

Swindon Borough Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Tuesday, 20 April 2021

In Public Virtual Meeting - LiveStream

At 6.00 p.m.

Group A:	Jo Backus, Buddhist Community
Christian Denominations and	David Burbidge, Baptist Church
Other Religions or Religious	Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance
Denominations	Ms Michelle Howard, United Reformed Church
	Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community
	Malkit Babbra, Sikh Community
	Atiff Ghafar, Muslim Community
	Claire-Marie Burchall, Roman Catholic Community

Group B:	Ruth Williams
The Church of England	Reverend Clive Deverell

Group C:	Tracy Mason, NEU
Teacher Associations	Helen Redhead, NEU
	Lottie O'Brien, NASUWT
	Emma McCarthy, NUSUWT
	Sarah Stewart

Group D:	Councillor Fay Howard
The Local Authority	Councillor Matthew Courtliff
	Councillor Oladapo Ibitoye
	Councillor Garry Perkins
	Councillor Imtiyaz Shaikh

Co-Opted:	Jo Garton, Swindon Humanists
	Fidelma Meehan, Baha'i Community

Support Officers:	Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor
	Gareth Cheal, Education Place Planning and Admissions Manager
	Steve Bogg, Commissioner for Education

Committee Officer: Rita Glen Gallo, 07980 752051

email: rglen-galo@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

AGENDA

1. Note

The link for the public session of the meeting is here:

[SACRE – 20th April 2021](#)

This link will only work from 6.00 p.m. on 20th April 2021.

For help on viewing the meeting, please visit: [Support Office](#). Please note that if Members resolve to go in to a private and confidential discussion the public link will be closed.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

4. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

5. Chair's Announcements

6. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2021.

7. Verbal Feedback from teacher members

Feedback from teacher members about how it has been in schools during this season of the pandemic and the impact on RE.

8. Annual Report (Pages 9 - 16)

9. Verbal Feedback from RE Conference and SACRE Conference

Please note that both these meeting were held online this year.

10. National Updates / Newsletter for Schools (Pages 17 - 34)

11. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Here are the provisional dates for the meetings next Municipal year. These will be confirmed at Full Council in May 2021.

- 13th July 2021
- 23rd November 2021
- 15th March 2022

Date of Despatch: 22 March 2021

Public Question Time - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

The deadline for public questions is: 15:00 on Friday, 16th April 2021

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Chief Legal Officer, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "[Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance](#)", which is available on the Council website or from the Committee Officer named above.

A privacy note about how we record Public Questions is available here: [Publication of public questions and questioners](#).

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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:-

Group A: David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Malkrit Babbra
Christian Denominations and (Buddhist Community), Jo Backus (Buddhist
Other Religions or Religious Community), Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community) and
Denominations Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical
Alliance)

Group B: Ruth Williams and Reverend Clive Deverell
Church of England

Group C: Tracy Mason, Lottie O'Brien and Emma McCarthy
Teacher Organisations

Group D: Councillors Fay Howard, Matthew Courtliff and
Councillors Imtiyaz Shaikh

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Gareth Cheal
(Interim SEND Lead)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Garry Perkins and Oladapo Ibitoye along with members Helen Redhead, Sarah Stewart, Clare-Marie Burchall, Atiff Ghafar, Michelle Howard and Steve Bogg.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interest in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

2. **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

3. **Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2020, be confirmed as a correct record.

4. **Agreed syllabus review process**

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that SACRE has a statutory obligation to review its Agreed Syllabus and to convene an Agreed Syllabus Working Party every 5 years. She advised that she had contacted the Senior Primary Commissioner regarding this matter and was waiting for confirmation regarding the allocation of a budget. Garth Cheal confirmed that the budget allocation request was being submitted to the Schools Forum in January 2021.

The SACRE Advisor asked for volunteers to sit on the working party being set up to review the syllabus and the following agreed to assist: Councillor Shaikh, Ruth Williams, Jo Backus, Tracy Mason, Dinish Patel and Lottie O'Brien. She confirmed that surveys, including virtual ones, had been issued and once responses were received, the working party will analyse the results and the next course of action will be agreed. She advised that she had been in negotiations with RE Today Services about the potential costing for a renewed licence for the current RE syllabus. Members noted that there will be an extra SACRE meeting in April/ May 2021. This will also be an Agreed Syllabus Conference where the working group will present its findings and group determine the next course of action.

Resolved – (1) That a working group be set up to review the RE syllabus.

(2) That an Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting be set up in April/ May 2021.

5. Collective Worship/ Assemblies under current restrictions

Mr Burbidge advised that the Baptist church had produced a programme for the Christmas term suitable for Year 5/6 children and was called Christmas Unwrapped. Mrs McCarthy referred to assemblies recorded by the Swindon Evangelical church that she was using as lesson aids. Mrs O'Brien referred to teaching aids for secondary schools. Members heard that guidance circulated in the agenda focused on primary school collective worship and noted that it would be beneficial to have similar information made available for secondary schools. The SACRE Advisor confirmed that she will collate the available supportive information from various churches and organisations, and following feedback from Mrs O'Brien and Mrs Stewart, will circulate to schools.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor be requested to compose and circulate guidance on worship to primary and secondary schools.

6. National Updates for RE

The SACRE Advisor informed the group about the impact of the Commission on Religious Education report. Understanding the meaning of world views was important and the debate regarding diversity in religious opinions had to be encouraged within and across different religious and non-religious groups. She referred to the effect on curriculum design and how the Religious Education Council has commissioned an academic literature review and guidance for agreed syllabus conferences for SACRE on how to design a new syllabus. Members noted that RE Today Services were proposing to write a syllabus to encompass the teaching of world views. Members further noted that RE syllabi will be different in five years' time.

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that the number of student undertaking RE at GCSE level was comparative to previous years and in the "A Level" setting, it compared well with other Humanities subjects. She also advised that a new Welsh RE curriculum will come into effect from September 2022 and will be called Religion, Values and Ethics.

The SACRE Advisor drew the groups' attention to the availability of training by Farmington Fellowship for RE Teachers in respect of subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise. The group also noted the provision of new materials for schools from free churches and the National Association of Teachers of RE.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor be requested to circulate links to resources to primary and secondary schools headteachers.

