

National RE Updates for SACRE from RE Today Spring 2025 for Herefordshire SACRE

NATRE Primary Provision Survey

In 2024 NATRE conducted their biannual survey into religious education in primary schools. The findings are used by NATRE to provide guidance to its work with RE teachers.

Time: most Agreed Syllabuses recommend that the equivalent of approximately 60 minutes per week be spent on RE at Key Stage 1 and about 75 minutes at Key Stage 2. The survey data suggests that in **just under a third of schools without a religious character (30.7%) insufficient time is being spent on the teaching of RE** to ensure that pupils make good progress. On the other hand, in around 94% of schools timetable time has either increased or remained the same.

Budget: Funding is an issue for all schools in the current climate. If resources are up to date and appropriate to modern teaching methods, it is vital that subject leaders have appropriate funds at their disposal. School funding is expected to rise this year and RE subject leaders will need to make the case for appropriate resourcing for RE. The most common budget is less than 50p per pupil per year and **a third of subject leaders have no set or no budget for RE.**

Teachers: In **54% of schools (63% in 2022) some RE is being delivered by adults other than teachers.** This was raised as a matter of concern by Ofsted in 2013 when in 24% of schools RE was delivered by teaching assistants. **In just over one in five schools, (one in four in 2022) more than 25% of RE teaching is delivered in this way.**

ITT training: more than 56% of the teachers in primary schools report that they received between 0 and 3 hours of training to teach RE in their initial teacher training (ITE). This represents an increase from 40% in 2022. **18% of these received no hours at all.** This serious issue was the focus of Recommendation 6 of the Commission on RE (2018) Report. It links with the question about teachers' confidence. **60.5% of our respondents' colleagues feel reasonably or very confident in how to teach RE and 63.2% about what to teach in RE.**

Teacher confidence in teaching specific religions and beliefs varies significantly. **Christianity, Islam and Judaism were ranked most highly in terms of teachers' confidence** about their subject knowledge. Conversely, they were **much less confident about teaching religions such as Zoroastrianism, the Bahá'í faith, Jainism and Paganism** and also about **non-religious worldviews such as Humanism.**

Experienced leaders: RE is now commonly led by more experienced teachers. Far fewer subject leaders are recently qualified teachers than when we first began conducting this survey. The overwhelming **majority of subject leaders have more than 10 years teaching experience.** They also tend to hold the position for a number of years, 67% for more than 3 years and 42% for over 5 years.

Withdrawal: The number of parents exercising the right to withdraw their child from RE is small but remains **at around one in five schools** but generally **affecting fewer than 10 children per school**, most frequently one or two. **82% of schools reported that there had been no withdrawal from RE** in the last academic year. The fact that parents can withdraw their child from RE without giving any reason or justification means that the ability of schools to educate pupils for life in a diverse modern

world is compromised. The most common use of the right of withdrawal is from teaching about anything other than the home religion or belief. This is cited in 54% of cases.

Spirited Arts 2025

NATRE has announced the subject areas for its annual Spirited Arts competition for 2025. This annual competition asks pupils to use their creative talents to explore questions of religious and non-religious worldviews.

This is the 21st year for Spirited Arts and there are six themes for pupils to choose from

- Living in a Diverse World
- Stories that Change Lives
- Thinking about God
- Sacred Places
- All God's Creatures? (Sponsored by AIA & VinE)
- Making Sense of Life

Schools can submit up to entries which should be received by the closing date of 31st July 2025. Full details are available at [Spirited Arts 2025 - Inspiring students to explore big questions through art](#)

RE Hubs

The RE hubs are offering training for speakers who would like to support schools bring to life their curriculum through first hand experience of meeting and talking with people from different religions and non-religious worldviews, as well as experts in social sciences, philosophy and theology.

