

RE NEWS

Autumn 2019 EDITION

*Monitoring and
Evaluation in RE*

The academic year 2018-19 has been full of changes in the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education. In January, we welcomed Tony Wilson as our new Director. We have spent the year getting to know the new SIAMS schedule and this year will see the introduction of the new Ofsted inspection framework. This edition of the termly newsletter will look at how best to monitor and evaluate RE provision in schools, looking back at what went well and planning for the future.



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Congratulations to Schools

gaining REQM



Stone: Bronze



Slough and Eton College: Silver

Yattendon: Gold



Dates for your diary

Local RE Networks – CPD for teachers and subject leaders

The new SIAMS schedule places more emphasis on CPD for all staff. Diocesan training will contribute towards CPD records for staff who attend. These meetings are free of charge to enable all staff to attend, regardless of school budgets.

To book please email: anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org unless indicated otherwise.

Oxfordshire

North

Date: Tuesday 5 November 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.15 pm

Venue: Deddington School, Earls Lane, Deddington, Banbury OX15 0TJ

Topic: Teaching Islam

South

Date: Thursday 24 October 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.15 pm

Venue: Benson CE Primary school, Oxford Rd, Benson OX10 6LX

Topic: Teaching Islam

West

Date: Tuesday 1 October 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.15 pm

Venue: Bampton CE Primary School, Bowling Green Close, Bampton OX18 2NJ

Topic: Teaching Islam

Central

Date: Wednesday 20 November 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.15 pm

Venue: Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington OX5 1GF

Topic: Teaching Islam

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes

Central

Date: Thursday 21 November 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.15 pm

Venue: Buckingham Park School, Aylesbury HP19 9DZ

Topic: Teaching Islam

South

Date: Thursday 3 October 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.15 pm

Venue: Hazlemere School, Amersham Road, nr High Wycombe HP15 7PZ

Topic: Teaching Islam

North and Milton Keynes

Date: Wednesday 9 October 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.30 pm

Venue: St Mary's Wavendon CE Primary School, Wafandun Lane, Eagle Farm South, Milton Keynes, MK17 7AA (*Use road name, not postcode if following SatNav*)

Topic: Key Concepts in Christianity

To book this session please contact: Janet.Gleghorn@Milton-keynes.gov.uk

East Berkshire

Bracknell Forest

Date: Wednesday 2 October 2019

Time: 4.15 - 5.30 pm

Venue: St Michael's Easthampstead Primary School, Crowthorne Rd, Bracknell RG12 7EH

Topic: Teach meet – Bring successful RE activities and ideas to share

To book, contact Anne Andrews

Anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org

RBWM and Slough

Date: Tuesday 15 October 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.30 pm

Venue: Larchfield Primary School, Bargeman Rd, Maidenhead SL6 2SG

Topic: Teach meet – Bring successful RE activities and ideas to share

To book, contact Elaine Norstrom:

elaine.norstrom@achievingforchildren.org.uk

West Berkshire Understanding Christianity Group

Date: Tuesday 24 September 2019

Time: 4.00 - 5.30 pm

Venue: Yattendon Primary School, Yattendon, Thatcham, Berkshire RG18 0UR

This group is for teachers who have completed accredited training in the Understanding Christianity teaching resource.

To book, contact Sharon Masters: smasters@msm.w-berks.sch.uk

Excellence in Schools Training Opportunities in RE

Excellence *in* Schools

New to RE – or need a Refresher?

Tuesday 8 October 2019 9.30 am – 3.30 pm

Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, OX5 1GF

Cost: Schools in SLA £95+VAT; all other schools £140 +VAT

With the up-dated Statement of Entitlement, new SIAMS schedule and the new OFSTED inspection framework, this one-day course for RE leaders is designed for those who are new to post and for those who feel they need a refresher. The course will cover the basics of subject leadership, including curriculum design, planning, resources, monitoring and evaluating RE.

