

Agenda

Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)

Date: **Friday 23 October 2020**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **Online meeting only**

Notes: Watch this meeting live on the Herefordshire Council YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/HerefordshireCouncil>,

For any further information please contact:

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01432 383690

Email: matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 383690 or e-mail matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)

Membership

Group A	Mr Burbidge Canon Nugent Mrs Ault Ven. Choesang (Chairperson)	Roman Catholic representative Free Church representative Baha'i faith representative Buddhist faith representative
Group B	Mr Debenham Mr Harrington Mr Nicholas	Church of England representative Church of England representative Church of England representative
Group C	Mr Caldicott Mrs Barker (Vice Chairperson) Ms Westlake	Primary teacher representative Secondary teacher representative Co-optee
Group D	Councillor Harvey Councillor Hewitt Councillor Stone	

Agenda

		Pages
	<i>(The meeting will be preceded by a prayer.)</i>	
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2.	NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY) To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3.	MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2020.	7 - 10
4.	RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY) To answer any pre-received written questions from members of the public.	
5.	PLANS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2021 To review the agreed syllabus online launch, and to consider plans for further CPD to support schools in implementing the syllabus this academic year.	11 - 14
6.	DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR SEPTEMBER 2019 - JULY 2020 To comment and agree the SACRE Annual report for the academic year September 2019 – July 2020	15 - 22
7.	RE HUB - HEREFORDSHIRE RESOURCES To receive an introduction from Chris Giles, Regional Ambassador for NATRE about his role and a request for support from SACRE members for RE teachers particularly with artefacts, resources and places of worship in Herefordshire which is for a new RE Hub/Website produced by RE Today and funded by St.Peter's Saltley Trust.	
8.	UPDATE ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN RE To consider recent national initiatives and their implications for the teaching of religious education in Herefordshire schools.	23 - 28
9.	ROUNDTABLE UPDATES To receive any updates on religious education in Herefordshire from members of SACRE.	
10.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting of SACRE will be held on 12 March 2021 at 2.00 p.m.	

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- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information. For online meetings you will be able to view the meeting live via the Council's YouTube site; <https://www.youtube.com/HerefordshireCouncil>
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Minutes of the meeting of Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) held at Committee Room 1, Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford HR1 2HX on Friday 13 March 2020 at 2.30 pm

Present: Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang (chairperson)
Mrs Ault, Mrs Barker, Mr Harrington, Mrs Nugent, Cllr Stone and Ms Westlake

Officers: Lead officer for SACRE, Strategic Finance Manager and Consultant to SACRE

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Debenham, Councillor Harvey and Councillor Hewitt.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 29 November are agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

11. SACRE BUDGET 2020/21

SACRE received a report from the SACRE Lead Officer which provided details of the budget for 2020/21. The report was introduced by the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM) who explained the source of SACRE's funding and the accounting practice of aggregating the annual surplus to fund the syllabus review every five years.

SACRE raised the principal points below in the debate:

- How would SACRE apply for increased funding? *The SFM explained that SACRE would need to ask the Schools Forum for an increase in funding including the reasons why the current budget was insufficient.*
- The amount of funding accrued for the syllabus review was queried. *The SFM explained that the amount available would be affected by inflation and potential increases in the cost of the contract with the RE consultant.*
- The reduction in the number of SACRE meetings from three to two was raised and the costs associated with meetings was queried. It was proposed that the autumn meeting was brought forward to ensure there was not such a long gap between meetings. *The SFM explained that the majority of meeting costs were associated with Committee Services.*
- Proposals for additional funding could concern: an RE conference for children; the introduction of faith boxes; and training for SACRE members. It was explained that faith boxes existed in Ludlow which could be reserved; details would be shared with SACRE following the meeting.
- SACRE could apply to the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education for funding and a number of trust funds. Specific details of a project

and costs would be required. A faith room in a school was suggested and it was proposed that the Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School could be considered as a venue. Councillor Stone and the RE Consultant could assist with the completion of applications for funding.

RESOLVED: That the SACRE budget 2020/21 is noted.

12. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS 2019

SACRE received and noted the presentation, attached to the agenda, from the SACRE lead officer which provided detail of the performance of pupils in RE examinations at Herefordshire schools. It was explained that schools had an obligation to teach RE at key stage 4 but there was no requirement to enter pupils for GCSEs.