7. Feedback from online RE Hub meeting held on 10th November 2020

SACRE received an update from Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, about the recent RE Hub meeting. The Hub Leader explained that the virtual meeting was well attended by both primary and secondary schools. She confirmed that the session focused on anti-racism and advised that the SACRE Advisor gave a presentation regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. This helped members focus their thoughts on future RE planning material. There was also a discussion on the agreed syllabus and members agreed to meet again during the next scholastic term. Members noted that there were quite a number of new RE teachers attending who were interested in the new RE syllabus being proposed. The Hub Leader referred them to a course being undertaken by the SACRE Advisor and her colleague, Adam Robertson.

Resolved – That the feedback from Hub meetings be noted.

8. Any Other Business

Members noted the following:

- That the SACRE Advisor was now also advising Wiltshire SACRE.
- That due to Covid-19, the school websites review would not be undertaken this scholastic year.
- The Dillington Conference usually held at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset will now be held virtually on 1st March 2021.
- That the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Annual Religious Education Conference 2021 that will be held on 31st January 2021 and this will also be held virtually on the 29th January.

Resolved – That Mrs McCarthy be requested to circulate the flyer for the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Annual Religious Education Conference 2021.

9. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Next meeting is due to be held on 16th March 2021 at 6.00 p.m. Members of the SACRE were asked to suggest venues or indicate where this meeting should be held.

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Swindon SACRE Annual Report 2019 - 2020

Annual RE Conference 2020

Friday 31st January 2020 9.30 am - 3.30 pm
Engineers House, Bristol BS8 3NB

"RE to save the Planet?"



Our Annual RE Conference
and examples of Religious
Education from Even
Swindon Primary School

Chair's Introduction

Welcome to our annual report 2019 - 20

This was the most difficult year in most of our living memories for teachers and for Swindon SACRE. We only managed to meet twice this Academic year as the Summer Term meeting was cancelled due to the impact of the pandemic. Nevertheless we have managed to offer support and encouragement to Swindon Schools.

Supporting Good RE through CPD

Once again we were able to serve schools through signposting an excellent, well attended and evaluated conference.

The Annual RE Conference organized jointly between Swindon, South Glos and Bristol SACREs was held on 31st January 2019 at Engineers House in Clifton, Bristol.

The theme was:

“RE to Save the Planet” and the keynote speaker was **Fiona Moss**. 11 Swindon teachers attended this event.

We unfortunately had to postpone the **“Assemblies SMSC British Values and Character Development for All Schools”** training planned for May the 5th and the summer **LTLRE conference** on June 26th (both to have been held at The Deanery CE Academy) due to Covid 19 restrictions.

We were able to signpost teachers to online materials for home learning for RE and guidance for Collective Worship at home and in small groups. These can be downloaded [here](#)

The Learn Teach Lead Initiative funded by the Jerusalem Trust and the St Matthias trust has also injected life into RE in the region by training and offering support to **Hub Leaders Emma McCarthy from Orchid Vale Primary School has been the Primary Swindon RE Hub leader during this reporting period. Emma Ainsley-King from Commonweal Secondary Hub** meetings are free and open to all schools and attract from between 8 to 35. The meeting in the autumn and the summer were held - the meeting in the spring was postponed. The Meeting held on the 19th October was led by **Adam Robertson** who is the LTLRE hub leader for Bristol and Adviser to South Glos SACRE and his subject was **Ideas to teach Islam**. The meeting held on the 22nd June was jointly held with Taunton LTLRE and arranged by their Hub leader Kathryn.

Suspended Initiatives that have had impact in previous years

During this reporting period we have had to suspend **The WIRE Award** (Widening Inclusion in RE) as schools could not go on visits or have people to visit the school. The award recognises that a teacher from the school has attended CPD, pupils in any year group have visited a place of worship that is not Christian and either put on an RE day or enter an RE

competition such as Spirited Arts organized by NATRE. Some schools may have fulfilled some elements of the criteria during 2019 - 20 and this can be carried over to a future time.

The other initiative taken in previous years was in response to SACRE's need to monitor standards and compliance with little funding or capacity, we undertook a simple website scrutiny. With the pressure that senior leaders have been under this year it was deemed insensitive to continue with this scrutiny, but we hope to return to this in Academic year 2021-22

We have been able to continue to employ **Katy Staples as the adviser to SACRE** and, through her, individual bespoke support has been given to several schools. SACRE is grateful to Swindon Unitary Authority for its continuing support to Swindon SACRE through funding an adviser and ensuring timely and accurate clerking to the body through the work of Rita Glen-Gallo.

Our thanks go to those who have served us in the role of SACRE members and in the last year.

'Meaningful relationships'

We have meaningful relationships with LA schools, academies, faith groups, and other local SACREs to ensure that we can offer our schools the best support possible. We continue to work closely with faith communities in Swindon and ensure that teachers can access faith speakers and people to help ensure visits to places of worship run well.

Our Collective Worship Guidance "Time to Breathe" 2016 has continued to be circulated signposted and recommended. This can be found by approaching the adviser katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org.

I have been SACRE Chair for over two years now and have been privileged to serve this body through this exhausting and trying time. I am proud that through the engagement of teachers and committed SACRE members we have continued to be able to offer some advice to beleaguered colleagues. SACRE is a body committed to ensuring that the pupils in our area know and understand the complexity of religion and world views so they can live well in our diverse world and face all that life may place in their path..

Fay Howard

Councillor Fay Howard

Chair of Swindon SACRE.



What is SACRE?

SACRE is the abbreviation for the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**. Its composition is specifically multi-belief/ worldview and includes serving primary and secondary school teachers. There is also representation from the British Humanist Association.

It is a statutory requirement for every Local Authority to have a SACRE and to support its work. The purpose of SACRE is to advise on the effective provision of RE and Collective Worship.

Swindon SACRE believes that Religious Education is unique because it is the only subject where the curriculum is not prescribed nationally but agreed locally. This means that we can ensure that the syllabus we offer children and young people gives examples of belief lived and practiced by people who have lived and currently live in their locality.

The Agreed Syllabus for Swindon

SACRE takes an active part in the review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus every five years by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference. This Academic year 2019 - 20 we started to turn our attention to the need to renew our Agreed Syllabus during the Academic Year 2021-22 and to that end a time line was agreed in the March 2019 meeting. The current Agreed Syllabus was first adopted in 2016 and is written by RE Today Services to receive a copy please contact: katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org

How SACRE is funded and administered

SACRE receives funding of £5,000 per annum from Swindon Council. As a statutory board SACRE is clerked through the council's services.

