**Spring Term 2023– First Edition!**

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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of the RE Newsletter for Community Schools for 2023! I do hope that you had some well-deserved rest and relaxation during the holiday period and that you are refreshed and ready to face the new term! I look forward to continuing to work with you all in the coming weeks and months, either online or face to face as we seek to develop and strengthen our subject across a wide range of London schools.

Do keep in touch via the various WhatsApp Groups that exist for Primary Subject Leaders in RE in many LAs now. Please contact me with your name, school and LA if you would like to be added. Remember that I am always here to offer you help, advice and support with RE (or Collective Worship). You may be:

* preparing teaching and learning
* reviewing and revising RE documentation such as schemes of learning and policy statements
* organising existing resources and/or selecting new ones
* developing your own subject knowledge.

I would be delighted to hear from you. Do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to make an appointment and I can assist you in person, online, by email or over the telephone.

Lesley Prior

**RE IN COMMUNITIES NEWSLETTER**

Adviser for RE in Community Schools

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| * **LB Brent:** 28th February, 9th May\* * **LB Camden:** 7th March, 6th June\* * **LB Hammersmith & Fulham:** 23rd March, 20th June\* * **RB Kensington &**   **Chelsea/City of Westminster:** 23rd February, 22nd June   * **LB Harrow:** 19th January,27th April\* * **LB Hounslow:** 14th March, 25th May\* * **RB Kingston/LB Richmond:** 9th March, 13th June\*   In LAs marked with an asterisk, a WhatsApp Group is available. Please contact me if you would like to be added. | **Dates of Primary RE Network Meetings**  **2022/23** |

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| **Study Visit to India** |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  |   This trip is designed to provide a taster of the vast and interesting country that is India through time spent in its capital, Delhi. It is being led by Pamela Draycott, a very experienced and highly regarded RE Adviser who has run similar trips many times.  Participants will be based in one hotel and travel around the varied sites of the capital from there, in an air-conditioned coach.    They will be visiting sites of religious and cultural significance such as the Jama Masjid (the largest mosque in India) in its setting of Chandini Chowk, the sprawling market area of Old Delhi along with visits to a Hindu Mandir, a Sikh Gurdwara and a Christian Church. It may also be possible to make a visit to the stunning Baha’i Temple.  Time in Delhi is not complete without going to the site of Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination (now a thought-provoking museum) and to the Raj Ghat (the place of his cremation).  A coach tour of New Delhi includes sites such as India Gate and the Parliament buildings. The National Gallery of Modern Art contrasts with the ancient buildings of Humayun’s Tomb and the Qutab Minar.  A local historian will give a short talk towards the beginning of the trip, providing insights into the history of this fascinating city. An opportunity to visit a home, watch some food being cooked and share it will further enhance the experience.  .  A day at rest on the Thursday will give participants the chance to relax and enjoy the hotel/Delhi at their own pace or for those who want to, an optional day trip on the train to Agra to visit the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort is possible (at a small extra cost).    The trip runs over the October half term break time. As the half term is different in different parts of the country the same trip will run twice. The first being Saturday 19th to Saturday 26th October 2024 and the second being Saturday 26th October to Saturday 2nd November 2024. There will be ample opportunity to take photographs and buy artefacts, along with spices, clothes and lots of other things.  Full details (with costs!) are available here: <https://soulofindia.com/lgxcarousel/a-taste-of-delhi/> | | |

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| **Strictly RE Conference!** |

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| The **Strictly RE Conference** is back in 2023! It takes place on 28th – 29th January 2023. Please note **Strictly RE 2023** will be held online, from the comfort of your own home. The **Strictly RE 2023 Conference** themes are:  • Depth  • Diversity  • Abrahamic Worldviews    By booking a place for the **Strictly RE Conference 2023**, you can attend the live sessions but you also get all the recordings and downloadable resources that are available from the weekend and weekday sessions that you did not attend!  Choose from a range of seminars on a wide variety of topics, including:   * Thinking out loud- joining the dots to help children think more critically (Primary) * Introducing Philosophy and Philosophers to the Primary Classroom (Primary) * Interfaith conversations - exploring creative projects that deepen pupils understanding in RE (Crossphase) * Special RE​ (Crossphase) * Championing and advocating for RE with parents (for SLTs)   Please note that you are not required to attend a seminar at every time slot.  See <https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2023/> for details and booking form. |

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| **Reminder: Holocaust Memorial Day** |

**Holocaust Memorial Day,** organised by the **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust** (**HMDT**), takes place on Friday, 27th January 2023. The theme this time is **Ordinary People**. SACREs, LAs and schools can find a wide variety of resources here: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/?genocide=any&resource_type=11&age=23>



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| **Update on RE Legislation!** |

In our Network Meetings for Subject Leaders last term, I mentioned the draft Schools’ Bill in which it was proposed that all schools should become academies by 2030. Such a change would be significant in the context of RE, as academies are not *required* to follow locally agreed syllabuses for RE (though many *choose* to do so).