13. RE CONFERENCES

SACRE received and noted an update on the RE conferences planned for summer 2020. The RE consultant introduced detail of the planning undertaken for the conferences and explained that the primary and secondary conferences would be combined on a single day. The conferences would equip teachers and schools to meet Ofsted's requirements and to answer those questions posed during inspections. The event would be hosted by the Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School and publicity would be circulated in spotlight and through the Diocese. In the event that the coronavirus prevented the conference taking place contingency measures were being investigated including online training through live or recorded webinars.

The principal points below were raised during the debate:

- The cost of the conference to SACRE members was raised. *The RE consultants explained that SACRE members could attend without charge.*
- The conference for special needs schools was proposed for the autumn.

14. UPDATE ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN RE

SACRE received and noted updates on new initiatives in RE from the RE consultant.

Ms Westlake provided an update on the RE primary network; following the initial meeting of the network in July 2019 numbers had reduced at the recent meeting. Despite the lower numbers there had been a number of contacts from people with proposals for new ideas and more remote arrangements to engage with the group might be undertaken in future. Recent issues that had been explored by the network included the difficulty of compiling evidence to demonstrate to Ofsted progress in RE learning.

The RE consultant introduced the updates and explained the recent Ofsted inspections that had taken place; it was clarified that the inspection of the community primary school had taken place under the new Ofsted framework.

SACRE raised the principal issues below in the debate:

- The new Ofsted framework was queried and whether it was very different from the previous framework. *The SACRE Lead Officer explained that it was different and in anecdotal evidence the majority of teachers preferred the new approach.*
- It was queried how schools with a bad Ofsted rating for RE were assisted. *The SACRE Lead Officer explained that schools with a good rating were put into contact with those schools that had received a bad judgement.*
- The launch of the new syllabus was an opportunity to co-ordinate secondary school teachers across Herefordshire.

- Local schools were linking together; Marlbrook had recently linked up with Black Marston.
- Support was expressed for the delivery of the new syllabus.
- There was concern that teachers would be unable to afford attendance at the conference due to a lack of funding for schools.
- The Peace Service on 20 September was raised and members of SACRE were encouraged to assist in preparations.

15. UPDATES TO THE HEREFORDSHIRE SACRE CONSTITUTION

SACRE considered a report by the Director Children and Families which set out proposed changes to the constitution. The representative of the clerk to SACRE introduced the report and explained that the recommendation proposed introducing the position of a vice chairperson on SACRE and the addition of faith representatives to SACRE's membership.

SACRE discussed the changes and agreed that the position of vice chairperson should be established and faith representatives for the Hindu and Quaker faiths should be added to the membership. It was felt that the addition of a Sufi representative required further consideration before inclusion in the membership; the implications for the Muslim representative required evaluation.

Councillor Stone moved and Mrs Barker seconded the motion that the constitution be amended to include the position of a vice chairperson and the addition of faith representatives for the Hindu and Quaker faith.

RESOLVED: That the SACRE constitution is amended to include the position of a vice chairperson and the addition of faith representatives for the Hindu and Quaker faith.

Mr Harrington proposed and Mrs Ault seconded Mrs Barker as the vice chairperson of SACRE until May 2023.

RESOLVED: That Mrs Barker is appointed as vice chairperson of SACRE until May 2023.

16. MEETING DATES 2020 - 2021

SACRE indicated that it was content with the timing of meetings on a Friday and the location of Shirehall. SACRE was informed of the need to submit items of business for discussion two weeks ahead of a meeting and it was agreed that before meetings there would be a prayer.

The meeting dates in 2020/21 were agreed on 9 October 2020 and 12 March 2021.

RESOLVED: That the following dates are agreed for meetings of SACRE during 2020/21:

- **9 October 2020**
- **12 March 2021**

The meeting ended at 3.35 pm

Chairperson

Implementing the new Herefordshire agreed syllabus for RE
Making good progress in RE: belief, impact, connections
Wednesday 2nd December
1.00pm-5.00pm Online via Zoom

The new Herefordshire agreed syllabus is essential for developing Religious Education, supporting and resourcing schools to provide a coherent, sequenced RE curriculum, enabling pupils to recall their learning and make good progress.

The syllabus was launched online in summer 2020. This training conference gives you an opportunity to explore it further, receive practical classroom ideas for implementing it, and ask questions.

