

Worcestershire RE: National Updates Spring 2023

Worcestershire SACRE receives updates on what is happening in the world of RE. We thought you might like to have this information – about resources and events, and other news updates. Please pass this on to members of your community, RE subject leads and others interested in RE.

Resources

Inclusive Judaism: resources from the Jewish Museum of London

Classroom resources, including an extensive image library, open up the diversity of Jewish communities. Developers, Shereen Hunte and Eliana Mendelsohn, say: *The teaching of Inclusive Judaism is important for many reasons and ensures that:*

- *The Jewish community is represented authentically.*
- *Students truly understand what it means to be Jewish, in all its diversity.*
- *We are able to connect to each other's experiences with empathy and compassion.*



See: [Inclusive Judaism - The Jewish Museum London](#)

Visits, videos and other resources for the classroom

THE ARTS SOCIETY BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham faith visits

The Arts Society Birmingham has worked with six faith communities to provide guidance and materials on six places of worship. Teachers can find a 4-page booklet, three videos introducing the building and community, and a related quiz for each place of worship.

Supported by a generous grant from Westhill Endowment Trust, The Arts Society Birmingham has collaborated with six different places of worship, Birmingham Faith Leaders and other organisations to produce resources designed to enhance a school visit, or to support a virtual visit, to a place of worship for children 8 to 13 years.

Actual visits to the places of worship may be arranged by contacting them directly. Contact details are provided on the Illustrated Guides. <https://birmingham-faith-visits.theartsociety.org/>

£600 grants for teaching Christianity

The Jerusalem Trust's

Small Grants to Schools Scheme

Resourcing the teaching of Christianity within Religious Education

The Jerusalem Trust's Small Grants to Schools Scheme supports the teaching of Christianity within Religious Education. The scheme operates by providing schools with grants of up to £600 to purchase resources for use in RE lessons.

The scheme is open to state funded schools in England and Wales, with 60% awarded to secondary schools and 40% to primary schools.

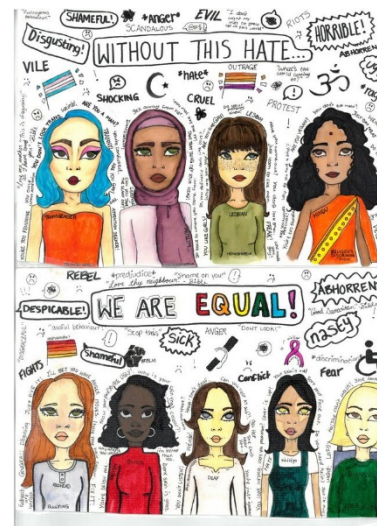
Details and application information: www.regrants.org.uk

NATRE Spirited Arts 2022 WINNERS!

Over 30,000 young people from around the world took part in the Spirited Arts competition last year, with entries from Australia, Bahrain and Thailand, as well as many from Stoke- on Trent. 523 schools took part, selecting their pupils' best artworks, and sending 3196 entries for judging. 27 winners have been selected and are now in the [Spirited Arts online gallery](#).

Categories in the 2022 competition included:

- 'God's Good Earth?', which invited pupils to explore the threat of climate change and the beauty of the earth
- 'Searching for God', where pupils considered their personal search for God, regardless of whether they are atheist, agnostic, or believers in God, and
- 'A view of the world', where pupils were encouraged to explore their own worldview.



Mollie (13) - Winner

The competition is supported by the Jo Cox Foundation. This year entrants were invited to develop a creative response to the 2015 quote from the late Jo Cox MP:

"We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us".

www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-gallery/2022/

NATRE Spirited Arts 2023 – new themes announced

Will your school join hundreds of schools from around the world taking part in this year's Spirited Arts competition? Entries are welcomed in (almost!) any art form pupils can think of. Winning entries will provide a good response to one of the 5 themes, and judges will be asking is it original? Is it well-crafted? And (most importantly!) is it excellent RE?