[Click here to book this course](#)



Global Neighbours

Friday 22 November 2019 9.30 am – 3.30 pm
Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, OX5 1GF
Cost: £50



This is a one-day course, led by Caz Weir from Christian Aid. Delegates will discuss the “whys and hows” of engaging pupils in discussion and action to challenge injustice and inequality. They will explore some of the resources available to help them in this work and learn about the Global Neighbours accreditation scheme. Linking to personal development in the Ofsted framework, several strands in the SIAMS schedule and contributing to bold and ethical curriculum decisions, this day will help teachers to tap into the ways young people want to change the world.

[Click here to book this course](#)

Understanding Christianity

Friday 17 January 2020 9.30 am – 3.30 pm;
Friday 27 March 2020 9.30 am – 3.30 pm and
Friday 12 June 2020 9.30 am – 12.00 pm (a delegate must attend all three sessions)
Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, OX5 1GF
Cost £235 +VAT (SLA schools) £250 +VAT (non SLA schools) £30 (second delegate)



This two and a half-day accredited training course will give teachers access to this essential resource and ample opportunities to explore good RE teaching. Using the “Text, Impact, Connections” this resource offers teachers a way to explore core Christianity as a living faith, using core theological concepts, as set out in the SIAMS schedule and the Statement of Entitlement. There are units for each year group from F2 through to Year 9 with lesson ideas and resources. This resource is available only to schools that send a delegate on accredited training.

[Click here to book this course \(this link will book all three sessions\)](#)

If you have a member of clergy connected with the school, tell them about this course:

Supporting Schools with *Understanding Christianity*

Friday 18 October 2019 9.30 am – 3.30 pm
Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, OX5 1GF
Cost: £10 (+VAT)

This is a one-day course for clergy who are supporting schools in the teaching of Christianity.

Understanding Christianity is a widely used resource, published by RE Today and the Church of England Education Office. The material offers a coherent approach to the teaching of Christianity covering 8 key concepts within a Biblical context. The main aim of the resource is to support teachers in delivering high-quality lessons, which promote biblical and religious literacy. It contains lesson suggestions for pupils from age 5 – 14 and is being used by schools across the diocese.

[Click here to book this course](#)

RE Network Meetings: Review

RE network meetings have been taking place termly in various locations across the diocese for the last five years. These sessions aim to bring teachers together to share experiences and resources, as well as engage in high-quality training. Recently the meetings have covered: assessment, concepts in Hinduism, spring festivals, diversity in Christianity, concepts in Judaism, planning the learning journey and moderation in RE.

In the summer term 2019, the moderation sessions demonstrated that there has been an improvement in the quality of recording of RE learning in individual books and “Big Books”. Compared to last year, learning objectives were more focused on RE learning outcomes and activities were enabling pupils to achieve these objectives. Looking through a whole unit of work revealed that planning, as discussed in the meetings in the autumn term of 2018, is creating a more coherent approach to teaching RE.

If you have not been attending these meetings (there are nine each term run by the diocese and others in Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading run by other providers) consider making them a priority. The diocesan meetings are all free and any teachers, not just RE leaders, are welcome to attend. The more people who attend, the greater the benefit to all. The SIAMS schedule asks leaders to consider their partnership working and “share effective practice locally”.

Review of the new SIAMS schedule – the first year

This time last year saw the introduction of the new SIAMS schedule, which has without a doubt raised the challenge for schools, particularly with regard to RE. Several schools have found the transition to the new schedule challenging, but many have risen extremely well to that challenge and achieved positive outcomes. Five schools have received a grade of excellent.

What has made the difference?

For most schools, the key difference has been around the area of vision. Schools need to develop a vision that is appropriate for their context and that has a clear Christian theological basis. The vision then needs to inform every aspect of school policy and practice, including religious education. Pupils, parents, staff and governors need to know, understand and uphold the vision.

What have SIAMS reports said about RE in diocesan schools?