1.00-2.15 Session 1: The intent of the new Agreed Syllabus: belief, impact, connections

A practical guide to the new syllabus: what's the same, what's different, what impact will it have on pupils, and how to teach it.

2.30-3.45 Session 2: Implementing the Agreed Syllabus

Examples of excellent teaching and learning to exemplify the syllabus approach.

We will start with ideas for primary, before splitting halfway through into primary and secondary groups for the rest of the afternoon.

4.00-5.00 Session 3: Impact: teaching and learning, achievement and assessment

This session will explore more teaching and learning ideas, connecting them with methods of assessment, providing examples of ways to enable pupils to make good progress in RE.

Electronic copies of all resources used will be available to download afterwards.

Who is it for?

The conference is aimed at teachers of RE from primary and secondary 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 introduce the revised Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE, with its increased clarity, rigour and inspiring support materials
- To provide practical support and guidance to schools in planning creative, challenging, thoughtful RE to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding, as well as their personal development
- To give teachers confidence when planning and delivering great RE, and in dealing with core concepts in religions, deepening subject knowledge and skills in RE
- To model examples of thoughtful RE, challenging all pupils and promoting deeper thinking

Training will be delivered by **Fiona Moss** and **Stephen Pett**, from **RE Today**, who developed the syllabus.

Online: the conference will be via Zoom. We will make it as interactive as possible.

Fee per school: £35

Sign up and use as school or department CPD.

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**

Implementing the Herefordshire agreed syllabus for RE Curriculum development: content, coherence and impact

Tuesday 15th June 2021

9.30pm-3.30pm Venue TBC (face to face if possible, or online)

The new Herefordshire agreed syllabus is essential for developing Religious Education, supporting and resourcing schools to provide a coherent, sequenced RE curriculum, enabling pupils to recall their learning and make good progress.

The syllabus was launched online in summer 2020. This training conference gives you an opportunity to explore it further, receive practical classroom ideas for implementing it, and ask questions.

DRAFT PROGRAMME: choose three sessions.

a. RE and climate justice

How do religions view the natural world? How should people treat it? Why have things gone wrong? A thoughtful, dynamic, practical session that will harness your pupils' concerns for global climate justice and explore some religious and secular ethical issues and responses.

b. Knowledge-rich strategies for improving progression

What strategies support progression? Can multiple choice questions and knowledge organisers help? Practical ideas for the classroom for 5-11s.

c. Ofsted, RE and 'ways of knowing'

The new Ofsted HMI for RE has set out a model for RE. This includes exploring different 'ways of knowing' in RE. This session offers some first steps for the classroom, applying different disciplines to the normal content of RE. For example, what difference does it make to look at ideas of God through the lenses of Theology and Psychology? How can we use approaches from Sociology to study Christmas? Thoughtful ideas to consider and implement in your school.

d. Picturing Islam, Picturing Muslims

Use images to enrich subject knowledge and try out some practical ideas to explore Islam in the classroom.

Training will be delivered by **Fiona Moss** and **Stephen Pett**, from **RE Today**, who developed the syllabus.

Fee per teacher, if face to face; or per school if online: £55



Meeting:	Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)
Meeting date:	Friday 23 October 2020
Title of report:	Draft SACRE Annual Report for the Academic Year September 2019 – July 2020
Report by:	RE Consultant

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To approve the draft SACRE Annual Report for the academic year September 2019 to July 2020. The report covers those areas of work undertaken by SACRE during the year including the Religious Education (RE) conferences for primary and secondary schools.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) subject to any comments by SACRE, the SACRE Annual Report 2019/20 be approved: and
- (b) the clerk to SACRE be authorised to finalise the document to take account of any comments by SACRE and final proof reading, and to publish/circulate the report as necessary.

Alternative options

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Matthew Evans, Tel: 01432 383690, email: Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

1. The broad role of SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and collective worship in schools. This report enables SACRE to fulfil this role therefore no alternative options are proposed.

Key considerations

2. There is a duty for SACRE to publish an annual report, ideally by the 31st December each calendar year but if necessary in the following calendar year. The report must be sent to the Secretary of State for Education as well as to key partners, including schools, teacher training institutions, libraries and councillors including the cabinet member for Children and Families.
3. The annual report should report on the work of SACRE and actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describe the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA (Section 391(6) and (7), Education Act 1996).