The 6 themes

1. "We have more in common than that which divides us."
2. Green faith, green future? ['God's good earth?']
3. Where is God today?
4. Faith in action, values in action.
5. Sacred space and holy buildings
6. All God's creatures?



More details here www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2023/

Training and CPD opportunities and other support

NATRE's annual Strictly RE conference took place in January 2023

The conference took place online for the third year.

The themes explored: **depth, diversity and Abrahamic worldviews.**

Although the conference is over, **all sessions were recorded**, and schools can buy access to all the recording for only £135 (£115 for NATRE members)



Workshops included:

- Thinking out loud- joining the dots to help children think more critically (Primary)
- Introducing Philosophy and Philosophers to the Primary Classroom (Primary)
- Dharmic Lenses on the Climate Crisis (Secondary)
- Creating a core RE Programme for KS4 (Secondary)
- Interfaith conversations - exploring creative projects that deepen pupils' understanding in RE (Crossphase)
- Special RE (Crossphase)
- Championing and advocating for RE with parents (for SLTs)

To buy access contact courses@retoday.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	Topic
13 Mar	Café NATRE – Subject knowledge Judaism
15 May	Taught session: Focus on Multidisciplinary RE
12 June	Taught session: Focus on Sikhi
10 July	Café NATRE: Subject knowledge Christianity

ECT webinars booking link www.natre.org.uk/membership/early-careers-teacher/ect-free-monthly-webinar/

Culham St Gabriel's 'In conversation' series

Extend your understanding of religion and worldviews, subject knowledge and pedagogy by listening in on conversations among teachers, researchers and other experts.

Two conversations are programmed for the spring:

- 20 Feb: 4-00-4.40pm Learning from experiences in Lebanon: diversity, solidarity and safeguarding human dignity
- 20 March 4.30-5.10pm RETOPEA! Promoting religious peace and tolerance through history

Details and booking info here: www.cstg.org.uk/activities/events/in-conversation/

Extensive back catalogue here: www.reonline.org.uk/research/in-conversation/

Regional RE Hub leads in place and ready to go!

Under the leadership of Claire Clinton, Lead Director, a fantastic team of Regional Leads will be supporting ten regions of England and Wales. They have been recruited to build relationships with advisers, dioceses, universities, SACREs, LAs, governors, MATs, teaching school hubs and more. The Regional Leads will also act as conduits between the regional providers of research, CPD, resources, places of worship and so on for the benefit of all RE/Religion and Worldview stakeholders.

The Regional Hub structure aims to increase accessibility for all teachers to local and regional professional development and research, and to enable teachers to teach with greater confidence through their access to the support, knowledge, training and resources available in their region.

Details and the list of Regional Leads:

www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/the-regional-re-hubs-team-is-ready-to-go/

West Midlands regional hub lead is **Chris Giles**.

NATRE: new membership packages!

NATRE is the largest membership organisation that promotes, defends and supports RE teachers and RE teaching. It does this through producing high-quality resources and CPD, lobbying government, being involved in conversations with the DfE and Ofsted, Local Authorities and SACREs, telling teachers' stories and experiences and being a voice for all teachers.



Membership packages for students, ECTs, teachers, schools, RE professionals and RE enthusiasts!

Details: www.natre.org.uk/membership

NATRE: welcome webinars for new members

New NATRE members are invited to a monthly welcome webinar. This will help them use their NATRE membership and enjoy it to its fullest!

What will they learn?

- How to Access NATRE resources
- Access online termly mailing resources
- Access Local Groups area
- Take the best out of the NATRE monthly newsletter
- How to redeem your REtoday library membership
- How to use your membership discount

Members can register their interest to attend a webinar at this link.

www.natre.org.uk/member-login/natre-members-welcome-webinar/

NATRE Primary Subject leader support pages

NATRE have created a new resource the primary subject leader toolkit. This has many resources and links to support your role as Religious Education/ Religion and Worldviews subject leader. All the content detailed and linked in these pages has been written and collated by Primary members of the NATRE Executive and RE Today Advisers.

www.natre.org.uk/primary/primary-subject-leader/

Other information

Research into parent views on Religious Education

In summer 2021, the Culham St Gabriel's Trust (CSTG) commissioned a survey to understand more about public perception of an education in religion and worldviews. In the summer of 2022, CSTG commissioned another survey, this time exploring the views of parents about education in religion and worldviews. In both cases, the language used in the questions was chosen to try to avoid these misconceptions and to collect a more accurate set of data about what people thought about modern RE.