Once the training has been completed then speakers are kite marked and then included on the RE hubs web site for the local region. Schools can then access a full list of speakers in their area to help bring RE to life in the classroom. There are a range of training dates available through the RE hubs website from 29th January 2025 through to 7th July 2025. Potential speakers, which may include members of SACREs can register at [Register as a school speaker](#)

RE Hub network meeting for MAT RE Leads

1 April 2024, 4-5.30pm, free CPD for NATRE and AREIAC members

Speaker: Hazel Henson, HMI for RE at Ofsted, talking about high-quality RE in academies, plus Q&A.

This is a networking opportunity for MAT RE leads, giving you an opportunity to have a say in the government's curriculum review on RE, and offering updates and links to opportunities and resources for MATs.

www.re-hubs.uk/mat-re-leader-network/



NATRE responds to the DfE Call for Evidence for the Curriculum Review

Following NATRE's submission of evidence to the review in November, NATRE has continued its conversations and correspondence with the Department for Education. This has included engagement with Professor Becky Francis OBE, Chair of the review, other members of the review panel and officials.

NATRE have continued to make clear the case for considering key issues that we included in their Call for Evidence response. These included:

- The advantages, disadvantages and legal issues around including RE in the subjects of the National Curriculum rather than the basic curriculum.
- The extent to which changing the legal status of RE would alleviate the key changes being faced by teachers of the subject, including securing high-quality provision
- RE Council's National Content Standard and evidence of the level of consensus around this document
- Issues around the current GCSE and A level specifications
- The right of withdrawal from RE for teachers and for parents
- The nature of RE in different types of schools and the importance of opportunities to build on previous learning, especially when children move between schools in the same or different area

We anticipate the publication of the interim report of the review in 'early spring' and have offered to consult members of NATRE about specific proposals as soon as these become clear.

Explaining Atheism

RE Today is delighted to be working with the Explaining Atheism research project as part of its outreach programme. A short video has been released that explains the research and the outreach projects: [Outreach — Explaining Atheism](#)

Leading on behalf of RE Today is National RE Adviser, Stephen Pett, who has been working with a number of researchers from Explaining Atheism to bring findings from their core research and affiliated research projects into classrooms across the UK. Stephen is working in collaboration with filmmaker Briony Campbell and photographer Aubrey Wade to create learning resources from their projects. In October 2024 this work was trialled with groups of RE pupils at a pop-up exhibition and workshop series at Conway Hall in London, led by Lat Blaylock.

RE Today will be publishing teacher resources to link to the Explaining Atheism research. Earlier research from the project has been featured in *Challenging Knowledge in RE: Studying Worldviews* (2021) and *Investigating Non-Religious Worldviews* (2023).

Speaking about this opportunity, RE Adviser Stephen Pett said:

"It is a privilege to work with the researchers on this extensive and illuminating project. Findings help to show something of the complexity of what it means to have non-religious worldviews in the UK and in five other countries around the world. The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches are helpful for the RE community as we embrace the use of diverse ways of knowing in the classroom. I look forward to presenting our teaching and learning materials when they are ready to go!"

The video will serve as a helpful resource for RE teachers across the UK. It highlights the importance of including non-religious perspectives in the conversation, ensuring that all pupils can engage meaningfully with the diversity of worldviews that shape our world.

Jerusalem Trust Applications – RE Grants for Schools

Applications are now open for RE Grants for Schools from the Jerusalem Trust. 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 Christianity resources for use in RE lessons. The grants are available for all state funded schools in England and Wales.

Any school wishing to apply for the grant should visit [Grant Criteria – The Jerusalem Trust](#) which outlines what the grant will and will not cover and there is also a Frequently Asked Questions section available for schools to support them in making an application [FAQs – The Jerusalem Trust](#).

At the time of the writing of this Herefordshire SACRE update there is availability for both primary and secondary schools to apply for the grant. The application will take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete.