All SACRE's members are volunteers who give up their time freely and enthusiastically to help SACRE with its work.

SACRE Adviser

The SACRE Adviser advises SACRE and enacts its decisions. Since 2009 Katy Staples (Bristol Diocese) has provided the advice and support for Swindon SACRE. She invoices the local authority three times a year and keeps within the budget set. This has provided SACRE with a dedicated and experienced resource. Katy also advises Bristol SACRE and has extensive expertise in education and working in schools. During this period, the Local Authority Elected Members, Steve Bogg and Senior Primary Commissioner, and Gareth Cheal Interim SEND lead were able to offer oversight of this council. Steve Bogg attended the November meeting.

SACRE works to the non-statutory guidance in the 1994 document: Circular 1/94. Parts of that document have been replaced with the guidance: 'Religious Education in English Schools: Non- statutory guidance 2010'.

Swindon Council has approved a constitution for SACRE. A copy of the constitution may be obtained from the Clerk to SACRE Rita Glen-Gallo RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk

Support for schools

In line with its key priority to raise attainment in RE through advising and training teachers, SACRE undertook the following work in 2019-20

Annual RE Conference

Teachers in Swindon were offered the opportunity to attend the Bristol South Glos and Swindon SACRE Annual RE conference. 11 teachers from Swindon Schools attended this conference. This year the Key Note speaker was Fiona Moss from RE Today Services. She spoke about **“RE to save the Planet”** and helped teachers to gain confidence in their subject knowledge by inspiring them with new ideas to investigate what religions teach about humans relationship and responsibilities towards the natural world. There were excellent workshops including: **“Hands on Creation for EYFS”** led by Claire Hawkins and Elinor Watt from Fishponds CE Academy, **“Stewards or Vandals”** led by Adam Robertson, Laura Harris (NATRE Regional Ambassador for RE) with Callum Humphries from Christian Aid.

There were two secondary workshops. One focussed on **“Buddhism and the Environment”** and was led by Emma Woodshaw from Gordano School and Advayamati from the Bristol Buddhist Centre. **“Christianity, Climate Change and Poverty”** was led by Jill Dickinson, former head of Religious Studies at Saint Mary Redcliffe and Temple School.

All the materials from this conference can be downloaded [here](#)

Best Practice Forums and Learn, Teach, Lead RE Conference

A very exciting development in RE has been the *Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE)* project. This is a project that ran successfully in Devon and Cornwall, this was extended to include Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Swindon. It has secured funding from the Jerusalem Trust and the St Matthias Trust with the aim of creating a network of RE ‘hubs’ that will train ‘hub leaders’ to offer support and training to all teachers, both primary and secondary to improve the teaching of RE. This project has been running and serving Swindon Schools since 2015 and has ably and consistently run by Emma McCarthy (Primary) from Orchid Vale Academy and Emma Ainsley-King (Secondary) Commonweal School. During this reporting period they have continued to receive training, both in person and online and have held hub meetings both in person and online.

The SACRE adviser, Katy Staples, assists in training the hub leaders. The new hub met twice during the 2019 - 20 year, one meeting held at Orchid Vale Primary Academy attracted 25 attendees, the Zoom training shared with the Taunton Hub attracted around 9 teachers of RE.. The variety of the Hub meetings ensured that RE leaders and teachers in Swindon were able to receive the support that they needed. This years meetings centred on Islam. Thanks go to both hub leaders for their drive and organisation!

Support for schools through Governor training

As part of its role to offer advice on effective RE, SMSC and Collective Worship SACRE runs training for Governors who serve Swindon schools on an annual basis

On February 6th 2020 Katy Staples led a Governor training evening, 11 delegates from 9 schools attended , the feedback was 100% Good or Outstanding.

Monitoring of RE provision in Swindon

A key task for SACRE is to monitor the overall provision of RE in Swindon schools. This is quite a difficult task, as it is some years since individual school Ofsted reports specifically commented on RE. The main evidence base that SACRE has to work from is the data from examinations. In the Year 2019-20 due to the pandemic no public examinations took place as a result we have no examination results to use to help us monitor the standards and entitlement to RE that pupils are receiving in Swindon Schools.

South West Regional SACRE conference

Two SACRE members Jo Backus (Buddhist rep) and Katy Staples (adviser) attended this conference for SACRE members on March 2nd 2020 held at Dillington House, Illminster.

The topic was **SACRE Futures**

Professor Trevor Cooling, Chair of the Religious Education Council provided a keynote address: "The Commission on RE - where to next?"

Other workshops included were

- The crisis in RE at KS4 and the offer being made in Bristol, Jill Dickinson and Ed Pawson
- The new 2019 Ofsted framework and the monitoring of RE, Laura Harris Regional Ambassador for RE
- Engagement and monitoring of RE provision in Schools using website checking as a tool for SACREs, Katy Staples shared Swindon SACRE's good practice
- Reviewing an Agreed Syllabus in the light of the national entitlement and Big Ideas for RE, Dave Francis and Barbara Wintersgill
- REQM: Celebrating your RE: One of the region's REQM assessors will explain the possibilities for SACREs and schools presented by the RE Quality Mark. The workshop will present new criteria for the award and explore how REQM can transform the subject and have a positive impact on wider school improvement issues. Jane Kelly.

Statutory matters

SACRE has a statutory role to decide on any determinations. These are requests by schools to move away from the requirement for collective worship to be wholly, broadly or mainly of a Christian character. During the period of this report, there have been no requests for determinations.

Where a complaint has been made about the RE curriculum in a Swindon school, it should be referred to Swindon Council for it to deal with. Swindon Council has undertaken to seek SACRE's advice on any such complaint. There have been no formal complaints within this reporting period.

SACRE has a complaints procedure to deal with any complaints made against SACRE. There were no such complaints in the reporting period.