Some key findings about what parents talk about with their children:

- Around 8 in 10 discuss beliefs about the origins of life and the universe (78%)
- 7 in 10 discuss beliefs concerning what happens when we die (72%)
- 8 in 10 discuss beliefs that affect people's behaviour and decision making (77%)
- 7 in 10 discuss issues related to religious and non-religious worldviews that appear in the media (67%)

Find out more here: www.cstg.org.uk/activities/campaigns/parent-survey/

Why does the rate of entry for GCSE RS vary so much around England? Does the 2021 Census provide part of the answer?

In answer to a parliamentary written question asked by Janet Daby MP and **answered by Nick Gibb MP in January**, the minister provided a table ranking each local authority in relation to the number of entries for GCSE Religious Studies in 2022. The range is significant; from 14.4% to 81.0%.

Looking for an explanation for this gap, NATRE tabulated the percentage of the population in each local authority that recorded they belonged to a religion in the 2021 Census alongside the average entries for GCSE. The correlation is interesting as you will see by the colour coded shading in the last column. Comparisons between the local authorities entering the most and the least students are worth noting as follows:

- An average of 57% of the English population, recorded that they had a religion in the 2021 census
- An average of 51% of the population, in the bottom 10 LAs in terms of entries for GCSE RS, recorded that they had a religion in the 2021 census.
- An average of 71% of the population, in the top 10 LAs in terms of entries for GCSE RS, recorded that they had a religion in the 2021 census.

The full table can be downloaded [here](#).

Even though this is correlation and not proven causation, SACREs may like to consider the following:

- How do entries in their LA compare with other LAs in their region and nationally?
- Does the census data provide part of the answer or not?
- Why do some LAs buck the trend implied by the census data – i.e. pupils appear to be more likely to be entered for GCSE RS in areas with a larger proportions of people who identify with a religious worldview?
- Might parental views of what their child should study be affecting curriculum design? See CSTG survey of parents above.
- What are the implications of the answers to these questions for Religious Education in England?

Find out more here: [Local Authorities entries for GCSE and census records](#)

Cross-party calls for RE National Plan after Westminster debate

London, 01 November 2022: A Westminster Hall debate heard cross-party calls of support for religious education, as MPs urged the Government to do more to protect the subject, they considered vital for young people in modern Britain.

The debate, entitled 'Religious Education in Modern Britain', was called by Conservative MP Martin Vickers who cited concerns about the number of schools fulfilling their statutory responsibility to teach the subject. At year 11, one school in five reported offering zero hours of RE.

www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/?news=re-in-modern-britain-westminster-hall-debate

Shortage of Specialist Secondary RE Teachers

NATRE and the RE Council's RE Policy Unit have collaborated with Culham St Gabriel's Trust on a Policy Briefing on the current shortage of subject specialist secondary teachers for religious education. It provides a useful source of information about the national picture of recruitment and for arguments to press for government action.

Key findings

- The DfE has missed its RE recruitment target in 9 of the last 10 years
- [25% of RE](#) lessons are taught by teachers with no post A-level qualification
- 51% of teachers of RE, mainly teach another subject (28% Geography, 27% History, 13% of English teachers)
- The number of graduates from Theology and Religious Studies courses in 2020/21 was approximately (including joint honours) 1300. Only around 10% of whom go on to enrol in ITT.
- RE teacher numbers have fallen by 1800 (-10.9%) since 2011.
- RE teacher recruitment is now a post code lottery, with areas such as the East-Midlands and the North East being particularly badly affected.
- Concerns have been raised by faith community members regarding representation and accuracy of RE.
- Positive [parental opinion](#) of the subject is around 70%, with a recognition that the subject is vital in the preparation of young people for life in the modern world.
- Despite this, DfE have spent [£0 on RE projects between 2016 and 2022](#). Maths has received £154 million.