Community impact

4. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council must ensure that those making decisions and delivering services are accountable for them. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting on actions completed and outcomes achieved, and ensuring stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the council plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. The provision of an annual report assists in maintaining transparency and an understanding of where the focus for improvement should be.

Equality duty

5. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
6. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that 'due regard' is paid during decision making concerning the design of policies and the delivery of services. The provision of religious education seeks to contribute positively to the specific duty by increasing the understanding and tolerance of all religions in local communities. SACRE contributes to this duty by advising the council on its arrangements for religious education. The provision of Religious Education and collective worship seeks to increase understanding and tolerance of all religions in local communities.

Resource implications

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Matthew Evans, Tel: 01432 383690, email: Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

7. There are no resource implications involved in the production and consideration of this report. There is no cost associated with the production of the annual report which will be published and circulated electronically.
8. If there are any resource implications of actions identified in the annual report the intention is that these will be met within the existing budget for SACRE.

Legal implications

9. Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires the council to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise them on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship.
10. SACRE's main function is to advise the council upon matters connected with religious worship in schools for which the council has responsibility and with the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus. Under Section 391(6) and (7), Education Act 1996, SACRE is required to publish a report each year as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by representative groups on the council.

Risk management

11. No risks were identified in the production of this report.

Consultees

12. None

Appendices

Appendix – draft SACRE Annual Report 2019/20

Background papers

None

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

LA – Local Authority

RE – Religious Education

SACRE – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

**Herefordshire
Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education
(SACRE)**

**SACRE Annual Report
for the Academic Year 2019/20**

1 Herefordshire SACRE Annual Report 2019-2020

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory body set up to advise the Local Authority on matters related to religious education and collective worship. Its members are drawn from teachers, Local Authority representatives including Councillors, faith representatives from the Church of England and a range of Christian denominations, and representatives from other religious and non-religious groups represented in the region.

SACRE's key functions include monitoring the provision and quality of RE, and providing advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus. This includes advice on methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and provision of teacher training. This is primarily done through the review and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, a process which is required every five years. This is followed by on-going monitoring of its effectiveness in the light of changing national education policy.

Herefordshire County Council supports SACRE with an annual budget that includes an additional element to cover the cost of agreed syllabus renewals every five years. This was outlined by the LA Strategic Finance Manager at the Spring 2020 meeting. SACRE endeavours to offer maximum support to schools through its use of conferences and network meetings. However, it still functions with only two SACRE meetings a year. At the end of the period of this report, following a tendering process, the long-term support from RE Today Services, who have supported Herefordshire SACRE since before 2008, was renewed for a further three-year period.

The Local Authority officer is Alison Naylor, Head of Learning and Achievement.

Herefordshire SACRE met twice in 2019-2020. The minutes of these meetings are available from Matthew Evans, Clerk to SACRE (matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk). Both SACRE meetings were quorate. Membership is an on-going issue SACRE is seeking to address.

2 Supporting RE in Herefordshire

The key work of SACRE this year has been ensuring the delivery of the new Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025. However, this year has been dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Plans and preparations for launching the new agreed syllabus in June 2020 were disrupted, although contingency plans were put in place (see below). The second SACRE meeting took place only a few weeks before the March lockdown, and SACRE members were able to discuss alternative ways of supporting schools.

3 Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025

Teachers were consulted in June and October 2019, on the choice between a renewal of the current syllabus or changing to the new syllabus model from RE Today. The key difference from the current thematic syllabus constructed around three broad strands (believing, expressing, living) is that the alternative model includes more systematic study of religions before comparisons. It also incorporates the key questions and outcomes from the *Understanding Christianity* resource, used in many schools in the county and beyond.

In June 2019, 22 delegates attended the primary RE conference. They were shown the two syllabus models and had a chance to ask about the similarities and differences.

- 19 delegates completed an evaluation form and their feedback on the syllabus options.
- 2 delegates wished to retain the current syllabus
- 14 delegates wished to move to the new model

- 3 delegates had mixed feelings.

In October 2019 a group of 22 teachers attended the NATRE local group meeting, organised and hosted by Tracy Westlake at Marlbrook Primary School. They were also shown the syllabus models and asked for their feedback. All 22 teachers expressed a wish to move to the new syllabus model.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference took the recommendation of teachers and voted to recommend to the Local Authority that Herefordshire SACRE adopt RE Today's syllabus 'model B'.