At the end of 2022, this Bill was dropped and so at the time of writing, there are no imminent changes in the legislation that presently governs our subject. The current arrangements therefore remain as follows:

-If you lead RE in a community school that is under the control of the LA then you MUST follow the locally agreed syllabus for your Borough.

-If you lead RE in a community school with academy status, then you may choose to follow the locally agreed syllabus for your Borough, but you are not obliged to do so.

-If you are in the voluntary aided sector – for example in a Church of England or Catholic school – then you should follow the syllabus prescribed by the relevant Diocese or other religious authorities.

You may also be interested in this December 2022 statement from Nick Gibb MP who is Minister of State in the Department of Education:

*‘The Government has no plans to introduce a national compulsory curriculum for RE. The Government’s policy is to allow RE curricula to be designed at local level, whether that is through locally agreed syllabuses or by individual schools and academy trusts developing their own curricula. It will remain for individual schools to plan, organise and deliver their curriculum.”*

If you require more detailed information about the current legislative arrangements for our subject, please refer to the following documents:

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7167/CBP-7167.pdf>

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf> - although this dates from 2010, it remains valid as the statutory requirements have not changed since it was issued.

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| **Religious Artefacts for Use in Schools** |

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| Many schools enhance and enrich opportunities for teaching and learning in RE by making creative use of artefacts from different faiths and traditions. They may build their collections of relevant items by asking for donations from within and beyond their own communities or by making purchases from shops in particular areas where such objects are widely available. But if you are looking to place large orders with individual companies that can address all your requirements, the following may be of interest to you:   * **Artefacts to Order**: <http://artefactstoorder.co.uk/product-category/religion/> * **TTS Group**: <https://www.tts-group.co.uk/primary/re/religious-artefact-collections/>   I would also recommend this book to support you and your colleagues in using artefacts appropriately in RE.     * **Religious Artefacts in the Classroom by Paul Gateshill and Jan Thompson**.   Although it was published many years ago, it is still an invaluable resource and second hand copies are available cheaply online! |

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| **Census Data on Religion and Belief 2021** |

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| As 2022 drew to a close, the Office for National Statistics published data on religion and belief across England and Wales drawn from the National Census conducted in 2021. The main points to emerge were as follows and have clear implications for RE:   * The religion question is voluntary; 94.0% (56.0 million) of usual residents answered the question in 2021, an increase from 92.9% (52.1 million) in 2011. * 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”.   You can check the following link for further information and to access the whole report:  <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion>  I recommend that you also look for the data for your specific LA and consider what it might mean for your RE syllabus, as well as the schemes of learning you use in your school. |

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| **The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse** |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A sign in the snow  Description automatically generated with low confidence |   During the holiday period, many of you may have watched this programme on the BBC. It is a story of kindness, friendship, courage and hope for viewers of all ages in a heartwarming, hand-drawn animated film based on the children's book of the same name by Charlie Mackesy.  Although the book and the film are not explicitly religious in any way, they may well be a very useful resource for us in RE as they deal implicitly with many concepts and themes that are important in our subject, such as loneliness, making mistakes, friendship, creating a community and asking for help. These can be discussed and reflected upon with children of all ages to give them a more developed understanding of how the same concepts may be understood by people from different religions and worldviews. There is also of course much potential for these resources for use within PSHE and even Collective Worship.  The BBC has provided some guidance materials for parents/carers which can be accessed here, but they may also be of use to teachers in schools: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z2n9jfr> | | |

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| **RE Classroom Resources on Veganism** |

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| Some new RE materials are soon to be available to view on the Veganism in Education (VinE) website here: Classroom Resources for RE - Veganism in Education ([www.teachvine.org](http://www.teachvine.org) )  These will be officially launched in January, during Veganuary, with the support of RE Today/NATRE. The actor and activist Peter Egan is going to record a brief presentation to the RE materials to help promote them.    Schools are required to teach RE in a way that is objective, critical and pluralistic and must include both religions and worldviews, some of which incorporate veganism as an element within their ethical codes. |