussions. The next start date for this course is 2nd November 2020.

#REchatUK

Teachers and other RE professionals are invited to participate in NATRE's #REChatUK twitter discussion which takes place on Mondays, between 8 and 9pm. Everyone is welcome!

Research

RE teachers' engagement with research

Culham St Gabriel's (CStG) and the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter are collaborating on a research study exploring RE teachers' engagement with research. Culham St Gabriel's Research for RE strategy and wider discourses surround CPD, have emphasised the valuable role that research can play in teachers' professional development and practice. However, deeper understanding is needed about the range of ways RE teachers engage with research, access it, mediate it, interpret it, and use it to inform practice within school contexts. In order to gain a deeper understanding of how and why RE teachers engage with educational research, and how that engagement with research informs their practice, we would like to talk to teachers.

Teachers of RE in primary, middle or secondary schools in England or Wales who would like to get involved in this project, please contact Samantha Brown (research assistant) at the University of Exeter at s.brown6@exeter.ac.uk. Participation would involve a virtual interview, lasting approximately one hour.

Home Learning

Home learning resource packs

NATRE have over 1500 resources available online. Member simply click the link and login.

To help you 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. We will be adding FREE resources to this page on an ongoing basis so please keep checking the site. Resources can be accessed here: <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/free-resources-for-you-and-your-pupils/>

A list of useful resources for RE home learning from a range of providers can be found here:

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Additional%20Documents/RE%20home%20learning%20resources%20v2.pdf>

UK Council for Subject Associations launches directory to support educators

Subject associations are experiencing a surge in demand for practical resources to support home learning in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. In response, the UK Council for Subject Associations (CfSA) has created a new online directory of organisations to guide parents and education professionals in need of specialist resources and support across all subjects. Many resources have been tailored for use by parents as standalone materials while retaining links to wider learning programmes. Some of these were made available via BBC Bitesize and other BBC channels on 20th April.

Access the new Subject Association Directory here: <https://www.subjectassociations.org.uk/the-cfsa-directory/>

BBC Bitesize Daily

NATRE has received schedule information from the BBC via RE Today Adviser Lat Blaylock who has been commissioned to support them with the creation of RE lessons for Bitesize. The first Secondary RE lesson went out on the morning of 23rd April and is now available on iPlayer, via the following links:

11-12: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p089rj1x/bitesize-1112-year-olds-week-1-4-maths-english-and-religious-studies>

12-13: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p089sg9j/bitesize-1213-year-olds-week-1-4-maths-english-and-religious-studies>

13-14: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p089rfyz/bitesize-1314-year-olds-week-1-4-maths-english-and-religious-studies>

Further transmissions are **currently** scheduled as follows:

Primary RE – Thursday 30th April

Primary RE – Thursday 7th May

Secondary RE – Thursday 7th May

Secondary RE – Thursday 11th June

Primary RE – Wednesday 1st July

Secondary RE – Thursday 2nd July

These are of course subject to change. The BBC hope to keep us informed of any changes.

Classroom resources update

New RE films from BBC Bitesize

RE Today has been working with the BBC for many months on a new RE project for 11-14s. This new, free BBC Bitesize RE content for Key Stage 3 is very timely as it is designed for pupils to use themselves, rather than needing a teacher to tell them what to do.

There are 22 new short films with accompanying information and activities which are now live and ready for your pupils. Access the BBC Bitesize films and resources here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zh3rkqt>

From the Inter Faith Network

The IFN has produced a resource for primary schools, aimed at teachers in upper Key Stage 2, which explores inter faith activity in the UK – with a focus on England. The resource has a teacher introduction and four units that can be used to explore inter faith activity, looking at issues such as dialogue, social action and sport. Each unit has a series of hyperlinks that link teachers and pupils to actual projects across England with a series of possible tasks to assist learning. It can be found at:

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>.

The IFN has been collating and publishing the ways that faith communities and inter faith bodies are responding to the Corona virus/Covid-19 crisis. The link can be found at:

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus>. This is being updated on a weekly basis as more responses come in.

How GCSE, AS and A Level will be awarded this year

After consultation with NATRE and other subject associations, Ofqual have published details of how GCSE, AS and A levels will be awarded this summer. You can find the details and the relevant documents here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcses-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020>

As decisions are being taken, NATRE will continue to work with Ofqual to ensure that the voice of teachers of RE is represented. Ben Wood, Chair of NATRE, said: "In these unprecedented times, we know that everyone is concerned to ensure that pupils gain the results they deserve this summer. In our discussions with Ofqual we have raised issues specific to awarding of grades in Religious Studies, and we are pleased that Ofqual have listened and acted upon these. We will continue to liaise with Ofqual as this process continues in the coming weeks to help ensure that this process is fair both to teachers and to pupils."