Many good things have been identified: passionate RE leaders, reflection opportunities, RE that contributes to character development, well-developed assessment systems, a priority on training, Understanding Christianity and high-quality activities that challenge pupils to think. There are also areas for development that have been noted: monitoring and evaluating of RE; the global nature and diversity of Christianity; and the need to develop systems of assessment so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Last term’s edition of *RE News* focused on Global Christianity. The rest of this edition will look at monitoring and evaluating RE.

If a SIAMS inspector will be visiting your school soon, make sure that you are prepared. Read through the recent reports (available on www.oxford.anglican.org/schools/siams/). While every school is different, the reports show what is being considered good practice and what would benefit from some improvements. Come along to the RE network meetings and learn from those who have had first-hand experience. Book a place on one of the training courses available; talk to the school’s link adviser or the RE adviser. Keep your subject knowledge up to date and engage in reflective practice. And above all, have a vision for your school and RE.

Specific training on the SIAMS schedule is offered under the *Excellence in Schools* training programme. <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/organiser/schools-training-2/>

Monitoring and Evaluation in RE

The main role of the RE leader is to plan, monitor and evaluate the RE provision in the school. This is not just about ensuring that you get a good SIAMS report. Monitoring and evaluating are good practices in every area of education. How do you know otherwise if planning, curriculum, teaching and learning in RE are effective?



The SIAMS schedule asks the following two questions for the inspectors to answer:

How effective the school is in ensuring pupils flourish through the provision of high-quality religious education reflecting the Church of England Statement of Entitlement?

How effective the school is in ensuring that religious education expresses the school's Christian vision?

There are some guiding questions and grade descriptors to use for self-evaluation:

- How well does RE help pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living, diverse world faith?
- Is there an exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with religious text and theological ideas?
- How well does RE help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide?
- How well does RE enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture?
- Is the curriculum coherent and well-constructed?
- Is there a balance between theology, philosophy and human science?
- How well does RE give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions?
- Do pupils develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation?
- Do teachers share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development?
- Does RE have in place rigorous systems of assessment?
- In VA schools only: How effective is RE teaching and learning in the school?
- Do all pupils, including the vulnerable, make good progress?

The RE leader may be expected to answer questions like these, and so monitoring and evaluation need to provide the information. Ultimately, it is the governing body that is responsible for monitoring RE to take place, so they need to ensure that the task is given sufficient priority.

What are the best ways of monitoring RE?

There is a wide range of monitoring activities that can and should be undertaken. The RE lead needs at least to have opportunities to observe teaching, conduct planning and work scrutiny, organise pupil voice exercises (even if someone else, perhaps a governor, carries it out) and have the opportunity to be observed themselves, or to engage in reflective practice. Staff interviews, resource audits, data analysis, parent voice and learning walks present further opportunities to understand how effectively RE is being taught and learned. This will not necessarily need the same amount of time in every school; it has to suit the size of the school and other responsibilities of the member of staff involved.

What should the focus be?

The SIAMS questions, while essential, are only part of the picture for monitoring and not every school will be starting from the same place. The RE action plan, in line with the school development plan, may well suggest a place to start. What is the priority for RE development? Was there an area for development from the previous SIAMS report that relates to RE? If so, that will need to be addressed (if it has not already been). The way that RE contributes towards an understanding and expression of the Christian vision for the school has to be a high priority. This will also link to the revised Ofsted inspection framework, due to come into practice this autumn, with a year to be implemented. What is the intent for the subject? Why have certain topics been chosen and ordered as they have been? In the Oxford Diocese, RE teachers are fortunate to have Locally Agreed Syllabuses that are not prescriptive on the order or arrangement of topics, concepts, religions or themes so that the curriculum can be tailored to fit the school. That also means that the answer “it’s in the syllabus” will not suffice.

