

Agenda

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday, 18 March 2024, 2.00 pm
County Hall, Worcester

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DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:
'Disclosable pecuniary interests' and **'other disclosable interests'**

WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3rd party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
 - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests** OR relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
 - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education **Monday, 18 March 2024, 2.00 pm, County Hall, Worcester**

Membership:

Group A (Representatives of Christian and other faiths)

Mr G Bounds (Free Church Representative), Ade Couper (Quaker Representative), Sheila Hicks (Catholic Diocesan Education Service), Mrs T Khawaja (Muslim Representative), Jenny Lockwood (Worcestershire Baha'i Community), Mr J Loyal (Sikh Representative), Mrs C Parker (Methodist Representative), Aimee Parsons (Catholic Diocesan Education Service), Dr Y Stollard (Jewish Representative) and Richard Udall (Humanist Representative)

Group B (Church of England Representatives)

Danielle Evans (Church of England) and Rev Duncan Hutchison (Diocese of Worcester)

Group C (Representatives of Recognised Teachers Associations)

Charlotte Betteridge (NASUWT) and Mr C Giles (Teacher Representative)

Group D (Elected representatives of the Local Authority)

Cllr Mel Allcott (Worcestershire County Council), Cllr Matt Jenkins (Worcestershire County Council) and Cllr Emma Marshall (Worcestershire County Council)

Co-opted Representatives

Ms E Hill (University of Worcester)

Agenda

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

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Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious

Education

County Hall, Worcester

Monday, 9 October 2023, 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr. Mel Allcott (Chair), Cllr. Matthew Jenkins (Vice -Chairman), Mr Graham Bounds, Ms Danielle Evans, Mr Chris Giles, Mrs Sheila Hicks, Rev. Duncan Hutchison, Mr Jatinder Loyal, Cllr. Emma Marshall and Mrs Christine Parker.

Also attended:

Stephen Pett, Kate Griffiths and Lisa Bradbury

783 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence had been received from Tasnim Khawaja, Jenny Lockwood, Aimee Parsons, Dr Yvonne Stollard, Ellie Hill and Tracey Onslow.

784 Confirmation of the Minutes

Subject to minute 774 having the tense corrected to record that a letter would be sent to Nick Gibb, the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2023 were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

785 Membership: Humanist Representative

SACRE has received a nomination from Humanists UK for a Humanist Member to become a member of Group A (Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations).

Stephen Pett explained that many SACREs have a Humanist representative as a Co-opted member of SACRE. Although it was not a legal requirement to have a Humanist Member on SACRE, earlier in the year Kent County Council was taken to Court for refusing to allow a Humanist onto Group A. The resulting judgement was against the Council and stated that it was against Human Rights to exclude a humanist member from Group A.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Monday, 9 October 2023

It was queried what constituted a Humanist and suggested that to be nominated as a member of SACRE they should be someone who was a member of Humanists UK. It was accepted that not everyone who called themselves a Humanist would believe in the same thing, and it was different to being non-religious. A differing view was put forward that someone should not have to be a member of a particular group to become a member of SACRE as a Sikh Member would not necessarily have to be a baptised Sikh.

It was confirmed that the constitution of SACRE stated that the Local Authority appointed Members of SACRE, once they have been recommended by SACRE, and the Local Authority needed to take reasonable steps to assure itself that the nominee is representative of the relevant faith group.

It was suggested that the description of Group A in the Constitution be amended to include the wording "including non-religious world views" and that a belief group could nominate representatives as well as a faith group. The Membership list for Group A should include 'a humanist representative.'

RESOVLED that SACRE:

- a) agreed that the SACRE constitution be amended to include a Humanist Representative in Group A, and**
- b) the constitution should be reviewed at the next meeting in light of the changes to the membership of Group A.**

786 Letter to MP - Follow up

Following a letter written to local MPs, a response had been received from Nick Gibb, Minister for Schools. A response would be sent back.

After prompting, a reply was received from Robing Walker which was agreed to be more positive than other correspondence as he said he would be happy to write to the Department for Education about PGCE bursaries for RE Teachers.

NATRE attended the Education Select Committee on teacher recruitment and the RE Policy Unit had been talking to the DfE and had been attending the Party conferences.

Support for RE Teachers was necessary as previously bursaries were only being paid for science and maths subjects. Of the current target of 655 trainee RE Teachers there were only 76 being trained. Last year there had only been 20 RE trainees in the West Midlands.

RESOLVED that SACRE:

- a) Would send the response to Nick Gibb, and**
- b) Arrange a meeting with Robin Walker.**

787 **Worcestershire School Workforce Data**

Every November the school workforce data was requested. Responses were voluntary and the data collected was often not comparable, as some schools gave RE different titles or mixed it with other subjects.

In previous years the data had been followed up and schools who appeared to offer little RE had been offered support.

Chris Giles agreed that he would carry out some follow up work with schools and hopefully analyse the data to see if any trends could be identified.

RESOLVED that Chris Giles would bring a report back to the spring meeting.

788 **Practical Resources for Schools**

At the last meeting it had been suggested that schools should be supported by sending out resource packs. Stephen explained there was a choice between an electronic version of 'What happens in' which involves pictures of different religious settings or alternatively a hard copy version of a 'Talking Pictures' pack aimed at age 4-7, which included a CD ROM.

As well as supplying support for teachers these packs would mean that SACRE was more visible to schools.

A discussion took place on the merits of an electronic resource, such as the fact that most schools have electronic white boards and often seemed to prefer electronic resources, compared to the feedback received that a pack similar to the Talking Pictures pack had been well received by schools.

RESOLVED that SACRE agreed that although there were merits to both the electronic pack and the hard copy version it was decided that schools should be sent the electronic version of 'What happens in'.

789 **Support for Schools 2024: Pupil Conferences**

It was suggested that a Pupil conference could be hosted at a Worcestershire Primary School where approaches to RE could be showcased. The pupils who attended the conference could then take the learning back to other pupils in their school.

As resources were tight, schools would have to take charge of the organisation of a pupil conference. It was suggested that a Secondary School may need to host a number of Primary Schools.

RESOLVED that there was a scarcity of resources to organise such a conference but Chris Giles would make further enquiries.

790 **Planning for Primary and Secondary Conferences for 2024**

Primary Conference

Following previous conferences, the preference of teachers appeared to be face to face meetings rather than having meetings online, but it was acknowledged that online meetings were easier, and less expensive, to organise. However, it was pointed out that when RE Today organised conferences, the cost of a face to face meeting would be covered by the charges made to attendees.