[Access the documents here.](#)

Minister admits most Teachers of RE mainly teach another subject

In response to the **parliamentary written question** asked by Janet Daby MP, minister for school standards; Nick Gibb MP admitted that 51% of the total number of secondary teachers of RE spend most of their teaching timetable delivering a different subject. Only 27% of teachers of History, 28% of Geography and 13% of English fall into this category. This statistic lends further support for the call for immediate action to boost the number of trainee teachers of RE after the government, yet again, refused to offer trainees teachers of RE a bursary and, unsurprisingly, recruitment is currently down 32% on last year (22% for all subjects).

NATRE believes pupils deserve better, and that they should be taught by well-trained and qualified teachers. According to the government's own **teacher standards** (3), teachers must "demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge". It is difficult to see how these can be met when the proportion of specialist teachers is so low.

School leaders struggling to recruit RE specialists blame the DfE, especially as they **recently justified the decision**, on the basis that in one single year in the last ten (2020/21), the target was exceeded, conveniently ignoring the fact that it had previously **stated**, "In 2020/21, we saw an unprecedented increase in new entrants to ITT compared to the previous year, which was likely to be a direct result of the impact of COVID-19..."

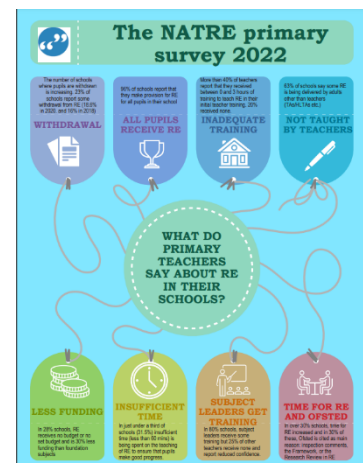
You can find detailed arguments and statistics to support the case for action to support government action including the restoration of bursaries here:

[The case for ITT bursaries 2023](#)

NATRE survey of provision for RE in primary schools published

Key highlights from the survey show:

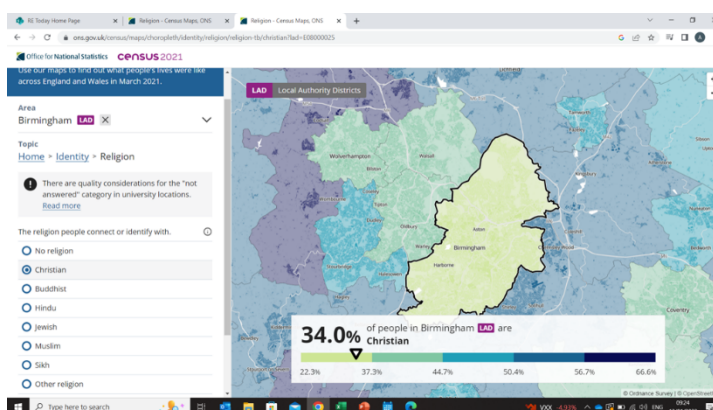
- The number of schools where pupils are withdrawn is increasing. 23% of schools report some withdrawal from RE (18.6% in 2020. and 16% in 2018).
- 96% of schools report that they make provision for RE for all pupils in their school.
- More than 40% of teachers report that they received between 0 and 3 hours of training to teach RE in their initial teacher training. 20% received none.
- 63% of schools say some RE is being delivered by adults other than teachers (TAs/HLTAs etc.)
- In 28% of schools, RE receives no budget or no set budget and is 30% less funding than foundation subjects.
- In just under a third of schools (31.5%) insufficient time (less than 60 mins) is being spent on the teaching of RE to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- In 80% of schools, subject leaders receive some training but 25% of other teachers receive none and report reduced confidence.
- In over 30% of schools, time for RE increased and in 30% of these, Ofsted has cited as the main reason: inspection comments, the Framework, or the Research Review in RE.