With this change, Worcestershire and Herefordshire SACREs still share the same agreed syllabus, so training that is available for either county is made available to neighbouring schools.

4 Agreed Syllabus launch: June 2020

Plans to launch the syllabus on 5th June 2020 at Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School were in place when lockdown started in March 2020. For several weeks, hopes remained that we might still be in a place to have the conference in June, but in May the decision was taken that the conference would not be possible.

The alternative was arranged by RE Today. Schools registered to receive an electronic copy of the syllabus, alongside a recorded webinar introducing the syllabus. Accompanied by a workbook, sample units, knowledge building blocks and sample long-term plans, this webinar meant that teachers could work through the new syllabus individually or as staff or department teams. By the end of the summer, 66 Herefordshire schools had accessed the new syllabus. The missing 30 or so schools will be followed up in the autumn term.

5 Local groups and other CPD

As mentioned above, a NATRE local group was held at Marlbrook Primary School on 21 October 2019. 22 teachers attended, trying out some examples of teaching and learning activities, sharing ideas and resources, as well as looking at the syllabus models. [Additional local group dates spring 2020?]

The Diocese of Hereford [training opportunities?]

6 Chair of SACRE

It was noted in the 2018-2019 report that Councillor John Stone stood down as Chair of SACRE after the summer 2019 meeting. Cllr Stone was Chair of SACRE for 18 years, from its inception in the county. SACRE is deeply grateful to Cllr Stone for his commitment to SACRE over the years. The news of his stepping down attracted comments from a number of past local authority officers, advisers to SACRE, head teachers and a Diocesan Director. They commented on his dedication, hard work and unstinting commitment to his role, which he fulfilled with wisdom and courtesy. They also noted his active involvement in annual conferences, encouraging and supporting teachers to value RE and pupils' personal development. Members of SACRE echo these appreciations and thank Cllr Stone for this service to SACRE.

SACRE appointed the new Chair, Lama Tenzin Choesang.

At the Spring 2020 meeting, SACRE voted to amend the constitution to allow for the election of a Vice Chair, to be able to stand in for the Chair as required. Ms Lou Barker, secondary teacher representative, was elected as Vice Chair.

7 Exam results summer 2020

Owing to the cancellation of exams due to the pandemic, there are no school results to report here.

9 Other matters:

[Any additional information?]

Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang
Chair of SACRE
November 2020

DRAFT

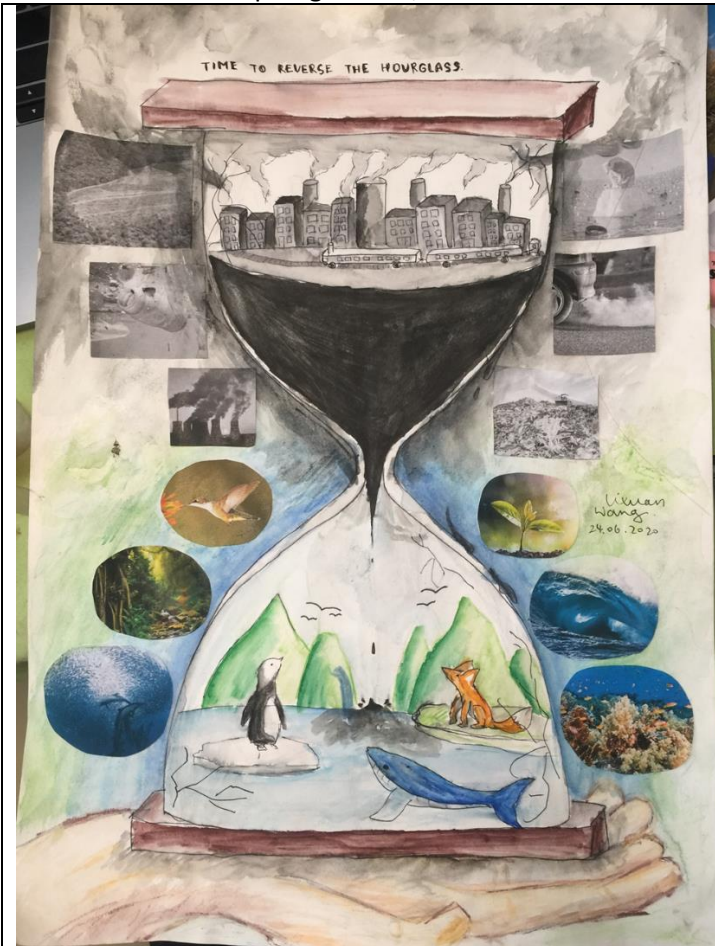
Herefordshire SACRE: update on new initiatives