It was agreed that the Primary Conference for 2024 would be electronic with the proposed date being Wednesday 5 June. For the launch of the new syllabus in 2025 a face to face conference would be organised.

Secondary Conference

The Secondary Conference would be set up for the Three Counties and was likely to be face to face on Tuesday 25 June. Part of the programme would be based on World Views.

791 **Update from Local Groups**

Rebecca Davidge was hosting a session at the Chase High School on 24 October, 4.00-5.30. It would be a hybrid meeting for GCSE and A level teachers.

Worcestershire Interfaith Forum were involved with the RE Conference being held at the Cathedral and visits were beginning to pick up following COVID. Planning for the Interfaith Group and the Holocaust Memorial Day was underway.

Olivia Spencer and Chris Giles were running sessions for school leaders along with the Diocese.

792 **National RE News**

The RE News was detailed in the agenda. Stephen Pett highlighted:

- recruitment of teachers was a concern although political awareness was being raised.
- Cullum St Gabriel's have launched a free self-study course which had been used by 2000 teachers
- Understanding Humanism had launched a new animation entitled 'One life, live it well'
- Free webinars were being organised by NATRE for Early Career Teachers

Chris Giles highlighted that RE Hubs website was live and was a resource to list local speakers and to sign post people to resources. SACRE members were encouraged to add themselves to the website.

793 Feedback from Members / Any other business

None

794 Future Meeting Dates

The timings and process for the next year's meetings were discussed. It was agreed that future meetings would be hybrid, using Teams but SACRE members were encouraged to attend in person if possible.

The meeting dates for 2024 were agreed:

- 18 March 2024
- 6 June 2024
- 7 October 2024

All held at 2.00pm at County Hall.

Chairman

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Worcestershire County Council
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
Constitution and Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. In accordance with the Education Act 1996, Circular 1/94, Religious Education and Collective Worship and Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, the council, as local authority (LA), has a duty to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).
2. It is required by law that religious education (RE) is taught in schools to children up to the age of 18 but it is not part of the National Curriculum. Instead RE is a local responsibility. SACRE oversees RE and collective worship in county schools on behalf of the LA. The Funding Agreement for an Academy without a religious designation states that that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses that are set out in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Academies can opt to use a locally agreed syllabus.
3. SACRE will operate within the law and guidance in force issued by parliament, the courts and the Department for Education (DfE). If there is any conflict of interest between this constitution and terms of reference and the law, SACRE will comply with the law.

Functions and Responsibilities

4. The broad role of SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools. Worcestershire LA will work with the SACRE to monitor and review the existing provision for RE and collective worship.
5. The functions of SACRE are detailed in the s.391 Education Act (as amended). Other responsibilities are outlined in Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance (2010), SACRE and Self Evaluation: A guide (OFSTED 2005) and Circular 1/94 Religious Education and Collective Worship. The duties and responsibilities comprise:
 - a. To advise the LA on such matters connected with religious education and collective worship in Worcestershire community schools and foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary controlled schools without a religious character;
 - b. To monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its Agreed Syllabus together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
 - c. To provide advice and support on the effective teaching of the Agreed Syllabus;

- d. To provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training;
- e. To require the LA to set up a statutory conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of the SACRE, this becomes necessary. This must be reviewed and updated every five years but a majority of representative groups on the SACRE, other than that consisting of persons chosen to represent the LA (Group D), may at any time require a review of the Agreed Syllabus which is currently being used by the LA;
- f. In partnership with the LA, consider whether any changes need to be made to the Agreed Syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus, to improve the quality of RE and the learning of pupils;
- g. Offer schools and the LA advice concerning how an existing syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with wider changes in education;
- h. To receive and determine whether applications from headteachers, that the requirement for collective worship in community schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils at that particular school;
- i. To publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups. This report will be made available to the schools and to the public. A copy can be sent to the DfE.
- j. SACREs are encouraged to develop their own roles working with inter-religious bodies to enhance the important contribution that the study of religion and belief can make to social cohesion and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.
- k. The SACRE may offer advice to Worcestershire LA on any matters related to its function as it sees fit.

Membership of SACRE

- 6. The Worcestershire SACRE will be represented by members who can fully support the effective provision for RE and collective worship in schools. All members shall be delegates who are interested in education in general and religious education in particular. The membership shall be allocated to four groups as follows:

Group A: Christian denominations, other religions and religious denominations including non-religious world views.

This group is made up of representatives of Christian denominations; other than the Church of England; and other religious traditions represented in Worcestershire as well as other faith or belief groups (as identified in the most

recent published census information). Each of these representatives should be nominated by an appropriate faith organisation. All members of this group will be appointed by the Local Authority, which will have taken reasonable steps to assure itself that the nominee is representative of the relevant faith groups of Worcestershire and that they fully support the effective provision for RE and Collective Worship in schools.

Group B: Church of England

three representatives of the Church of England, at least one of whom should be a representative of the Diocese of Worcestershire Board of Education

Group C: Teacher representatives

representatives from the teachers' and head teachers' associations (AHT, ASCL, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT). The Local Authority will seek to ensure that teacher representatives come from a balance church and non-church schools, county schools and academies.

Group D: The Local Authority

three elected councillors as nominated by the political parties represented on the council.

SACRE officers

Local Authority responsible officer (non-voting)
 Clerk to SACRE (non-voting)
 RE Consultant (non-voting)

Co-opted Members

Any other co-opted members agreed by SACRE.

7. The power to appoint members is vested in the LA in consultation with the appropriate bodies whose representatives comprise the SACRE.
8. Any member of SACRE unable to attend a meeting may appoint a named substitute to attend in his/her place.

Vacancies

9. In the event of a vacancy on SACRE the clerk shall
 - a. advise the relevant representative group of the vacancy;
 - b. refer any nomination from said group of a replacement member to the LA;
 - c. add the nominee's name to the membership of the SACRE upon receipt of the agreement of the LA.

10. Before appointing a person to represent any religion, denomination or associations as a member of the council, the LA shall take all reasonable steps to assure themselves that s/he is representative of the religion, denomination or associations in question.
11. A member of the council who was appointed by the LA may be removed from membership by the LA if, in their opinion, s/he ceases to be representative of the religion, denomination or associations which s/he was appointed to represent or (as the case may be) s/he ceases to be representative of the authority.
12. Where a faith group not currently represented on Committee A wishes to join SACRE, the representative will be asked to attend a SACRE meeting and present their request. SACRE will then refer the matter to the LA, recommending either approval of membership, or co-opting the representative, or rejection of the application, with reasons.
13. In the absence of nominees from a representative group, the LA may nominate and appoint any person that it considers to be representative of that group and it deems appropriate to fill that vacancy.