Read more [here](#) and an infographic [here](#):

Office for National Statistics publishes Census 2021 data on religion

- For the first time in a census of England and Wales, less than half of the population (46.2%, 27.5 million people) described themselves as “Christian”, a 13.1 percentage point decrease from 59.3% (33.3 million) in 2011; despite this decrease, “Christian” remained the most common response to the religion question.
- “No religion” was the second most common response, increasing by 12.0 percentage points to 37.2% (22.2 million) from 25.2% (14.1 million) in 2011.
- There were increases in the number of people who described themselves as “Muslim” (3.9 million, 6.5% in 2021, up from 2.7 million, 4.9% in 2011) and “Hindu” (1.0 million, 1.7% in 2021, up from 818,000, 1.5% in 2011).
- Wales had a greater decrease in people reporting their religion as “Christian” (14.0 percentage point decrease, from 57.6% in 2011 to 43.6% in 2021) and increase in “No religion” (14.5 percentage point increase, from 32.1% in 2011 to 46.5% in 2021) compared with England and Wales overall.
- London remains the most religiously diverse region of England in 2021, with over a quarter (25.3%) of all usual residents reporting a religion other than “Christian”; the North East and South West are the least religiously diverse regions, with 4.2% and 3.2%, respectively, selecting a religion other than “Christian”.



Explore our region and the surrounding area

using this interactive online map: www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps

Theos Report: Who are the Nones and what do they believe?



This report published on 24th November, shortly before the census data above was released explores the demography, beliefs and practices of Nones and then presents a cluster analysis of this group. It shows that Nones comprise a complex and sometimes counter-intuitive group with, for example, only 51% of them stating they “don’t believe in God,” and 42% believing in some form of the supernatural.

Download the full report here:

www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2022/10/31/the-nones-who-are-they-and-what-do-they-believe

Draft Resource for Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom

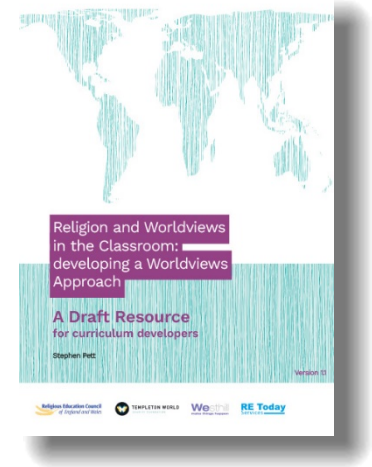
As part of a three-year Worldviews project, the RE Council of England and Wales (REC) has published a draft resource for Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom.

The resource sets out a rationale for a religion and worldviews approach, building on the developments since the 2018 Commission report. It incorporates a revised **National Statement of**

Entitlement (NSE), which gives a clear description of an education in religion and worldviews, and sets a benchmark for high-quality teaching and learning. The resource then offers practical guidance, including how to use the NSE to develop a syllabus or curriculum, applying ways of knowing, developing pupils' personal worldviews, and what progress looks like in a worldviews approach.

Sections include:

- What do people mean by 'religion'?
- What do people mean by 'worldview'?
- The value of worldviews
- Purposes for RE in a religion and worldviews approach
- **Revised National Statement of Entitlement**
- Developing pupils' personal worldviews
- Making good progress
- Applying disciplinary methods
- How to use the NSE to develop a syllabus
- How to use the NSE to develop questions and construct units of work
- Making good progress: three models



The resource is primarily written to inform three Framework Development Teams, who are currently working to apply the NSE and the guidance to their own contexts. During this process, the draft resource will be tested and revised as necessary, before the publication of a final Handbook, three example frameworks, sample units of work and pupil responses, in 2024.

You can download copies of here: www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/draft-handbook-and-nse/

News updates created for Worcestershire SACRE by RE Today Services, February 2023