Evaluating the findings

Just carrying out the monitoring activities and finding answers to the questions is not sufficient. The RE leader needs to decide whether what they have found meets expectations, and if not, what action is required to improve it. Carrying out a book scrutiny where it is discovered that year 6 have not done any RE since October, and taking no action to improve the situation, is not going to contribute towards effective RE. There need to be clear expectations of what RE in your school will look like. What do school policies say about marking and feedback? Planning? Curriculum coverage? Expectations of pupils’ achievement? Frequency of assessment or recording? Timetabling of lessons? Standards of presentation? As with teaching, setting expectations clearly has to form an integral part of monitoring and evaluating RE.

Where are you now?

If you are new to leadership, new to your school or just resolved to improve RE in your setting it is worth finding out what is currently going on. What do teachers, pupils and parents currently think about RE? Review the school’s RE policy. Is it up to date, referencing the most recent Statement of Entitlement (Feb 2019) and your school’s current status? Review last year’s action plan. Have all actions been completed? Are those that haven’t still relevant? From what you learn, plan a monitoring cycle for the year, ensuring that it will be manageable in the time that you have available. Prioritise the actions that will have the greatest impact on learning in the classroom. Make sure that the level of leadership above you knows what you are planning and ensure that your time is supported. Then keep a record of how things go.

What next?

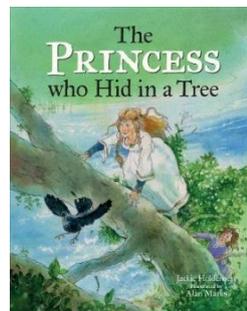
If you are already well established with your monitoring and evaluation and you know that RE is having a positive impact on your school, then consider applying for REQM – the RE Quality Mark. On their website is a free to use self-assessment audit tool. It will help you to establish the next steps – unless you are already at Gold Standard! – and give you a national benchmark against which to evaluate RE in your school. You can find all the information and resources here: www.reqm.org. If you decide to apply and would like support with your application contact anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org.

Teach:RE Primary – an introduction. This is a new FREE self-study course for beginner teachers, NQTs and HLTAs. It is designed to take 12 hours and is a specific response to the Commission on RE (2018) recommendation 6. <https://www.teachre.co.uk/teach-re-course/teachre-primary/>

Resources for RE

A book for young children

The Princess who Hid in a Tree by Jacqueline Holderness
Bodleian Library Publishing



A long time ago, there was a brave and kind Anglo-Saxon princess called Frideswide who lived in Oxford, England and just happened to be brilliant at climbing very tall trees. One day, when a wicked king tried to kidnap her, her talent came in useful. How did she and her friends escape, and what happened to the king and his soldiers who tried to take her?

With stunning illustrations by award-winning artist Alan Marks, the legend of Saint Frideswide, patron saint of Oxford, is retold for young children as a tale of adventure, courage in the face of danger, friendship, and kindness, with a few surprises along the way.

“The Princess who Hid in a Tree is a charming re-telling of a celebrated story from Oxford’s history. The beautifully illustrated book introduces young readers to Frideswide’s story in a fresh and immediate way. It’s impossible not to cheer on a princess who decides for herself how she wishes to live her life.”—Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford.

For the Primary school

Barnabas RE Day: Who is my neighbour?

This is a day of creative workshops for Foundation through to KS2, with optional collective worship and online follow-up ideas. It aims to help primary schools embrace difference and diversity, exploring questions such as:

- What does it mean to be part of a community?
- How can we understand ourselves in relation to those who are ‘different’ from us?
- How can we respond when the world around us identifies certain people or groups as socially unacceptable?

With 25 years of experience of delivering **high-value, low-cost interactive pupil workshops, £295 only**

‘Absolutely excellent – children [were] clearly engaged... very thought-provoking. Lots of SEAL issues tackled.’

‘Engaged the children and sustained their focus throughout the session.’

‘Superb collective worship session set the theme for the day; workshops continued high standard.’

‘[Got] children thinking and empathising on a deeper level.’

‘Catered for needs of all ages and abilities.’

