

West Berkshire SACRE

Spring Newsletter 2023

Welcome to the West Berkshire SACRE Spring/Summer RE newsletter. As the clocks have finally moved forward, we are 'safely' in Spring and heading for Summer, so it is a time for optimism even though the weather will still undoubtedly keep us entertained for a good while yet.

As always West Berkshire SACRE wishes to send out a sincere thank you to all teachers and schools for the way in which you have shown such dedication to children and education during these relentlessly challenging times.

In this newsletter we will try to keep you updated on local and national updates, opportunities, resources and chances to engage.

RE Leaders database

Many thanks to those schools who have already sent the name of their RE lead through to David – these people will now receive RE related information direct to their inbox. **It would be really helpful if remaining schools could let David know the RE lead's school email address so he can directly keep them updated on what support is available.** This is particularly important if the person in post changes or if someone is new to teaching.

We do still have quite a few gaps in our database and so are aware that some information about networks, newsletters and resources is not directly reaching the RE lead – it would be so helpful if you could let us know this term. Please let us know by emailing david@reesuk.onmicrosoft.com

SACRE wishes RE teachers to know that ongoing support is available. One of the ways SACREs can support teachers is by running virtual RE network meetings and producing these newsletters, designed to inform you of some or all of the following...

- Local and national RE developments
- Agreed syllabus cycle updates.
- Free classroom resources
- Upcoming CPD opportunities
- News from religion and worldview communities – national and local

Virtual Primary Networks

SACRE is supporting RE by running virtual RE networks as twilight sessions each term – these are run by the RE Adviser to SACRE David Rees.

This term's meetings will be virtual and held on the following dates.

- **Tuesday 9th May - 4-5.15pm**
- **Wednesday 28th June – 4-5.15pm**

If you would like to attend any of these or receive information about support for RE please email David on david@reesuk.onmicrosoft.com - zoom links will be sent to those who confirm

If you have anything you would like covered in any of the meetings please do send suggestions through to David – we want the networks to be as useful as possible. We are always aware of the many demands on your time so thank you in advance for your attendance.

The Pan Berkshire Hub

The Pan Berkshire Hub (a group consisting of members of 6 Berkshire SACREs including West Berkshire) continues to meet and work together to help provide support and resources to help Berkshire teachers. The Hub produced some excellent free teaching resources in the form of video clips and support notes. The **'Real People, Real Faith project'** Key Stage 1-3 classroom clips have been available for teachers to use since April 2021. The project set out to ask believers from different places of worship and religion and worldview communities questions about their faith and how it impacts on daily life – these were professionally filmed and edited with the classroom in mind. Teacher notes were also developed to accompany each video clip. They are hosted on the NATRE website <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/real-people-real-faith/>

The hub meets termly and is now in discussion about the Pan Berkshire Agreed Syllabus review process – there will be opportunities for Pan Berkshire teachers to be involved. The hub welcomes opinions on the existing syllabus and what changes might be needed to be included to reflect what has happened in the world of RE since the last syllabus was written. Please keep an eye open for opportunities and let David Rees know if you wish to be involved.

News from RE Online

RE Online is a free quality-controlled website designed to support teachers with many different aspects of teaching and leading RE.

The website includes teaching resources, knowledge essays on many of the major faiths and worldviews designed to help improve subject knowledge and ideas on how to connect with faith communities. There is also a large section on research and how it connects with the classroom.

The focus of RE leadership for Spring 2023 on RE Online is subject knowledge

'In recent years the importance of subject knowledge has grown in prominence, not just in teaching Religion and Worldviews, but in all subjects. This has come about due to an increased interest in curriculum design and insights from cognitive science as to how we actually learn and retain information.' A series of resources on subject knowledge are highlighted.

For teachers of Religion and Worldviews the idea of subject knowledge has particular importance. As we shift from the World Religions paradigm we are thinking and talking about what constitutes our subject knowledge, what sort of subject specialists are we, and what sort of information should we be seeking for our curriculum design.

This term we will be exploring contributions to teachers' subject knowledge from various researchers, beginning with a new book on Islamic history for teachers.

The subject knowledge we will present is for teachers. If you teach younger pupils don't panic! The information is for your own development, to enhance your understanding of religion and belief, and for you to translate for your own classroom context. As always, we love to hear from you and hear what you have been working on.'

There are also cpd opportunities like the Introduction to Religion and Worldviews course **'What is a Religion and Worldviews approach?'** Maybe you have heard the phrase and are unsure what it means. This free self-study course provides an introduction to what is happening in Religious Education right now, covering the most recent report into the subject and the thinking behind a new approach to teaching and learning in the subject.'

All this information can be found here.

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/>

Regional RE Hubs

New regional RE Hubs are being set up 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 Religion and Worldview stakeholders.

The Specific Aims:

- To improve communication between teachers, professional development and resource providers, and research communities
- To improve connections and interactions between different parts of the RE/R&W Eco-System
- To be an information exchange to increase accessibility for all teachers to local and regional professional development and research
- To enable teachers to teach with greater confidence through their access to the support, knowledge, training and resources available in their region.
- To create a sustainable long-term model for future provision

This will be achieved through:

- An excellent communication system that works efficiently and effectively between teachers, CPD and resource providers, local/regional adviser networks and research communities which will link those who need training, resources and encouraging with those whose purpose is to provide it.
- Improved cohesion and strategic operations between different RE/R&W organisations and groups
- Improved engagement by teachers with RE/R&W local groups/networks
- Increased access to wide range of professional development locally and regionally
- Secured long term funding for this project.
- Improved accountability lines for the project

SACRE Adviser David Rees will be involved in these and will keep you updated through networks and newsletters – it is a potentially exciting development which could really help RE teachers and leaders connect more locally and hopefully nationally.