#REChatUK Video Resources

NATRE held its weekly Twitter chat, #REChatUK, on Monday 27th April 2020. The topic of discussion was 'Using video clips to aid remote learning'. All the links shared were captured and have been collated as a free resource for teachers and parents to provide further support during this uncertain time. The list can be accessed by following this link:

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/List%20of%20video%20clips%20of%20aid%20independent%20learning%20FINAL.pdf>

News on RE Trainee Teachers

New entrants into teaching RE

40% of new PGCE students have become Religious Education teachers after graduating in other humanities subjects such as History, Philosophy, or Sociology. This increase boosts the number of new RE teacher trainees to its highest level in almost a decade.

New data obtained by the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) via a Freedom of Information request to the Department for Education reveal that 196 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students preparing to become RE teachers have taken a Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) course, having graduated in another subject.

The overall number of new ITT RE teachers increased significantly - by 30 per cent – to 488 in the 2019/20 recruitment cycle, compared with 376 in 2018/19. The number of new RE teacher trainees is at its highest for nine years; 860 students were recruited in 2010/11, exceeding the Government's target by 131 per cent. This surge in numbers follows a decision by the Department for Education to cover the cost of SKE courses for RE and to provide students with a bursary of £200 a week for the eight-week programme.

Commenting on the increase, NATRE Research Officer Deborah Weston said: "Around one hundred Theology and Religious Studies graduates choose to train to become Religious Education teachers every year. With a Government target for new RE student teachers ranging from 525 to 650 over the past four years, this means we need to recruit at least 80 per cent of trainees from other subject specialisms.

"This additional Government funding for SKE courses has opened up an exciting career in RE teaching to people from a broader range of backgrounds. Trainees mainly come from other Humanities, such as Philosophy, History or Sociology, but we have also seen new recruits from subjects including Law, Criminology, or Politics."

A campaign to attract graduates and career changers to teach RE launched in 2015. It has highlighted the inspiring and challenging nature of the role, as well as the availability of financial support while training. Within 12 months of the campaign's launch, RE teacher trainee applications were up 35% year-on-year. Teacher training courses are open to graduates from a range of academic disciplines and from all sorts of diverse backgrounds. Successful candidates can benefit from a bursary of up to £9,000 a year while they study.

SKE courses are available from schools, universities or other providers. The Teach RE Religion and Worldviews course, for example, requires 200 hours of distance learning over eight weeks.

Anyone looking for more information about training to be a RE teacher should visit

www.teachre.co.uk/beyondtheordinary.

Further information on differences between regions of the country in the demand for teachers in general and how RE compares with other subjects in the number of secondary vacancies in England as a whole by following this link:

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Teacher%20vacancies%20and%20regional%20variations%202020%20final%5B1%5D.pdf>

This story has also been covered by TES, available here <https://www.tes.com/news/re-popularity-boost-30-rise-trainee-teachers>

Developments in Wales

Following the Welsh Minister for Education's announcement last January of her intentions to re-name RE Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) as well as to remove the parental right of withdrawal from the subject, Welsh Government is now consulting on proposal to make legislative changes for religion, values and ethics in the Curriculum for Wales Framework. The relevant document and response forms can be found here: <https://gov.wales/legislative-proposals-religion-values-and-ethics>.

The proposals involve making significant changes to the scope of RVE, arrangements for SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) as well as to the expectations placed upon different types of schools.

Local Updates

Primary Network

Due to the current COvid-19 situation, the primary teacher's network have been provided with a pack of resources and updates in lieu of a face-to-face meeting. Primary teachers are also being invited to attend an informal online meeting scheduled for Monday 6th July, to catch up with one another, share ideas around the resources in the pack and for a general discussion of all things RE in their 'new normal'.

Secondary CPD

The secondary training around improving GCSE performance has been postponed and it is hoped that this can be re-scheduled in the autumn term, depending on how the situation around the pandemic develops. This will be reviewed at the start of the academic year. If face-to-face training is unlikely to be possible, other arrangements will be considered.

Pan Berkshire Hub

The Hub met online on 27th April. The Real Faith: Real People Westhill Project continues with some delays. The launch event planned for 2nd July has been postponed. At present, there is not a date for the re-scheduled event, but it may well take place around the same time in 2021.

Inspiring RE conference, Milton Keynes

This NATRE CPD arranged by the Central South RE Ambassador, Sarah Payne was scheduled to take place in March in Milton Keynes but had to be postponed. A tentative rescheduled date of 14th October has been arranged. The event is for primary and secondary teachers/heads of RE and costs £50 per delegate.

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