Term of Office

14. Appointments to SACRE shall generally be for a term of up to four years to be co-terminous with the term of office of members of Worcestershire Council.
15. The SACRE shall review the membership annually at the Autumn Term meeting.

End of Membership

16. A member shall be removed from SACRE if:
 - a. they reach the end of their term of office and have not been re-nominated;
 - b. they write to the SACRE or the Clerk and tender their resignation;
 - c. they were appointed by virtue of holding a particular office and they no longer hold that office;
 - d. they do not attend three consecutive meetings;
 - e. their representative group states, in writing that the member should no longer act as one of its representatives on the SACRE, where the member was nominated by the representative group;
 - f. the LA determines, on reasonable grounds, that the member is unable, unwilling or an unsuitable person to continue these duties.

Co-opted members

17. SACRE shall have the right to co-opt additional members. Co-opted members may take part in any of the discussions but do not belong to any of the groups and do not have voting rights.
18. Members of SACRE or a representative group should consider the following when co-options are decided. Candidates should:
 - a. have some experience as religious educators;
 - b. have an inclusive view of the aims of religious education and collective worship;
 - c. where possible be representative of specific education phases, to provide a balanced spread across various phases.
19. SACRE will decide co-options following nominations from members of SACRE or representative groups.
20. Co-opted members shall hold office on such terms as may be determined at the time of co-option by the representative members. This may be for a fixed-term project, or for term of four years. There is no right of succession for co-opted members; SACRE shall agree through a vote if a replacement co-opted member is required and fulfils the stipulations from Para 18.

Voting

21. In general proceedings, routine decisions can be approved by SACRE members giving their consent. Matters of controversy, constitutional reform or significance, such as agreeing a revised Agreed Syllabus, should be dealt with by voting in groups, as in Para 22 below.
22. Each of the four groups on SACRE shall have one vote. Groups are to determine their own internal voting arrangements. Decisions within a group about how that vote is cast do not require unanimity. Each group is to regulate its own proceeding including provision for resolving deadlock.
23. A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three of the four groups, unless otherwise required by law or guidance.
24. The validity of the proceedings of SACRE or of the members of SACRE of any particular category shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of SACRE, or on the ground that a member appointed to represent any religion, religious denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the religion, religious denomination or association in question.

Quorum

25. A quorum shall consist of one member from at least each of the four constituent groups with a total presence of no less than one third of the appointed members.

Chair and Vice-Chair

26. The chair and vice-chair will be elected by the membership of SACRE for a period of two years, with the option for renewal, at the autumn meeting or any meeting during the year when the position is vacant.
27. The chair and vice-chair, where possible, will represent different groups of the SACRE.
28. Voting for the chair and vice-chair will be by a simple majority within the council.
29. The chair will be responsible for
 - a. the management of meetings;
 - b. representing the SACRE to other bodies;
 - c. such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.
30. The vice-chair will be responsible for
 - a. deputising for the chair as required;
 - b. representing the SACRE to other bodies in the absence of the chair or in agreement with the chair;
 - c. such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

The Clerk

31. The LA shall appoint, fund and supervise a Clerk to:-
 - d. attend the full meetings of SACRE, any agenda-setting meeting and agreed syllabus conference meetings;
 - e. take appropriate minutes and notes at meetings;
 - f. maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings;
 - g. perform any other necessary administrative duties;
 - h. provide a copy of the minutes and papers of meeting to the members of SACRE and LA.

The LA officer

32. SACRE shall be supported by an Officer from the Children's Services Directorate who will:
 - a. attend each meeting;
 - b. represent the views of the LA at the meeting;
 - c. ensure that the LA provide sufficient funds for SACRE to perform its functions.

The RE consultant/Adviser

33. The RE consultant/adviser will:

- a. attend each meeting of the SACRE and support the SACRE to fulfil its function in Worcestershire;
- b. work with the chair, clerk and LA officer to prepare the SACRE agenda and any reports, papers or advice required;
- c. will regularly report back to SACRE on work completed on behalf of SACRE;
- d. provide expertise and advice in the areas of RE and collective worship.

Frequency of Meetings

34. There will normally be three SACRE meetings per year, one in each term. Meetings will be convened by the LA.
35. Special meetings may be called by the chair and LA acting jointly.
36. Details of the business to be considered by the meeting, which will be included in the agenda, must be received by the clerk not later than 10 school days before the meeting.
37. The clerk will, no later than 5 working days before the meeting, circulate the agenda and supporting papers to the members.

Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference

38. Worcestershire LA is required to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review the Agreed Syllabus every five years. An ASC may be requested to be convened by SACRE more frequently.
39. This conference will have the same composition as SACRE. There is no provision for co-opted members, however some individuals may be invited to all meetings of the conference and its groups in order to give their advice.

General

40. The SACRE may if it wishes establish working parties to take forward specific projects comprising representatives of each of the groups and the RE consultant. These working parties will report back to SACRE regularly.
41. The SACRE may if it wishes establish a Strategy Group to prepare proposals for SACRE, or to take forward agreed proposals. This group shall comprise representatives of each group and the RE consultant/adviser.
42. In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Education Act 1996 and associated regulations, the press and public will be entitled to attend meetings of the Council, but may be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of

items containing information capable of being treated as exempt information if meetings of SACRE were meetings of a Local Authority.

43. Worcestershire will review this constitution every four years.

Membership

The membership shall consist of:-

- Group (A) two Roman Catholic representatives (nominated by the Roman Catholic hierarchy)
two free Church representatives (which could include non-conformists e.g. Baptist and Methodist)
one Muslim representative
one Jewish representative
one Hindu representative
one Sikh representative
one Buddhist representative
one ba'hai
up to four representatives of other faiths or beliefs
- Group (B) Three Church of England representatives (nominated in consultation with the appropriate Diocesan Education Authorities)
- Group (C) Representatives of such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area
- Group (D) Three members of the Authority.

The Council may also include co-opted members appointed in accordance with paragraphs 17-20.

The number of members appointed to any representative group to represent each denomination or religion required to be represented shall, so far as is consistent with the efficient discharge of the groups function, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the County.