Members of SACRE September 2019 -20

Committee A:	David Burbidge (Baptist Church)
Christian and other religious denominations	Jo Backus (Buddhist Community)
	Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community)
9 Members	Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance)
	Atiff Ghafar (Muslim Community)
	M S Khan (Muslim Community)
	Malkit Babbra , (Sikh)
	Clare-Marie Burchall (Roman Catholic Community)
	Michelle Howard (United Reformed Church)
Committee B	Ruth Williams
Church of England	Reverend Clive Deverell
	Reverend Norma McKemey
Committee C	
teachers nominated by the South Gloucestershire TCC	Mrs Tracy Mason
	Mrs Lottie O'Brien
	Mrs Helen Redhead
	Mrs Emma McCarthy

Committee D Councillor Matthew Courtliff

Local Authority representatives Councillor Fay Howard
Councillor Oladapo Ibitoye
Councillor Garry Perkins
Councillor Bazil Solomon

Committee E Fidelma Meehan (Baha'i Community)

Non voting Co-opted Jo Garton (Humanist)

During the reporting period, SACRE was chaired by Fay Howard and the vice chair was Emma McCarthy.

The Clerk was Rita Glen-Gallo.

Meetings were held at the following places on these dates:

Commonweal Secondary School, The Mall, Swindon, SN1 4JE

26th November 2019

Main agenda items were:

1. A presentation from Emma Ainslie-King about RE at Commonweal School
2. KS4 Working Party - non exam RE SACRE guidance
3. Religious Education and the New Ofsted Framework
4. Feedback from Hub meetings ,
5. The WIRE Gold Award

The Deanery CE Academy, Peglars Way, Swindon SN1 7DA

1. Presentation from Sarah Stewart about RE at The Deanery CE Academy
2. Draft SACRE Annual Report
3. Development Plan
4. Suggested Timeline for the Agreed Syllabus Review process
5. Feedback from RE conference held in Bristol and from SACRE conference held at Dillington House in Illminster.

The meeting of the July 21st 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic.

All SACRE meetings are open to members of the public who should contact the Clerk for details of forthcoming meetings.

The Swindon SACRE can be contacted via its Clerk: Rita Glen-Gallo RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk

Review of the Swindon Agreed Syllabus 2021 - Teacher Voice

Sources of Evidence

There were only 10 responses to the survey, I think the stresses and strains of Covid have directly affected people's capacity to engage with this process:

There were 11 teachers who attended the Hub Meeting (again only 2 Secondary teachers) and offered feedback on 10th November 2010 (some of those who attended the meeting had also completed the survey).

Primary 10	Secondary 2
Green Meadow	Lawn Manor
Ferndale	Commonweal
Orchid Vale	
Robert le kyng	
Nythe	
Peatmoor	
Grange Junior School	
Eldene	
Laines Mead	
St Francis	

Over half of these schools are Academies and therefore do not have to follow the locally agreed syllabus.

It is difficult to say, therefore, how representative the results of the survey and opinions heard at the Hub meeting are of schools as a whole in the area.

They represent the schools that most engage with training and who join in with the RE community or access support. It does represent a healthy mix of different types of schools in the area, only one of the schools that responded has a religious foundation (St Francis).

Of the 10 schools that responded to the survey the majority felt that it did meet the needs of learners and is engaging and challenging end of the spectrum.

However not all schools use the Agreed Syllabus and their main or only resource

Other resources used:

2 of the schools used 'Understanding Christianity' as a resource (this is for the teaching of Understanding Christianity)

6 use "Discovery RE" as well

5 schools mentioned using RE Today materials.

Other resources mentioned included BBC film clips and resources suggested by RE hub leaders and on training events.

The elements of the Agreed Syllabus that people were positive about were:

Having clear enquiry questions for each unit (Discovery RE has similar questions to the AS but not identical)

The units based exploring different religions e.g. L2.8 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today?

Lesson plan ideas - a variety of options to meet outcome. The building of knowledge across the year groups through the three strands of learning.

How the beliefs of lots of different religions are used and relate to children's own lives.

The outlines of the lessons are easy to follow.

The children enjoy units linked to Hinduism and Islam

Outcomes for each unit of work which can be used for assessment.

We really enjoy the way the units focus on a big question.

Aspects mentioned as being dull or difficult

Some teachers/HLTA find the subject difficult as a whole, but have found Discovery RE useful for developing own knowledge and for engaging the pupils.

Pupils appear more disengaged if there is either too much discussion or too little practical activities.

Some of the units are quite tricky to teach such as U2.8 What difference does it make to believe in ahimsa (harmlessness), grace, and/or Ummah (community)?

None really - we have mixed up our curriculum by teaching a religion and then a theme as well as inter-weaving religious views into our themes.

If the children are not particularly religious some of the bible stories can do the above. More modern versions would be beneficial. I often source my own video clips to make the lessons more interesting.

The year 3/ 4 units can some times be a little difficult for our children to understand.

Some of the Christianity units can be dry

Year six units are very challenging. Difficult for non specialists unless support materials are provided.

The Hinduism units are quite tricky to resource in year 4. The unit on Mohammed and his love for animals is hard to fill a lesson with in KS1. The units in year 3 and 4 on Moses and on Communion assume a great deal of background knowledge.

Amongst the difficulties experienced

We follow the Discovery RE units which link to the Agreed Syllabus - there is good progression within it and is structured to make it easier to teach

What would make it easier is having some more information on each unit e.g. key facts, links to videos

No - the layered learning allows for good progression across both key stages.

No

There is a lot to cover in 1 session so sometimes it can feel very rushed and it is difficult to cover the whole unit in a term.

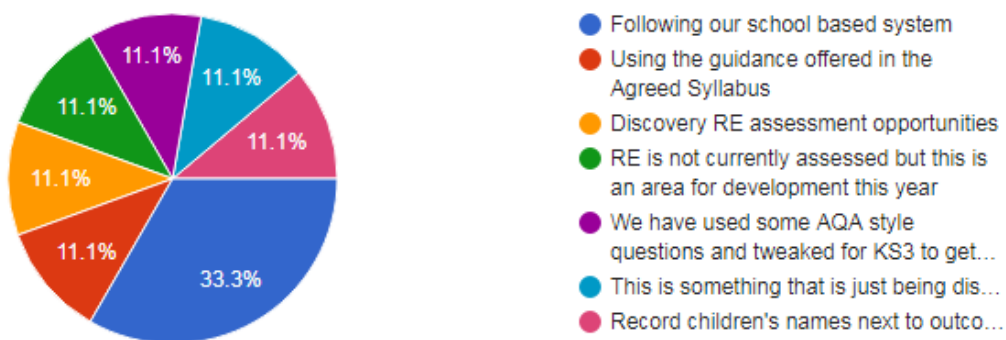
Some of the links to resources don't work. Too much content.