‘Very well-structured day; allowed children to explore their own ideas and thinking.’

Teacher feedback

Find out more at www.barnabasinschools.org.uk or to book, contact 01235 858238

For the Secondary school

Holocaust Memorial Day

Monday 27 January 2020 is the date of the next Holocaust Memorial Day. It will be 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and 25 years since the Bosnian Genocide, so this year promises to be momentous. The theme: Stand Together has already been chosen and there are resources available for schools. More information is available on the HMD website: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/take-part-in-holocaust-memorial-day/schools/>

Two travelling exhibitions are also available to borrow from the UK Office of the International Christians Embassy in Jerusalem. One is entitled “No Child’s Play” and looks at the toys, games, artwork, diaries and poems that were an important part of the lives of children during the Holocaust; the other, “Besa – A code of Honour” explores the way that Albanian Muslims hid and protected Jewish people. Contact Russell Bowles at: Russell.bowles@uk.icej.org if you are interested in borrowing either of these exhibitions, or enquiring about exhibitions that may be available in the future.

GCSE Resource on Judaism by Clive Lawton

This is a comprehensive resource to support teachers and student of Judaism at GCSE.

PDF downloads and print copies can be ordered from the Board of Deputies of British Jews:

<https://www.bod.org.uk/judaism-gcse-religious-studies-the-definitive-resource-order-your-copy-here/>

General resources

RE Online - <https://www.reonline.org.uk/>

The website has been updated to make it more user-friendly. There are new drop-down boxes for subject knowledge and updated sections on assessing and leading, which reference the Commission on RE and the new Ofsted framework, including a downloadable document to support teachers developing a vision for RE.

#BalancedRE - <https://balancedre.org.uk/>

A new website is being created to support the development of the Balanced RE approach, using Theology, Philosophy and Human Science as a scaffold. While the site is not yet complete, there are useful definitions of the three areas of study and a film that could be used in staff meetings.

Wintershall - <https://www.wintershall.org.uk/nativity-play> or <https://www.wintershall.org.uk/life-christ>

Early booking is advised for schools and families wishing to visit the Wintershall Estate for the popular nativity play 18 to 22 December 2019.

If that is too short notice, then think ahead to next summer and the production of the Life of Christ, on between the 23 and 27 June 2020. Pupils from Jennett’s Park school went to the performance in summer 2019. Here is an extract from what they wrote:



On the 21 June 2019, for the first time, a group of Jennett’s Park students got to experience a performance unlike any other. The play “The life of Christ” is an amazing production put together by volunteers [over 400] and a wide variety of animals, including doves and horses, just to name a few. Each epic event of Jesus life, from birth to crucifixion, feeding the 5000 to resurrecting the dead is included in detail. The Wintershall estate is a beautiful destination along with an amazing day out for all age.

They really enjoyed the day and rated the performance 10/10.

And finally, ...

Are you a teaching school? Do you support PGCE or School Direct Trainees? Linda Whitworth, Middlesex University, is gathering details of schools that are offering training in religious education to trainee teachers. If your school would like to be part of the project, please email me (anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org) and I will put you in touch with her. There are free resources for trainee teachers and HLTAs on www.teachre.co.uk/teach-re-course/teach-primary/ but the Toolkit for providers is only available through Linda Whitworth.

RE Support

The diocese employs a dedicated RE Adviser who is available to visit schools to offer bespoke training, advice, support and resources. Check out the RE pages <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/schools/religious-education/> of the website for the Diocesan Scheme of Work for RE, support materials and links to teaching resources. There are sample policies and all the Locally Agreed Syllabuses can be accessed, along with the guidance material that supports them. If you want to book a session, either contact the Link Adviser for your school or email me directly on anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org. Schools in the Service Level Agreement can usually use credits towards RE support; for other schools, payment may be required at standard diocesan rates.

Any comments, articles or suggestions for inclusion in future editions;
any other questions or queries on RE, please email

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