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Worcestershire SACRE Agreed Syllabus review 2024

Background

The Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for RE runs from 2020-2025. It is a legal requirement for Local Authorities to review its syllabus every five years. We have to set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to advise SACRE, and for SACRE to inform the LA of its recommendation. We need to begin the review spring 2024, so as to be ready for a launch summer 2025, and implementation from September 2025.

The need for a high-quality syllabus

The provision of a clear, well-structured, up-to-date and professional agreed syllabus is probably the single most important function of SACRE. Combined with ongoing implementation training and resources, a new syllabus offers the potential to raise achievement in RE in all local schools. It is also essential to consider how this relates to new inspection requirements, to developments in assessment and in teaching and learning, the Commission on RE report (CoRE) and its recommendations with regard to its 'Statement of Entitlement' and the change to a 'Religion and Worldviews' approach, and other associated educational change.

Ofsted's subject specialist RE reports 2010 and 2013 highlighted the need for syllabuses to:

- be clear about expected knowledge and understanding about religion(s) and belief(s)
- support and empower teachers to plan effectively
- offer coherent progression across ages and key stages
- support clear and focused assessment, useful for raising standards.

Implications of the 2019 Ofsted Framework

The 2019 Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) places great emphasis on curriculum planning. It asks schools what the thinking is behind their curriculum plan for the school – their **intent**. It then examines how they **implement** it – including a context and narrative for its implementation in the school. And then it examines the **impact** of their curriculum on pupils. An agreed syllabus needs to be able to support schools in all three. It needs to have a good rationale for its structure; it needs to be operable in diverse school settings; it needs to show schools how they can see what impact the syllabus is having on pupil achievement.

Ofsted Research Review 2021

Ofsted's RE research review talks about what RE means by 'knowledge'. It describes three kinds of knowledge: **substantive knowledge** (concepts, teachings, practices, ways of living); **'ways of knowing'** or 'disciplinary' content (the methods of study) and **personal knowledge** (pupils' own worldviews).

Commission on RE: Religion and Worldviews 2018

The 2018 Commission report (CoRE) is prompting a widespread discussion over the meaning of 'worldviews' – both 'organised' and 'personal' – and the implications of using this idea within RE.

RE Council of England and Wales: religion and worldviews project 2024

The REC religion and worldviews project comes to a close in May 2024 with the publication of a Handbook for curriculum writers looking to apply a 'religion and worldviews approach', along three Frameworks that give examples of how the Handbook model is applied in different contexts. At the heart of the Handbook is a National Statement of Entitlement (NSE), as a pedagogical tool to guide syllabus and curriculum writers. This NSE is the basis of the REC's new proposed [National Content Standard](#) .

Worcestershire syllabus 2020-2025

RE Today developed the current syllabus with the above issues in mind, anticipating the Ofsted EIF demands with our focus on a spiral curriculum, clarity on core concepts, guidance on short, medium and long-term planning, clear learning outcomes and progression.

The syllabus includes substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge, but it is not explicit for teachers without some guidance. Again, it is possible to identify personal and organised worldviews in the syllabus, but teachers will need guidance on this.

Options

We have three options:

1. Re-license with RE Today, to their updated syllabus, for the next five years.
2. Look at alternative syllabuses available
3. Move to a 'religion and worldviews' approach syllabus.

A fourth option might be to write a new syllabus ourselves. However, this is not a serious solution given the challenge of funding such a major undertaking.

1. Re-license with RE Today, to their updated syllabus, for the next five years.

This is the simplest arrangement. We just recommend to the LA that we re-license the syllabus around for another five years.

RE Today is working on an updated version of the current syllabus, with some additional guidance material, some tweaks to language, and some amendments to units. See the appendix for a full list of amendments in the updated syllabus

Advantages:

- Current syllabus is strong and successful
- Pupils are beginning to reap the benefits of the continuity of the spiral curriculum
- Many schools have invested in planning and resources and won't appreciate another change
- Its connection with the Understanding Christianity resource allows for extended progress for pupils
- More community schools could access Understanding Christianity training and resource
- The update offers guidance on 'ways of knowing' (Ofsted), disciplines, and worldviews

Disadvantages:

- The RE world keeps moving! The syllabus is not applying a religion and worldviews (RW) approach, which is the cutting edge of RE teaching at the moment.

2. Look at alternative syllabuses available.

Other local authorities make their syllabuses available for a cost. For example:

Norfolk 2019 syllabus, the first local agreed syllabus with an explicit focus on disciplinary approaches. Content is studied in one of three strands – theology, philosophy or human/social sciences. We would need to ask Norfolk what their charges are. Cumbria SACRE adopted this in 2023, with some tweaks.

Hampshire's 'Living Difference IV' is a conceptual and enquiry-based syllabus with a long history. It has been well supported by specialist advisers for decades. Costs are given on their website.

Advantages:

- Norfolk's disciplinary approach definitely meets the Ofsted requirements for helping teachers and pupils to understand 'ways of knowing'.
- Hampshire has a long pedigree and many teachers in the county love it. It is used by a few neighbouring LAs, and some London Boroughs.

Disadvantages:

- Norfolk's disciplinary model is demanding and would require significant training to get teachers to use it well. This is also already 5 years old, and presumably a review is underway.
- Hampshire's model is also significantly different to the current Worcestershire model and would require specialist training, initially from a Hampshire adviser, but then on-going.

3. Move to a 'religion and worldviews' (RW) approach syllabus

The REC's Handbook includes a guide on how to develop an RW approach syllabus, and it would be based on the National Statement of Entitlement. Some syllabuses are either in the pipeline or available already, for example:

- RE Today is working on a syllabus that embraces the RW approach for 2025.
- Coventry and Warwickshire 2024: this is based on the framework developed as part of the REC Worldviews Project over the past three years. As such, it is pretty cutting edge. It is sophisticated and detailed, with units of work for all key questions.

Advantages:

- An RW approach would implement the most recent developments in the RE community

Disadvantages:

- The challenge again is that it is a very significant change, requiring committed support for teachers and committed buy-in from teachers too.
- Not everyone agrees with the RW approach, although some may find the new Handbook offers a clearer idea of what it looks like in practice.

Costs:

There will be some cost implications for these choices.

Option 1. RE Today have a licence fee per school. They will offer a discount on the full licence costs to keep them very close to the 2020 cost.

Option 2. Costs for Norfolk will need to be ascertained. Hampshire has a price list on its website.

Option 3. Costs for Coventry and Warwickshire will need to be ascertained. RE Today's syllabus licences are likely to include a discount, but not as much as for option 1.