Oct 2020

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

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

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



*This piece is called **The Hourglass**. I wanted to show a contrast between what the earth was like, and what it was now without a too obvious division of the page. I did not base it on a particular religion, but on the overall belief that God is watching over us, holding our hourglass with his hand. I got my inspiration from a picture of an hourglass with the mountains, the forests, all flowing down into the other side of the hourglass, where it is all rubbish and pollution. I've switched the concept subtly. Instead of the wonderful nature flowing and rotting into trash, I decided that it would be the other way round: the black tar that shows our pollution is flowing and dark drops are contaminating the Bright nature on the other side of the hourglass, and the animals are watching in vain. The whole hourglass is cracking. I wanted to show that if one system breaks, then, like the Buddhists say, the whole interconnected and interdependent community will fall. I have put pictures of the opposing sides on either end of the hourglass, they are examples of the wonderfulness of nature, and the heart wrenching truth of what we have done with our planet; on the bottom, corals, birds, forests, and on the top toxic fumes, fossil fuels, plastic, pollution, landfills, and deforestation. I hope that when people see this piece, they will see God's good Earth, and realise what we are doing to it, and strive to reverse the damage before the hourglass breaks.*

Lixuan is 12

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

Can we, as a SACRE, promote the competition to all our schools? Could we run a local round to the competition, to see what creative RE is going on here?

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

Themes for the coming year:

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

Interfaith week

Inter Faith Week starts on Sunday 8 November and concludes on Sunday 15 November. The Week is a great opportunity for pupils to explore inter faith issues and for schools to build relationships with faith, belief and inter faith groups in their community. Here are some suggestions for schools for things you might want to consider doing this year:

- Work with your local inter faith group and SACRE to host a special virtual 'Question Time' via a social media platform
- Organise an exhibition in your school featuring information and objects about a range of religions and beliefs reflecting your local population (this could be virtually available to others)
- Celebrate the Week on your website, perhaps have a series of short videos where pupils share what they have learned in RE
- Organise a virtual tour of local places of worship to investigate the importance of faith in the lives of believers in your community
- Create an Inter Faith Week poster, artwork or multifaith calendar
- Host a dialogue about a topic such as 'shared values' or how people of different faiths and beliefs can live well together at a lunchtime event
- Make a video of events at your school held for Inter Faith Week For more about Inter Faith Week

Visit <https://www.interfaithweek.org/> and if you have specific questions or ideas you'd like to discuss email IFN's Assistant Director at david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk.

**Can those of you that represent religion and belief communities offer your services?
Can schools be informed about this week- together with the suggestions above?**

Anti-racist RE

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

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

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

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

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

GCSE Results

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

Until this year, there has been a gradual decline in full course RS GCSE entries since a peak in 2016, when 269,839 entries were recorded in England. Full and short course entries reached a high of 461,795 in 2011 but declined rapidly as schools in England opted not to enter pupils into the short course following Government policy changes, despite a requirement among all schools, including Academies, to provide Religious Education to all pupils at all key stages. In Wales however, the short course entries have not declined at the same rate and fell by just 3.74% (from 6,198 to 5,966). In England, short course entries fell by more than 16%. In general, these figures should be interpreted in the light of government policy – they don't indicate much about the popularity of the subject with students.

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

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

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

Changes in RS examinations for 2021

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

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

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

Ofqual did recognise that:

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

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

However, Ofqual decided against making changes to Religious Studies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other related issues:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We note from his answer below that he restates that:

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

He also clearly says that in the reopening of schools:

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

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

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

Can this information be shared with all Herefordshire headteachers and chairs of governors? Do school improvement partners or similar know whether this guidance is being followed? Could they find out?

Increase in the number of secondary trainees

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

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

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

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

Access resources

Strictly RE: Online training for teachers

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

Location: Online

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

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

Prices start as low as £45 for NATRE members*

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

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

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

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

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

Book soon to avoid missing out on the early bird discount which ends 31 October 2020.

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

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

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