Almost too many ideas and outcomes to choose from

Need an accompanying scheme of work or support materials that you can just pick up and teach from for non specialists.

Generally it is well received but those teachers who do not have a church background have needed extra support re Christian doctrine, on beatitudes, parables and miracles. UC is helping with this but our subject lead has needed to provide additional information.

Assessment



Missing elements of the Syllabus,

Not from the Agreed Syllabus

As above, a little more detail for teachers with limited subject knowledge

A specific inclusion of Sikhism ideas within the lesson plans. This faith is taught within our school.

No - I feel we have got to grips with the Agreed Syllabus and there are some parts that we want to implement into our SoL moving forward. It doesn't feel as if much if anything would need to be tweaked.

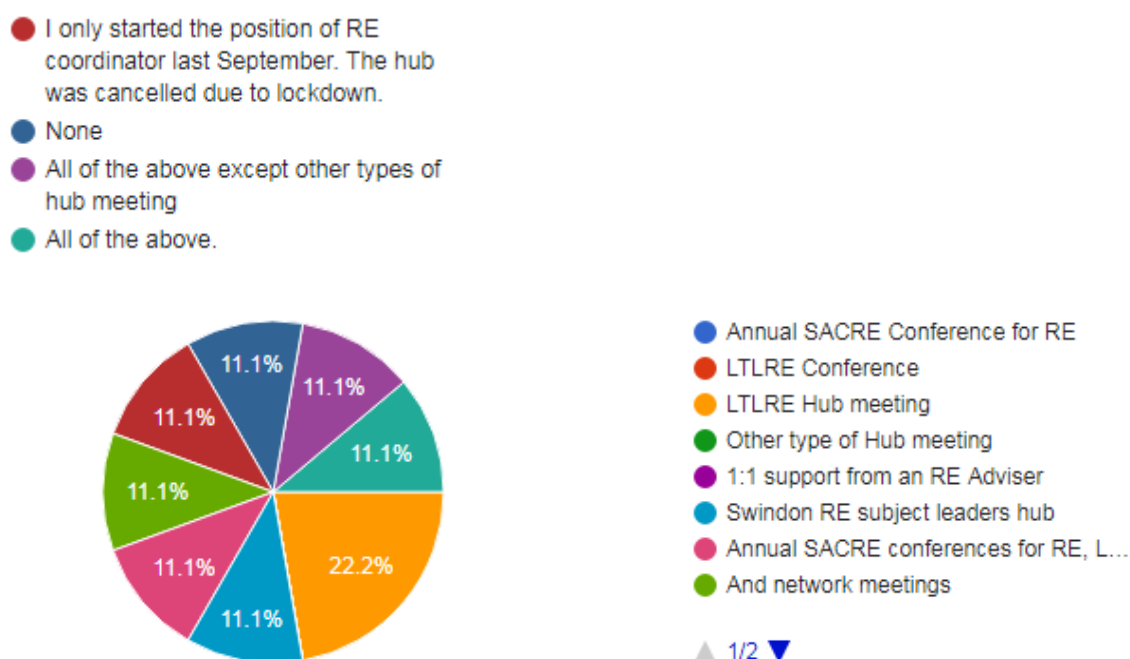
I think it's all covered but in our school we are trying to plan more whole school RE days, year group and house group activities, have more visitors in and visit more places (once COVID has settled down) to emphasise how important the subject is and how it goes towards creating open-minded individuals.

Links to resources. Less content in the units of work. Slim it down a little.

Non specialists would like lesson plans that they can pick up and teach for each unit of work. Too much content in RE Today scheme of work.

The Hinduism unit as above

Access to training for RE in their school in the last four years.



Other suggestions for improvements to the AS :

More information about SACRE and local hub support

A termly newsletter celebrating good practice and details of any new resources/websites.

It would be good to share SoL or lessons within the network. I use Seneca learning for GCSE pupils to revise / recall. However, they do not do anything for KS3 RE. Do you / or anyone else know where I could go to access similar online KS3 platforms for homework / revision exercises?

Suggestions of visitors from different religions who would be willing to come in and speak/ run whole days in schools. Lists of local religious settings that could be visited.

Resources. Keep us up to date with any changes.

Ideas how other coordinators use the scheme and how they assess; online sites to go to for support and ideas;

More user friendly. A unit of work for each term in each year group. We have to repeat some units with a different focus such as festivals or we have to carry a unit of work over two terms.

A specified order of units of work which can be used.

Further links to clips and resources. Inexpensive opportunities for people of faith to visit- especially Judaism representatives.

Specific Feedback offered at the Hub meeting

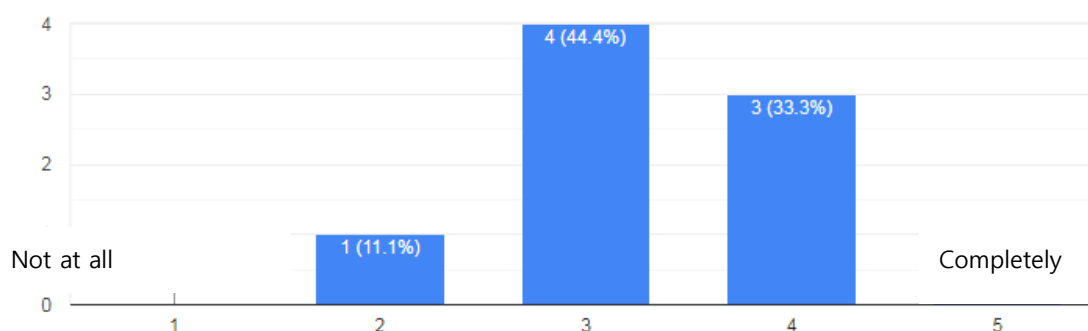
Some said it is too woolly. They use the headings but then come up with their own content. Others said it was easy to use and you don't need to have subject knowledge to teach it. Most said resources were hard to find or not available at all. Some staff like it and some use bits and bobs and then add to it to personalise it.

The RE co-ordinators in this room summed up a concern for each unit being too long, which means there won't be consistency of subject content being taught amongst Swindon schools. It was suggested having six lessons per unit would help ensure consistent coverage. There is concern that the amount of content also means that things can't be built upon throughout the year groups and having a slimmed down version would allow less content to be taught but developed further throughout the key stages.

Is the Agreed Syllabus fit for renewing for the next 5 years

Taking all of this into account, do you feel the current agreed syllabus is suitable for renewing for the next five years ?

9 responses



Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor

20/1/21

Minutes of the Swindon Agreed Syllabus Working Party

Thursday 21st January 2021 - Zoom

Those attending Jo Backus, Tracy Mason , Dinesh Patel, Ruth Williams, Katy Staples,	
Apologies Lottie O'Brien, Councillor Imtiyaz Shaikh	
Item	Outcome
1. To establish and agree the central purpose of this group and this meeting	<p>It was agreed that the purpose of this group was</p> <p>a) to reflect upon the needs of Teachers and pupils in Swindon in regards to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and</p> <p>b) to make Recommendations to the Agreed Syllabus Working Party</p>
2) To analyse the context and information re Swindon Schools and the Current Agreed Syllabus - <i>evidence base was the findings from the survey and feedback offered at the RE Hub meeting held on November 10th 2021</i>	<p>It was decided that there was no real appetite for change -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to the amount of change colleagues had dealt with under the Pandemic. • it is only 5 years since the last Agreed Syllabus was introduced and some schools may have only just fully implemented that. • The ramifications of the CoRE report have not yet settled and there are likely to be bigger changes ahead towards a "Religion and Worldviews" curriculum. So we wish to avoid unnecessary workload and confusion for teachers in changing the Agreed Syllabus twice in short succession.
3) The offer made by RE Today services for Relicensing the Agreed Syllabus :	It was decided that :

<p>The cost to SACRE for relicensing the Swindon Agreed Syllabus from RE Today Services will be £4838 (This is a negotiated reduction from £5330 due to the Adviser's haggling)</p> <p>For this sum the ASC will gain :</p> <p>An additional booklet with updates and extra material, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progression document (outlining how to use the syllabus to develop a coherent curriculum, reflecting Ofsted priorities of intent, implementation and impact). This will be updated as RE Today Services know more about Ofsted subject specialism groups etc 2. Updated EYFS outcomes 3. Assessment update 4. World religion guides 5. Intro to worldviews 6. Developing knowledge organisers plus sample KOs 7. Concrete advice on anti-racism 8. Visits, visitors and virtual visits 	<p>The offer from RE Today Services would cover most interim needs of teachers in Swindon Schools and Academies for whom the Locally Agreed Syllabus is an important point of reference.</p> <p>It can be accompanied with a RE-launch training offering exemplars of best practice in Spring Term 2022</p>
<p>ASWP Recommendation to the Agreed Syllabus Conference</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That we keep the same Swindon Agreed Syllabus for the next 5 years 2. That we accept the relicensing offer from RE Today Services for £4838 3. That we offer all schools a Re-launch training where we showcase examples of exemplary local practice and offer the new supplementary booklet with supporting briefing in Spring Term 2022 	

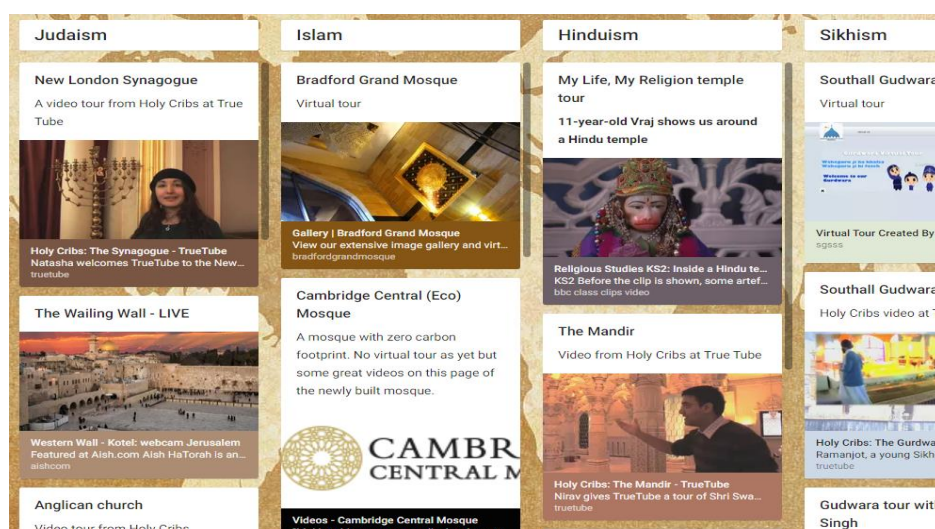


Newsletter for Teachers and National Updates for SACRE

Virtual RE - videos of places of worship, virtual visits and visitors

As we are in such an unusual context, visiting places of worship will not be possible and yet we want to offer pupils an experience of sacred spaces.

This [website](#) offers an excellent collection of virtual tour resources from around the country for all six major world religions and Humanism.



<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/learning/courses/?department=Board+of+Education>



A RE-Juvinating and RE-Inspiring RE Conference is going virtual on Wednesday 31st March.

With Lat Blaylock from RE Today as the keynote speaker and a range of workshops, run by colleagues across Wiltshire and Dorset, this is an event to inspire and encourage! Thanks to a grant from Sarum St Michael's Education Charity a ticket is only £50 per person. Book Here: <https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/learning/courses/psa-subscription-course-re-conference-wednesday-7435>

Keynote Creative, Thoughtful and Spiritual RE EYFS to KS4	Lat Blaylock
BREAK	
Morning Workshops 1. 'How to' – Creative ways to deliver RE digitally 2. CREative and Wriggly RE in EYFS and KS1 3. Sikhism in KS2	Steph Rann Hazel Baines Alison Harris
Text Centred Teaching in KS2 & 3	Lat Blaylock

LUNCH BREAK	
Special Guests in conversation ‘What is the text that has inspired you in these times?’ A panel of guests holding different religious and non-religious worldviews share the texts that have inspired them during the past year	Facilitated by Nicola Coupe & Katy Staples
BREAK	
Afternoon Workshops 1. ‘HEAR the text’ - Judaism in KS1 and EYFS 2. Use of Texts in Exam Classes in KS 4 & 5 3. Christianity – Creative approach to using Bible texts	Lynda Ford-Horne & Dave Rees Steph Rann Sarah Sprague



Introduction to using Understanding Christianity as a resource

One full day (20th May), plus a half day (21st September) This training

is suitable for church, community and independent schools who are new to the use of this excellent resource. It is also suitable for schools who may have the resource but who have a new RE leader who has not yet been trained in its use.

This course will be led by 2 Hub Lead Practitioners who are not only accredited Understanding Christianity Trainers, but who use the resource for the teaching of Christianity in their schools. The ‘text, impact and connections’ approach can be applied to the teaching of other religious worldviews and the creative approach to teaching RE can also be translated into other subjects across the curriculum.

This resource enriches teacher understanding and scaffolds planning of RE. It has sustained impact on pupils’ learning about Christianity in RE. Cost £230 (Thanks to a national grant secured by RE Today, there may be a refund of £75 following attendance by colleagues from community schools.) Book here:

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/learning/courses/ bespoke-cpd-course-introduction-to-using-the-7456>



Learn Teach Lead **RE**
Improving quality: building community

Learn, Teach, Lead RE Conference

SAVE the Date - more details and registration to follow (still deciding whether to go IRL or online)

‘This is my truth, tell me yours! Learning to disagree well in the classroom’.

It features a key note speech from Ruth Flanagan (Exeter University) and a range of workshops to inform and inspire. Richard Keogh the lead RE Inspector for Ofsted is also speaking.

When: Friday 25th June, 2021

Cost: £40

ofqual

Ofqual – consultation on proposed changes to GCSE and A level examinations 2021

In light of the recent government announcement about the 2021 exams, (March 1st) NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) has already been in contact with officials, and will continue to engage positively and constructively with both Ofqual and DfE as they consult about the replacement for exams. SACRE, through its adviser, can be available for any teachers responsible for Religious Studies to answer queries and offer support. Katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org

Subject knowledge Enhancement

Following the disappointing news that bursaries had been cut for most subjects including RE, it was really good news that Religious Education had been selected for funded subject knowledge enhancement courses. The funding will be available from April 2021 but hopefully will help support those people wishing to apply to teach RE who do not have a first degree in the subject. This decision follows intensive lobbying to make the point that about 84% of trainee secondary RE teachers do not have a degree in Theology or Religious Studies and therefore need support in developing their subject knowledge. Please can SACRE members forward this information to anyone thinking of a new career teaching Religious Education.

<https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/explore-my-options/teacher-training-routes/subject-knowledge-enhancement-ske-courses>

Support for teachers and those interested in the teaching of Religious Education (Religion and Worldviews)



Culham St Gabriel are a charitable organisation that funds projects and programmes to support teachers of RE , both in boosting subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise and also in supporting research projects and provides some bursaries details of their projects and programmes can be found [here](#)

The Culham St Gabriel's Leadership Programme: Finding your voice as a leader of Religion and Worldviews 2021-2022

Following a successful pilot programme in 2020-21 CSTG are now inviting applicants to be part of a new Cohort of Leaders for Change in 2021-22. This is an amazing opportunity for teachers.

Programme Outline

The funded programme aims to develop leaders in the following four areas: research, curriculum, classroom and politics

Stage 1: This stage is for those local or regional leaders who are beginning to work across more than one school. For example, leading Religion and Worldviews across a MAT or supporting other schools in a Federation and/or leading a local group or hub. Some NATRE Regional Ambassadors, SLEs, REQM Gold award RE leads or LTLRE Hub leads might find this Stage of CPD helpful.

Stage 2: This Stage is for teachers who have completed Stage 1 and/or for those who already have a regional/national role and would like to develop their expertise further. This stage is particularly for teachers/advisers who are likely to continue their specialism into senior leadership roles within or outside of their school situation. Those who are seeking to become advisers, ambassadors or an Executive member of one of the RE Organisations are particularly encouraged to apply. Please go the website for more details, participant guides and the application form. Applications need to be in by March 31st.

Find out more [here](#).



TEACH:RE

TO ENTHUSE. TO EDUCATE. TO INSPIRE.

Teach: RE primarily offers distance learning modules to teachers of RE. However it is not just for teachers. Teach: RE's modules contain a wealth of information that would be of benefit to anyone in the field of religion and worldviews education, whether SACRE members community representatives, local councillors or LA representatives. There are 10 interesting modules to choose from to find out more click [here](#)

Promote further study to your examination classes with these films of Graduates in Theology and Religious Studies

To study for a degree in Theology or Religious Studies is to open up a vast range of options for worthwhile careers. TRS-UK is launching a set of ten recently filmed interviews with TRS graduates in jobs as varied as television documentary-making, law, local government, public relations, education, and many more. These high-quality YouTube films are to be made available as ten individual (3-minute) filmed interviews and two 5-minute compilations, where graduates speak about the value of their degrees and show how they put their skills and knowledge to work in their jobs. They do not advertise a specific University, only the value of the degree and the doors it has opened for them.

[Careers List Film](#)

[TRS UK](#)



Evaluations of the *Understanding Christianity* Resource

One report was published on 11th December. It presents findings and analysis from a study that examines the impact of *Understanding Christianity* in schools across England. The study, conducted by Dr Rachael Shillitoe at the University of Birmingham, seeks to evaluate the impact of RE Today's *Understanding Christianity* teaching resource amongst pupils and teachers across primary and secondary schools, with a particular focus on schools without a religious character. This study aims to find out the extent to which the resource has 'made a difference' to teaching and learning about Christianity in RE.

The report indicates that the response from pupils and teachers has been extremely positive, particularly in relation to the 'Big Story', pupil engagement and increased teacher confidence.

The full report can be viewed on the **Understanding Christianity** website, available [here](#)



Another report about **Understanding Christianity** has been commissioned by the **National Secular Society** and comes to divergent findings. It has been written by Chris Selway a member of South Glos SACRE and until recently an LTLRE hub leader. This report can be found [here](#). It is worth SACRE members and teachers with an interest in the "Understanding Christianity" resource and its impact on Religious Education reading both reports to make their own conclusions.

NATRE curriculum symposium

NATRE are excited to announce that we will be running a 24-hour residential curriculum symposium in Autumn. There will only be 25 places for delegates therefore NATRE will be running an application process to attract delegates from a variety of school types and at a variety of stages on their curriculum design journey for RE/Religion and worldviews.

The symposium will hear from both experts and practitioners in the area of curriculum design generally and curriculum design in for RE/Religion and worldviews.