If SACRE is so minded, there are ways to mitigate these costs.

Stephen Pett
RE Today
4 March 2024

Appendix: Adaptations/amendments for the Worcestershire syllabus update

- Updating the language from 'religion and belief' to 'religion and worldviews', in line with CoRE
- Updating language from 'religious and non-religious beliefs' to 'religious and non-religious worldviews' (e.g. p.8)
- Adjusting language (e.g. Hinduism to Hindi traditions p. 12)
- Making non-religious worldviews, specifically Humanism, more visible:
 - E.g. in worldviews to be taught (p.12)
 - Revise some non-religious units to have more visible Humanism, e.g. U2.10,
 - Amend U2.11 to become 'What does it mean to be Humanist in Britain today?' including some of the reasons for and against belief in God as part of this
 - Amend 3.13 What difference does it make to be non-religious in Britain today? to include some more specific study of Humanism but also more recent data on non-religiousness/Nones.
- Update EYFS using DfE 2020 EYFS Profile page 24
- Taking opportunities to add additional examples showing more diversity in the impact sections of units (e.g. Unit 1.2 some more global and local examples of Christian harvest celebrations, prayer, grace etc.)
- Scope for the county to add a few more examples of more local places in some of the units
- Updated demographics to 2021 Census
- Adjust p.147 long-term plan

Additional pages:

- Insert pages on developments in RE since last syllabus, ie CORE report, Ofsted EIF, Ofsted Research Review, Religion and Worldviews approach Handbook 2024
- Pages on curriculum design in RE and creating a coherent curriculum
- Additional page giving intro to ways of knowing – how disciplines are found within the syllabus
- An example of making progress in terms of methods/disciplines – from REC Draft Resource p44
- Update on National Statement of Entitlement/Subject Content Standard, and connections with syllabus.
- Adding three optional units as appendix 1:
 - L2.13 How do people from religious and non-religious communities celebrate key festivals? a unit that is explicitly multidisciplinary
 - U2.13 What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help?
 - U2.14 What do religious and non-religious worldviews teach about caring for the Earth?
- Appendix 2 – cultural capital and RE
- Appendix 3 – more detail on assessment, achievement and progress
- Appendix 4 – RE in special schools – more detailed guidance
- Appendix 5 – progression in language – vocabulary across the syllabus

Forewords, intro and cover also updated

Moving forward in RE: disciplines and diversity **Wednesday 5 June 2024 ONLINE via ZOOM** **9.15am-3.00pm**

A day of inspiring support and ideas for your RE classroom. A suite of practical ideas and guidance for supporting the agreed syllabus, from current theory to classroom practice. Clear advice on what makes for rich, engaging RE for you and your pupils – as well as meeting Ofsted requirements.

9.15-10.30 Session 1: 'Ways of knowing': using different methods to enhance your RE Stephen Pett

National guidance (such as the Ofsted Research Review, the RE Council's National Statement of Entitlement, and the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement) increasingly supports the idea that pupils should use different ways of knowing in RE. This session looks at what it means to apply methods from philosophy, theology and human sciences to your RE lessons, to deepen pupil learning.

10.45-11.15 Session 2: 'Meeting the REsearchers: a practical approach to using different ways of knowing in RE Kristy Pasmore

Kristy is subject lead at Norton Juxta Kempsey CE Primary School. For some time she has been using the REsearchers approach from the University of Exeter. This sets pupils up a researchers, taking four different approaches, as set out by characters including Ask-it-all Ava and Have-a-go Hugo. This allows pupils to engage in an interactive and enquiry-led approach.

11.30-12.30 Session 3: Surprising examples of Christian diversity for 5-11s Lat Blaylock

Six startling examples of Christianity showing its diverse contexts and expressions. Going global and local, historical and prophetic to challenge your presentation of Christianity to 5–11s.

1.30-2.45 Session 4: Changing the world: exploring the impact of worldviews Stephen Pett

The purpose of RE in the Worcestershire agreed syllabus is to enable pupils to learn about what people believe, its impact in people's lives – and to promote pupils' own development. How do religious and non-religious worldviews inspire people to change the world? In what ways can studying them in RE have an impact on how pupils think and live?

2.45-3.00 Session 5: news update and evaluations

A brief update on the review of the Worcestershire agreed syllabus, taking place this year for a summer 2025 launch and September 2025 start. An opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Copies of all resources used on the day will be available to take away, and electronic copies available to download afterwards.

Who is it for?

The conference is aimed at teachers of RE from primary schools, including subject leaders and head teachers. It will also be valuable for governors to find out about and explore best practice in RE.

Aims:

- To explore excellent practice for implementing the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for RE, in the context of the new Ofsted Framework, the Ofsted RE Research Review 2021 and the RE Council Handbook on religion and worldviews
- To provide practical support and guidance to schools in thinking about the intent of the syllabus and planning creative, challenging, thoughtful RE to implement it, increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding, as well as their personal development
- To give teachers confidence in planning and delivering great RE, deepening subject knowledge and skills
- To model examples of thoughtful RE, challenging all pupils and promoting deeper thinking

Cost: £95 per school. Attend as a staff for all or part of the day!
Receive recordings of the sessions to use within your school.

Booking details attached. Please email to mark@retoday.org.uk
or post to RE Today Services, 5/6 Imperial Court, 12 Sovereign Road, Birmingham, B30 3FH

Booking form:
Worcestershire Primary RE Conference:
Moving forward in RE
Wednesday 5 June 2024
 Fee: £95 per school

(Use this as whole-school CPD throughout the day, or
 different teachers join different sessions live online; receive
 recordings of the sessions to use within your school)

Full Name(s):			
School Name:			
School Address:			
	Postcode:		
Telephone:			
Admin email address:			
Attending teachers' email addresses			
	Yes, teachers will be attending		
	Teachers will not be attending – but please send the recordings		
Payment details:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Please invoice the school		
Invoice/ Credit Card billing address:			
	Postcode:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I enclose a cheque, payable to RE Today Services		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I will pay by Visa, Mastercard or Switch		
Card number:			
Expiry Date:		Start Date:	
Security code (last 3 numbers on signature strip)		Issue no. (Switch)	
Signature:			
Date:			

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Send to: RE Today Services, 5/6 Imperial Court, 12 Sovereign Road, Birmingham, B30 3FH
 Tel: 0121 458 3313 Fax: 0121 285 1816
Email to: mark@retoday.org.uk

Three Counties Secondary RE Conference

Tuesday 25 June 2024

Puckrup Hall Hotel, Tewkesbury, GL20 6EL

This will be a practical conference to explore theory and practice, from enriching provision at KS3 to enhance GCSE results, through to research on worldviews and being non-religious.

8.30	Registration and refreshments
9.00-10.00	Explaining atheism: getting to grips with non-religion <i>Stephen Pett, RE Today</i> Research scientists are examining 29 possible causes of atheism – you'll be amazed at no. 7..! Using the latest, cutting-edge research to explore non-religion at KS3
10.15-11.15	Rich study of Islam at KS3 for exam excellence at GCSE and beyond... <i>Ian Nicholson, RE Today</i> Loosening the straitjacket of the GCSE specs on your KS3! Lay the foundation for exam success by planning wide-ranging encounters with Muslims and Islam, including developing sophisticated interpretive skills, at KS3.
11.30-12.30	Worldviews: current research, excellent practice <i>Chris Hancock, Wycliff School</i> Drawing on his PhD research, Chris will set out the current picture of worldviews research and offer practical ideas for handling them in the classroom, particularly looking at students' personal worldviews.
	Lunch
1.15-2.15	Beyond the spec: developing a coherent GCSE curriculum <i>Ian Nicholson</i> Instead of using the specification as a curriculum – walking through each module and unit a line at a time – take an overview and find engaging ways for students to understand the field of study <i>and</i> be able to write great exam answers.
2.20-3.20	Encountering Jews, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs at KS3: real lives, real living <i>Stephen Pett</i> Getting beyond the text book, hear from a wide range of adherents to enrich your students' encounters, appreciating and appraising a range of voices from within religious communities.
3.20-3.30	Evaluations

You will receive an electronic copy of all resources used on the day to take away, with additional material available to download afterwards. A wide range of resources from RE Today Services will be available to purchase or order on the day at discounted prices.

Fee: £105 per delegate; £175 for two delegates from the same school.

Booking details attached. Please email to mark@retoday.org.uk or post to
RE Today Services, 5/6 Imperial Court, 12 Sovereign Road, Birmingham, B30 3FH

Why should I attend this conference?

- An opportunity to meet colleagues and share ideas
- Receive a rich variety of resources for classroom use
- Receive up-to-date, creative and inspiring training on things that matter in RE

But don't just take our word for it!

100% of attendees in 2023 rated the conference excellent!

- An excellent opportunity to consider and develop practice as usual!!
- Great ideas, great refresher, great to network just great! Thank you so much
- The variety of discussion and practical advice was stimulating and thought provoking. It has provided me with much to take back to both department and school. 'Letters and papers from prison' (Bonhoeffer) - the reason I have done this job for nearly 30 years!!
- Excellent resource ideas - great presenters - all very engaging and enthusiastic
- As always a great conference, jam packed with ideas and practical strategies for the classroom.
- Just excellent, so many points made throughout that I hadn't thought of before.
- As always, a great day! I always learn so much at the conference and this year is no different. Especially the practical help with lesson ideas.
- Excellent, really thought provoking, lots of practical ideas, takeaways.
- Some really interesting and practical ideas on how to bring diversity and world views into the classroom! Already planning mentally how I am going to add the resources used into our curriculum!

100% of attendees in 2022 rated the conference excellent!

- Thank you so much for giving up your time. Really enjoy/interested in research behind worldviews and how to explore worldviews. Practical examples modelled by Lat - thank you! Loved how we explored ideas and turned methods upside down.
- This is my annual 'plugin'! I love meeting other RE teachers and gaining such amazing knowledge and understanding.
- Excellent day with amazing resource is that can be adapted and taken into the classroom. Great to see some different approaches to how to deliver resources to students.
- Superb as usual. Inspirational and directly relevant to RE now. Lovely update on current dialogue and looking ahead.
- Excellent day full of useful ideas and links to learning. Good to be able to plan in some more up to date ideas. Good to share with others, making links.
- Fantastic day to really 'hone in' on key skills. Great content on both pedagogy and faith / worldview. World views was great to get to grips with. I liked the practical suggestions for use in the classroom.
- So good to be able to work collectively and in the real world again. I met some stimulating and supportive colleagues which is vital.
- Really enjoyed the segment on world views and excited to see how this develops. The venue was excellent! Really enjoyed the depth of the content on Sikhi.

90% of 2021 online attendees rated the day as excellent!

- Although very different - zoom! - still a fantastic day. As always I feel refreshed and positive about the future of RE. The ideas and topics were excellent and I will definitely be using many of the activities.
- I was surprised how close it came to the joy of attending a face to face conference. Lots of fantastic and inspiring ideas. Thank you both.
- As always, fantastic resources, ideas and new perspectives to explore. This conference reinvigorates me and at the end of this year, that has been especially needed! I particularly enjoyed the Anti-racist RS session. Thanks to all involved, brilliant.
- I can actually use all the ideas and resources in the classroom!
- Inspiring- it made me rethink my plans and critically examine my thinking on Islam

**Booking form:
Three Counties Secondary RE Conference
Thursday 25 June 2024
Puckrup Hall Hotel, GL20 2EL**

Fee: £105 per delegate; £175 for two delegates from the same school

Full Name(s):			
School Name:			
School Address:			
	Postcode:		
Telephone:			
Admin email address:			
Attending teacher emails:			
Payment details:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Please invoice the school		
Invoice/ Credit Card billing address:			
	Postcode:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I enclose a cheque, payable to RE Today Services		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I will pay by Visa, Mastercard or Switch		
Card number:			
Expiry Date:		Start Date:	
Security code <small>(last 3 numbers on signature strip)</small>		Issue no. (Switch)	
Signature:			
Date:			

Send to: RE Today Services, 5/6 Imperial Court, 12 Sovereign Road, Birmingham, B30 3FH
Tel: 0121 458 3313 **Fax:** 0121 285 1816
Email to: mark@retoday.org.uk

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Worcestershire SACRE News – Spring Term 2024

The role of SACRE is to create and monitor the agreed syllabus for RE in our local area, and to advise the local authority on matters relating to the provision and quality of RE and school collective worship. SACRE is keen to respond to teachers' needs and school requests for RE help.

National RE news for teachers and SACRE members

This paper is a short digest of some useful items of interest about RE in the spring term 2024. Wherever possible we have provided hotlinks to additional web-based resources.