Windows into Buddhism

A new resource has been produced to support the delivery of Buddhism in the RE curriculum. The web site allows teachers to access topics areas in Buddhism from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5 as well as giving access to webinars on key areas such as Why do we suffer? On 2nd May. Access to the resource is at <https://windowsintobuddhism.com>

Woolf Institute

The Woolf Institute is a charity based in Cambridge, specialising in the Abrahamic religions. Their aim is to develop better understanding of these faiths and a number of resources are available for schools to access to support delivery in religious education at [Woolf Institute \(en-GB\)](#)

Living in Harmony resources explore artistic, intellectual, and cultural sharing between Jews, Muslims, and Christians through music, architecture, and science. *Gender in Religious Experience* resources explore diverse lived experience of gender in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity as it relates to scripture, marriage and divorce, head covering, sacred space, and leadership. The resources include teachers' guides, videos, lesson plans, glossaries, and discussions encouraging students to relate content to their own experience and worldviews.

Understanding Humanism

Understanding Humanism provides a wealth of resources for EYFS through to KS5, to support the teaching of Humanism. All resources are designed for classroom teachers, but are also of use to SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences to further the teaching of humanism amongst non-religious worldviews. All resources are available at [Understanding Humanism](#)

Multidisciplinary RE

Over the last few years, the Templeton World Charity Foundation has funded a series of major research projects connected to its theme, Big Questions in Classrooms (BQIC).

BQIC seeks to develop teachers' and pupils' understanding and insight about "how knowledge works," particularly in the domains of science education and religious education (RE) in England. The intention is to nurture pupils' curiosity and their appreciation of how various forms of knowledge can come together to enrich our questioning, reasoning, and learning.

This [short video](#) tells the wider story of the purpose and impact of the BQIC programme.

Projects include:

- [Challenging knowledge in RE](#) – this project researched and developed an approach for multidisciplinary RE, resulting in a series of [six publications for primary](#) and [six for secondary teachers](#). These support teachers in using different disciplines or ways of knowing in RE, as described in the [Ofsted Research Review](#)
- [Epistemic Insight](#) – training pupils to think critically about how knowledge is communicated and how it can be applied in different contexts
- [Argumentation is science and religious education](#) – developing students' abilities to form claims based on logical and rational evidence in science and RE

The BQIC programme also funded the **RE Council's religion and worldviews project**. This 3-year project developed key guidance on a religion and worldviews approach, culminating in the publication of the [Handbook for Curriculum Writers](#) and a selection of sample frameworks that put the Handbook model into practice.

This short film from TWCF celebrates the value of multidisciplinary approaches in science and in RE, and of the religion and worldviews approach in RE. <https://youtu.be/GStlIVDd4VE>

Upcoming RE Today Courses for the Spring Term and beyond!

For more details on any of these courses, click here: www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/upcoming-courses-events/?page=1

Primary Phase CPD

Primary - Understanding Christianity

19th May 2025 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm (with two additional dates in Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026)

This course aims to give teachers the confidence and subject knowledge to teach about *Christianity: Text Impact Connections* through this tried and tested course which is supported by a substantial whole-school teachers handbook. The locally agreed syllabus include requirements for teaching Christianity that are directly supported by this resource.

Secondary Phase CPD

Peaceful and Purposeful Discussion in RE

29th April 2025 (Twilight 3.30 am – 5.30 pm)

The best RE is not afraid of controversy! This session will explore practical strategies for helping pupils engage in peaceful and productive discussion of contested issues in RE.

Cross Phase CPD

Introducing a Religion and Worldviews approach

7th May 2025 (Afternoon 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm)

What is a religion and worldviews (RW) approach? How is it different from current RE practice? What are the benefits to teachers and pupils? This session offers a practical introduction to worldviews and explores what an RW approach means for subject content and how we teach it, as well as reflecting how it develops pupils' personal worldviews. Drawing on the 2024 RE Council Handbook and Frameworks, including resources and strategies, this session will show how to enrich and deepen pupils' understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews.