

Worcestershire SACRE National Updates from RE Today: Spring 2021

Government launches review into Faith Engagement

On 10 October 2019, the government [announced that Colin Bloom had been appointed](#) as the Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

As Faith Engagement Adviser, Colin is leading a review into how best the government should engage with faith groups in England. He will make recommendations to the Communities Secretary about how the government can best celebrate and support the contribution of faith groups, break down barriers and promote acceptance between faiths, and promote shared values while tackling cultures and practices that are harmful.

Colin Bloom's initial proposal is to structure the review around 4 main sections:

- the first section asks the question, "Are faith groups, places of worship and people of faith a force for good in society?"
- the second section explores the extent to which government and its agencies have sufficient faith literacy and considers the partnership between faith groups and the State
- the third section looks at some aspects where harm might be caused through religious or faith-based practices and a review of the government's role in tackling them
- the fourth and final section will be a set of recommendations for the government to consider and respond to.

This survey closed on 11th December 2020 SACRE will receive an update on the next steps in due course.

Ofqual – consultation on proposed changes to GCSE and A level examinations 2021

In light of the recent government announcement about the 2021 exams, NATRE has already been in contact with officials, and will continue to engage positively and constructively with both Ofqual and DfE as they consult about the replacement for exams. The consultation on the replacement for exams has not yet reported.

Subject knowledge Enhancement

Following the disappointing news that bursaries had been cut for most subjects including RE, it was really good news that Religious Education had been selected for funded subject knowledge enhancement courses. The funding will be available from April 2021 but hopefully will help support those people wishing to apply to teach RE who do not have a first degree in the subject. This decision follows intensive lobbying to make the point that about 84% of trainee secondary RE teachers do not have a degree in Theology or Religious Studies and therefore need support in developing their subject knowledge.

<https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/explore-my-options/teacher-training-routes/subject-knowledge-enhancement-ske-courses>

Independent evaluation of the *Understanding Christianity* Resource

This report was published on 11th December. It presents findings and analysis from a study that examines the impact of *Understanding Christianity* in schools across England. The study, conducted by Dr Rachael Shillitoe at the University of Birmingham, seeks to evaluate the impact of RE Today's *Understanding Christianity* teaching resource amongst pupils and teachers across primary and secondary schools, with a particular focus on schools without a religious character. This study aims to find out the extent to which the resource has 'made a difference' to teaching and learning about Christianity in RE.

The report indicates that the response from pupils and teachers has been extremely positive, particularly in relation to the 'Big Story', pupil engagement and increased teacher confidence.

The full report can be viewed on the [Understanding Christianity](#) website, [available here](#).

NATRE curriculum symposium

NATRE are excited to announce that we will be running a 24-hour residential curriculum symposium in Autumn. There will only be 25 places for delegates therefore NATRE will be running an application process to attract delegates from a variety of school types and at a variety of stages on their curriculum design journey for RE/Religion and worldviews.

The symposium will hear from both experts and practitioners in the area of curriculum design generally and curriculum design in for RE/Religion and worldviews.

[Curriculum Symposium Expression of Interest Survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk)

Resources available to schools

Free Lockdown home learning from NATRE and RE Today

As a response to the amazing work that teachers and school staff are doing teaching pupils both in school and remotely NATRE and RE Today are offering their support by making all the home learning resources that were created for use by NATRE members in the last lockdown free to all schools. These multi-faith resources are all available on the NATRE website and offer support for home learning about religious and non-religious worldviews for primary and secondary school pupils.

More resources will be created and made available over the next few weeks.

www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/free-resources-for-you-and-your-pupils/

Free resources for school assemblies and RE lessons from ‘Good News for Everyone’

“**Good News for Everyone**” (formerly known as **Gideons**) has worked with Lat Blaylock from RE Today to develop a range of free resources for school assemblies and lessons. All GNE visitors have received training for going into schools.

All their visitors to schools have been trained by Lat Blaylock and are still available to speak in assemblies and lessons. They offer of a free copy of the New Testament and Psalms (now including the Book of Proverbs) to pupils. Here’s the link: <https://goodnewsuk.com/node/778>

Anti-racist RE – free project resources from NATRE for primary and secondary schools

NATRE and RE Today, working with the Free Churches Group and Methodist Schools, have launched a project to help teachers tackle racism in RE lessons.

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

Art in Heaven 2020 and 2021

- The 2020 Art in Heaven and Spirited Poetry competitions attracted record entries – lots of teachers set it in lockdown! flagship for ‘Spirited Arts’, our strategy to make RE more imaginative and creative.
- The latest website update is excellent – [take a look!](#) The relaunched 2020 section includes many amazing responses to last year’s themes, and our YouTube video to encourage entries had about 15000 views last year. We will be doing another of these for 2021.
- A Climate Justice theme features again this year: ‘God’s good earth?’ The most popular theme, overtaking the hardy perennial ‘Where is God?’.

Promote further study to your examination classes with these films of Graduates in Theology and Religious Studies

To study for a degree in Theology or Religious Studies is to open up a vast range of options for worthwhile careers. TRS-UK is launching a set of ten recently filmed interviews with TRS graduates in jobs as varied as television documentary-making, law, local government, public relations, education, and many more. These high-quality YouTube films are to be made available as ten individual (3-minute) filmed interviews and two 5-minute compilations, where graduates speak about the value of their degrees and show how they put their skills and knowledge to work in their jobs. They do not advertise a specific University, only the value of the degree and the doors it has opened for them.

[View careers playlist](#)
[YouTube TRS-UK](#)

The Culham St Gabriel's Leadership Programme: Finding your voice as a leader of Religion and Worldviews 2021-2022

Following a successful pilot programme in 2020-21 CSTG are now inviting applicants to be part of a new Cohort of Leaders for Change in 2021-22. This is an amazing opportunity for teachers.

Programme Outline

The funded programme aims to develop leaders in the following four areas: research, curriculum, classroom and politics

Stage 1: This stage is for those local or regional leaders who are beginning to work across more than one school. For example, leading Religion and Worldviews across a MAT or supporting other schools in a Federation and/or leading a local group or hub. Some NATRE Regional Ambassadors, SLEs, REQM Gold award RE leads or LTLRE Hub leads might find this Stage of CPD helpful.

Stage 2: This Stage is for teachers who have completed Stage 1 and/or for those who already have a regional/national role and would like to develop their expertise further. This stage is particularly for teachers/advisers who are likely to continue their specialism into senior leadership roles within or outside of their school situation. Those who are seeking to become advisers, ambassadors or an Executive member of one of the RE Organisations are particularly encouraged to apply.

Please go the website for more details, participant guides and the application form. Applications need to be in by March 31st.

Find out more [on the RE:Online website.](#)

Stephen Pett
RE Today/NATRE
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