Religious Education in the HMCI Annual report

The [Ofsted Annual Report](#) published at the end of November 2023 presents the organisation's findings for the areas they inspect including schools. NATRE is pleased to see the recognition of the challenges faced by teachers of RE and the impact on children.

Ofsted found the following issues in many schools:

- schools failing to meet the statutory requirement to teach RE to all pupils in all year groups;
- pupils not being taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society,
- non-examination provision typically not being of high quality;
- schools not teaching topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter;

Ofsted recommends a coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools including:

- the provision of high-quality professional development
- curriculum publishers identifying clearly what pupils will learn and when
- the government proving clear expectations about RE provision in schools
- non-statutory guidance for RE needing to be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach

These findings add further weight to the call from NATRE and others for a National Plan for RE and for government support for the National Content Standard published by the RE Council last month.

Extracts from the report relating to RE are quoted in full below:

From the Curriculum Section of the report as follows.

However, some subjects still do not receive the attention they deserve:

- *in many secondary schools, pupils do not benefit from a broad and ambitious music curriculum. In physical education (PE), pupils typically experience a broad range of activities. However, schools do not always ensure that these contribute enough to developing pupils' knowledge and skills.*
- *in too many primary and secondary schools, the religious education (RE) that pupils receive is of a poor quality and not fit for purpose, leaving pupils ill-equipped for some of the complexities of contemporary society.*

Religious education

RE in schools is generally of poor quality. Although it is a statutory subject, schools often consider RE as an afterthought. As a subject on the curriculum, it is under-valued. RE is a complex subject, and the lack of clarity and support from government makes schools' job harder.

Some schools steer through these challenges well, but most do not. We found that:

- *many schools do not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE at all stages*
- *pupils are rarely taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society (where religion and non-religion play different parts in different people's lives)*
- *too often, schools do not teach topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter*

- *non-examined RE is typically not high quality.*

All pupils should develop a broad and secure knowledge of the complexity of religious and non-religious traditions. It will take coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools:

- *schools need high-quality professional development to teach RE well*
- *curriculum publishers need to identify clearly what pupils will learn and when, building on knowledge over time, so that pupils develop a deep knowledge of the chosen religious and non-religious traditions*
- *the government should provide clear expectations about RE provision in schools. Schools should follow these. Current non-statutory guidance for RE should be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach*

National Content Standard for Religious Education

The RE Council of England and Wales has launched its [National Content Standard](#) for Religious Education in England. This newsletter has previously reported on the postcode lottery of RE provision in England, as found in the Ofsted [Research Review](#), the [primary](#) and [secondary](#) surveys from NATRE, and [analysis of the DfE's own data](#). However, until now, there has been no national benchmark to cite when we are asked, "What exactly does high-quality RE look like?"

The purpose is to give a national benchmark that applies to all types of school in England. The NCS is set out in the style of National Curriculum documents, and at the heart of it is the standard, based on the [National Statement of Entitlement](#) from the RE Council's religion and worldviews project.

You can read the National Content Standard [here](#) and a blog about it by Deborah Weston [here](#).

NATRE Secondary survey on RE: results

This is an analysis of the data gathered from a questionnaire on impact of political policies on Religious Education in England, RME in Scotland and RVE in Wales. It relates particularly to the level of provision in different types of school, the experience of teachers in relation to initial teacher training and continuing professional development and the type of examination and non-examination courses offered at key stages 4 and 5. Through publicising this survey, NATRE hopes it can be used widely seeks to make the case for more attention to be paid to the level of provision and quality of our subject in all schools and, in England for there to be a National Plan for RE as recommended by the Commission on RE in 2018.

This tenth survey was conducted during the summer term of 2023 via a number of teacher networks supported by NATRE, and RE Today Services. 241 teachers from different parts of the UK responded.

The report discusses teacher workload, provision at KS3 and KS4, leadership, timetabling and time for GCSE RS, whether RE is taught by specialists and if teachers have had any RE CPD, and the destinations of A level RS students. Access the full report: [NATRE Secondary Survey 2023](#)

Advanced British Standard Consultation

The DfE are currently consulting on the Advanced British Standard, a potential new qualification framework for 16-19 year olds. NATRE have pointed that current plans have not included the statutory position of RE for those studying 16-19 within a school setting, nor is Religious Studies A level – one of the most popular subjects, used as an example in the literature around the proposal. The closing date for the consultation is 20th March 2024. You can respond [here](#).

Parliamentary question on RE: Supporting and funding RE

[Ofsted describes](#) “the lack of clarity and support from the government makes schools’ job harder” in relation to delivering high-quality RE. An example of this can be found in the answer from Minister of State for Education; Damian Hinds, MP [to this written question](#) from Jim Shannon MP:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to take steps to fund network hubs for Religious Education; and if she will make a statement.

Damian Hinds MP, Minister of State for Education responded

“Religious education (RE) is an essential part of a school’s curriculum and remains a compulsory subject in all state-funded schools, including academies, to all pupils up to the age of 18. RE develops an individual’s knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society, as well as serving to inform their own values and behaviour.

Although the Department has not been involved in the establishment of the RE Hubs project, the Department welcomes its work to support teachers and practitioners. The Department currently has no plans to provide funding for the project. The Department does, however, provide support for RE in other ways.”

The answer then goes on to cite spending on the new bursary which was finally reinstated this year but is still very small in comparison to other shortage subjects such as geography and languages including Latin, the Oak National Academy materials which will eventually be rolled out to all subjects and the eight-week funded subject knowledge enhancement courses for potential trainee teachers of RE – again offered to many other subjects.

DfE’s annual report and accounts set out government policy:

“Our main levers to support schools are our Curriculum Hub programmes (music, computing, languages, English and mathematics), the Behaviour Hubs programme and our model curricula guidance ...” (page 72)

It is important to note that music hubs will receive £79m a year until at least 2025 and there is money available for other subject support too. For example, Schools Week [reported](#) on 1st December 2023 that the £320 million PE and sports premium for primary schools will be extended for at least another year from September.

NATRE and others in the RE community ask, if “Religious education (RE) is an essential part of a school’s curriculum and remains a compulsory subject in all state funded schools” and in relation to the RE Hubs project, “the Department welcomes its work to support teachers and practitioners”, why does the government not back up these words with action by funding the subject on a par with other subjects in the curriculum – including [RE Hubs](#)?

Is this a question SACRE should pose to local MPs and prospective candidates?