Wouldn't it be great if a teacher from our area could take part in this?

For more information and to register your interest please see [here](#)

Free Lockdown home learning from NATRE and RE Today

As a response to the amazing work that teachers and school staff are doing teaching pupils both in school and remotely NATRE and RE Today are offering their support by making all the home learning resources that were created for use by NATRE members in the last lockdown free to all schools. These multi-faith resources are all available on the NATRE website and offer support for home learning about religious and non-religious worldviews for primary and secondary school pupils.

More resources will be created and made available over the next few weeks.

www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/free-resources-for-you-and-your-pupils/



“Good News for Everyone” (formerly known as Gideons) has worked with Lat Blaylock from RE Today to develop a range of free resources for school assemblies and lessons. All GNE visitors have received training for going into schools.

All their visitors to schools have been trained by Lat Blaylock and are still available to speak in assemblies and lessons. They offer of a free copy of the New Testament and Psalms (now including the Book of Proverbs) to pupils. Here's the link: <https://goodnewsuk.com/node/778>



There are some really useful resources made available from the Oak Academy - Judaism for key stage 1 is excellent . The materials for Key stage 2 and 3 cover most world faiths and non religious world views and at Key stage 4 also some very useful materials including 4 lessons on exam techniques (which may be less useful this year - but are still good tools for consolidating learning). They can all be found [here](#)

New Materials for schools from Free Churches and NATRE

(National Association of Teachers of RE)



The Free Churches of UK funded NATRE to write materials for all schools to have access to Anti-Racist RE. There are a suite of 6 lessons for Primary Schools (UKS2) and Secondary Schools. All these materials can be found [here](#)



Art in Heaven 2020 and 2021

- The 2020 Art in Heaven and Spirited Poetry competitions attracted record entries – lots of teachers set it in lockdown! flagship for ‘Spirited Arts’, our strategy to make RE more imaginative and creative.
- The latest website update is excellent –[take a look](#) The relaunched 2020 section includes many amazing responses to last year’s themes, and the YouTube video to encourage entries had about 15000 views last year. NATRE will be doing another of these for 2021.
- A Climate Justice theme features again this year: ‘God’s good earth?’ The most popular theme, overtaking the hardy perennial ‘Where is God?’.
- The 2020 Art in Heaven and Spirited Poetry competitions attracted record entries – lots of teachers set it in lockdown! flagship for ‘Spirited Arts’, our strategy to make RE more imaginative and creative.



Anti Bullying week November 15th - 19th 2021

How about this year's theme being "Bullying and Belief?"

Another great resource available from NATRE which has been written through a NASACRE Westhill Project by Newham SACRE is an anti-religious bullying toolkit. This tackles an issue sometimes neglected by schools in their anti-bullying work. That is bullying on the grounds of religion or apparent religion. These materials can be found [here](#)

New Resource from the BBC for EYFS / YR 1

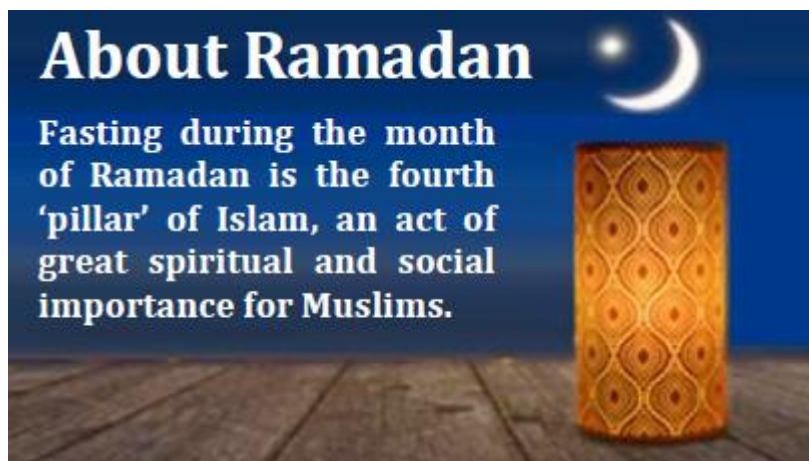


This series is called **"What's on your head?"** and includes short films of someone wearing hijab, a turban, a kippah and a mitre. It also includes a firefighter a scuba diver and a cyclist etc !

The films can be accessed [here](#)

Ramadan this year begins for most Muslim communities on

Monday 12 April 2021 and ends in the evening of Wednesday 12 May 2021



Bristol SACRE have written new guidance to help schools prepare for Ramadan these can be found [here](#)

The Significance of Ramadan for Muslims could be explored using the Locally Agreed Syllabus in year 5/6 ?
U2.6 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?

There is a good Newsround clip about Ramadan that can be found [here](#) , the second clip that follows on is about Ramadan during Covid

My Religion my Life also has a good clip that explains [Ramadan](#)

Resources for Passover (Pesach)

This year begins on March 27th and ends of April 4th



BBC Bitesize also have several clips about [Passover](#) and more [here](#) and the clip from “My Religion , My life” is particularly helpful for KS2 and can be found [right here](#)

Resources for Easter

This year Good Friday is on April 2nd and Easter Sunday is on April 4th



There are many resources available from Wells Cathedral including this lovely short film that uses

Godly Play short film to explore Holy Week

This can be accessed [here](#)

A series of Assemblies called **“From Wilderness to Hope”** preparing for Lent and Easter can be used for class worship can be found [here](#) These are suitable for years 5, 6,7 and 8. These resources are provided by Helen Jackson from Swindon Evangelical Church

EYFS and KS1 (ages 3-6)

There are some lovely **CBeebies** films to help understand the Christian Festival of Easter and how some Christians celebrate it.

The Easter Story is particularly moving. The films can be found [here](#).

Watch it.

See what you can remember.

Talk about why this might be important for Christians

There are also a cooking idea about how to mark Easter [here](#) and some things to help make an Easter Egg hunt [here](#)

FOR All Ages

Journey Into Easter With Children

Reflections through art for Holy Week and Easter

written by Shahne Vickery with paintings by Nebiyu Assefa

These free resources can be found [here](#) and give a reflection for each day and craft activities.



Katy Staples March 2021 katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org

If you have any new resources you are using that may be helpful for RE teachers please let me know and they can be included in the next National Updates/ Newsletter for Schools.

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