General resources/CPD

- We were recently contacted by a representative of '**Learn Islam**' – in their own words... '**Learn Islam** is a group of doctors, trustees, professionals, teachers and volunteers, which has been setup to help teachers. We work to provide high quality material related to Islam for free that has been verified, so that teachers are able to teach these topics in schools from young years to teenagers with more confidence and ease. These include:
 - PowerPoint slides for Primary and Secondary Schools.
 - Worksheets and Quizzes based on the slides to assess knowledge.
 - Covering KS1 through to KS4.
 - These are aligned to the RE syllabus, based on SACRE guidelines for Primary Schools and GCSE for Secondary Schools
 - 88 recorded words on how to pronounce them based on the curriculum.
 - Resources can be found on our website www.learn-islam.co.uk

We also have content on social media to help students and teachers engage to obtain better knowledge:

- Instagram link @LearnIslamUK - <http://instagram.com/learnislamuk>
- Facebook link @LearnIslamUK - <https://m.facebook.com/LearnIslamUK/>

- TikTok @LearnIslamUK - <https://tiktok.com/@learnislamuk>

Later we aim to record the slides with a voice over so that teachers can just play the videos on the relevant topics, these will be placed on our YouTube channel:

- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVZp-cvjxz7KBS-OjJEFieQ>

We can also arrange school visits to a local mosque for schools that are interested.

To help teachers struggling with topics in relation to Islam, we aim to provide virtual workshops

Simply contact us and we will set one up for the school on the topic the school wishes to cover.

We are continuing to create the content. However, if the content/topic the teacher is looking for covering is not found on the site. Just email us with your request learnislamforfree@gmail.com and we will be happy to support where possible or answer any questions.'

- **A New Humanism classroom clip** has been released called '**one life**' – Dr Alice Roberts narrates this short animation about the humanist approach to life and the importance humanists place on freedom, responsibility, and connections. 'Life is like a piece of string. It has a beginning and an end. We don't get much say about that. But we can make choices about the bit in between. We have the freedom to shape our own lives.'
https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/one-life-live-it-well/

Free downloadable Humanist resources for Teachers, including lesson plans, classroom activities, presentations, videos, and humanist perspectives on a range of topics discussed in school are available at the Understanding Humanism website. '**Understanding Humanism** is Humanists UK's education service. It aims to introduce young people to humanism as an example of a non-religious worldview. It provides teachers with the resources necessary to teach accurate, high-quality lessons about humanism, and assists them with the development of their own subject knowledge. The Understanding Humanism website offers information and services, including free school speakers who can work with teachers to broaden students' understanding. Visit Understanding Humanism at understandinghumanism.org.uk.'

Teachers can also find guidance and information about CPD opportunities.

<https://humanism.org.uk/education/teachers/>

- **British library - Discovering Sacred Texts** provides access to the richness and diversity of the texts from some of the world's greatest faiths. Discover more about the sacred texts from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and the Baha'i Faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism - find out more at this link - <https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts>
- **Empowering Voices project** – Gillian Georgiou, RE adviser for Diocese of Lincoln, has been leading a project since 2015 to support children and young people to engage with a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. The latest iteration of this work is the Empowering Voices project. This is a series of thirty-minute podcasts, each of which focuses on a particular worldview. Each podcast comprises of an audio play written collaboratively by young people and a professional writer, an 'in-conversation' piece that picks up on the themes of the play, and an immersive soundscape; the team have also produced accompanying education packs for each podcast, aimed at KS2 to KS3.
<https://www.reconnectlincs.co.uk/empowering->

[voices?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=summer_term_2023&utm_content=2023-04-11](https://www.sacre.org.uk/voices?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=summer_term_2023&utm_content=2023-04-11)

The first two podcasts have just been launched: the first focuses on the experience of white reverts to Islam in Scunthorpe and the second explores a black Evangelical Christian worldview in Bristol.

Future podcasts include engagement with Hindu and Sikhi worldviews in the Midlands, Jewish worldviews in Hertfordshire, the experience of a Pakistani Humanist in the south west and a female experience of Anglican Christianity.'

- **Veganism as a worldview in RE** - FREE RESOURCES to support teaching about the moral status of animals and Ethical Veganism as a worldview in RE. RE Today has been working with the new non-profit organisation, 'VinE' (Veganism in Education) to produce a range of free classroom resources for RE which enable teachers and pupils to explore, through critical, objective and pluralistic RE lessons, questions around the moral status of animals and ethical veganism as a worldview. This project is also supported by Animal Interfaith Alliance.
- **NATRE**, the subject teacher association for RE professionals, works to support those who teach and lead in all schools and institutions and at all stages of their career. NATRE has a website which includes a resource library - <https://www.natre.org.uk/resources/>

SACRE hopes that this newsletter contains useful ideas to help you in the coming term. We will send another newsletter out at the start of the Autumn term, but no-one quite rightly wants to think about that at the moment. In the meantime, SACRE sends very best wishes to you for the new term and as always commends you for all your hard work and dedication.

David Rees SACRE RE Adviser

April 2023