House of Lords debate quality Religious Education

Religious Education was in the spotlight on January 18th 2024, as the Lords debated standards in RE in the Grand Committee. NATRE worked with the RE Policy Unit to help brief several peers who offered to speak in this debate proposed by Lord Harries of Pentregarth.

In his contribution, Lord Harries of Pentregarth raised concerns about schools' poor quality of religious education (RE) and quoted data collected by NATRE. He also referenced the damning 2023 HMCI Annual Ofsted report from Amanda Spielman, where RE was described as "poor quality" and "not fit for purpose".

Ofsted suggested, he said, that RE was "undervalued" and often considered as an "afterthought" by schools and the "lack of clarity and support" from the Government made schools' job "harder".

The peer criticized the lack of government support, citing the survey conducted by NASACRE in August 2023, which found that five authorities declared no spending on RE at all, and a further 34—39 in all, or 31%—stated they did not spend any money supporting RE in schools.

Lord Harries closed his remarks by calling for a National Plan for RE, including a benchmark for the curriculum. He made a list of matters for inclusion in this National Plan.

1. it should include a budgetary provision at least comparable to that received for other subjects such as music;

- the plan should include a benchmark for what is expected from the syllabus,
- that what happens locally should be judged by this benchmark;
- that RE should be taught by people who have qualifications in the subject and who are given regular opportunities to enhance their professional skills,
- that more bursaries and more money for enhanced professional training should be made available to this end.

Various speakers contributed to the debate which can be read in full here: [Religious Education in Schools - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

Listen via Parliament TV [Parliamentlive.tv - Lords Grand Committee](#)

Training, networking, resources and other support

Bayt al Fann: exploring art and culture inspired by Islamic tradition

'Bayt al Fann' is Arabic for 'Art House'. It was launched in November 2021 and welcomes all to explore the past, present and future of Islamic art, culture and heritage. Its [website](#) is a huge treasure trove of information and examples of art and culture linked to Islam from ancient scriptures to modern 'calligrafitti' and architecture.

For those who want more, there are events and workshops and a new quarterly periodical with the first edition centred around Islamic pattern. There are regular, detailed social media posts across many platforms including Instagram (baytal.fann), Threads (baytal.fann), TikTok (@baytalfann) and X (@BaytAlFann).

List of Resources to Support Schools with Contentious Topics

Together is a coalition of some of the UK's best known organisations that aim to build a kinder, closer and more connected society. As one of its campaigns, 'Together for Humanity' is building a movement to stand against rising antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate in the UK amidst the conflict in the Middle East. The campaign is working to support schools, universities and councils to build bridges in their communities.

It has created a document containing links and information to offer guidance that schools and teachers may find helpful. There are also some resources that could potentially be used with pupils on this document.

[Access resource](#)

Westhill Awards 2024-25

NASACRE is once again joining with Westhill to offer awards of up to £4000 for innovative and enduring projects. Any project should offer young people meaningful opportunities to engage in compelling learning experiences in RE (or Collective Worship), within the broad theme of “education into diversity”.

Any SACRE wishing to submit an application is strongly advised to review the briefing notes which accompany the application form. There is a webinar on **16th October** which will look at the application process and give interested SACREs an opportunity to hear from past winners. The application form and the notes can be found and downloaded [here](#).

NASACRE Training for SACRE members

Wednesday 26th June 6.30-8.30 So, you've joined your local SACRE...

Description: A rerun of the September session, to help new SACRE members to understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members make their contribution to SACRE's work.

Free. Other training and resources available on the NASACRE site. [Welcome to NASACRE - NASACRE](#)

New RE Today Learning Zone

RE Today Services are delighted to have launched a new e-learning platform that puts teachers in control of their CPD. Courses already available on the Learning Zone include subject knowledge webinars for both primary and secondary teachers on Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu Dharma, Islam, Judaism, Sikhi and Non-Religious Worldviews alongside the ever-popular Understanding Christianity course for primary colleagues. Teachers of RE can select those courses and webinars most relevant to them – each can be accessed and used at times convenient for the participants, or even accessed in short bursts over a few weeks or months. More will be added to the Learning Zone over the coming months.

To find out more, please go to [RE Today Learning Zone](#). [Login](#)

RE Hubs – website growing!



RE Hubs website www.re-hubs.uk aims to connect those who can provide resources with those who need them, and create a neutral platform bringing RE professionals together.

Many organisations serve RE/RVE/R&W education in the UK, from places of worship and school speakers to CPD partnerships and resource providers. The website helps teachers to find local places of interest to visit, as well as people who will visit schools. Local training opportunities are listed.

The West Midlands hub is led by Chris Giles.

Culham St Gabriel's FREE self-study course

Digging Deeper: Subject Knowledge, this short, self-study course builds on the introduction level course and is available for FREE. Find out more here: [Culham St Gabriel's Trust Moodle \(cstg.org.uk\)](http://cstg.org.uk)

Free webinars for primary and secondary ECTs – a taster for NATRE ECT membership

Early Career Teachers have access to a range of free support through a series of online sessions. 'Café' sessions give you a chance to talk with experienced teachers and experts from different worldview backgrounds. The taught sessions offer expert input with a focus on practical classroom strategies.

Date – All Mondays 4.00-5.30pm	Speaker	Topic
11 March 2024	Stephen Pett	Exploring Jewish worldviews
8 April 2024	Deborah Weston plus an expert panel	Café NATRE: Pagan traditions
13 May 2024	Lat Blaylock	Using film to deepen learning in RE
10 June 2024	Fiona Moss	Café NATRE: Getting the most from your NATRE membership
8 July 2024	Stephen Pett	Using a religion and worldviews approach in RE

ECT webinars booking link <https://www.natre.org.uk/membership/early-careers-teachers/ect-free-monthly-webinar/>

BBC expands early years RE resources

There are new resources for 4- and 5-year-olds for RE / RME and RVE from BBC Bitesize Reception. These include some simple craft activities and some recipes for festive food with clear and simple ideas to bring the world of religion alive for small children.

The subject is connected to work in the fields of expressive arts and design, helping pupils with their understanding of the world particularly in the field of religion and belief.

These new materials cover Christmas, Easter, Eid Al Adha, Vaisakhi, Divali and more and have now gone live. They include video clips made for the age group, activity sheets and information for teacher-use.

Lat Blaylock, who contributed to the work says: 'I'm really pleased to see that BBC have made such a diverse and well thought out contribution to Early Years learning about religion and belief. Teachers will find this is a little treasure trove.'

Here is a link: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z24kqyc [Religions, festivals and celebrations](#)

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