



RE Newsletter

Autumn Term 2023

DIVERSE WORLDVIEWS

How did you spend your summer holiday? How many of you went away? How many had a staycation? I hope none of you spent the entire time working. One thing I can assume, is that most of you had the holiday that you chose, and that for each of you, that was different.



Diversity is a key concept within religion and worldviews. The RE Network in May introduced delegates to diversity within Judaism, and there is a report on the event in this newsletter. The new Diocesan Scheme of Work encourages teachers to explore what different Christians, different Jewish people, different Muslims, and different Hindus believe and how they act because of those beliefs.

The new SIAMS framework sets out expectations for curriculum design and includes diversity as one of the six keys. The framework doesn't mark a radical change for RE but raises the profile of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. There is more information about the SIAMS framework and its implications for RE in this newsletter.

The world of education always keeps teachers on their toes. This academic year will be no different. Teachers in Buckinghamshire are implementing the new Syllabus; teachers in Oxfordshire are starting on the same journey, with a very similar syllabus. Teachers in Berkshire and Milton Keynes will have a little longer to wait for theirs, though the process is beginning for both reviews.

I am available for online and in-person support depending on school requirements, but my diary is already filling up between now and Christmas, so if you want to book any sessions, don't leave it too late!

I look forward to hearing from you. Have a great term.

Anne Andrews by [email](#) or phone 07884 655097
Diocesan RE Adviser



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DIOCESAN TRAINING THIS TERM



All RE training events and booking links for this term can be found below and on the [website](#). Click on the date for the live link to the booking page. Please ensure that even for free courses you book on Eventbrite, with the correct email address to ensure that you receive all the necessary information.

Please note that bookings close four working days before the start of the course so ensure that you book in time to receive the link for any online courses.

SO, YOU'RE THE NEW RE LEADER

Friday 3rd November 2023 09.30-3.30

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

Cost

S4S: £95 (+VAT) per person

Non S4S: £130 (+VAT) per person

This course is aimed at anyone who has become RE leader since January 2023, and is particularly suitable for those who have not been a subject leader previously.

During the day, delegates will consider the purpose of RE, the legal requirements, the implications of the new SIAMS framework as well as curriculum planning and moderation.

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UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY REVISITED

Tuesday 14 November 2023 09.30 – 3.30

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

Cost:

S4S: £95 (+VAT) per person

Non S4S: £130 (+VAT) per person

This one-day course is designed for schools that have the Understanding Christianity resource pack but need to revisit the training, as there are new members of staff or leaders. The session will give teachers an opportunity to explore the resources, including the frieze, the core concepts and planning approaches.



This course is not suitable for schools that have not had the initial training and do not have the resource pack. For those schools, [RE Today](#) are still running training courses.

RE FOR ECTS

Friday 23rd February 2024 1.30 – 3.30pm

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

Cost:

S4S: £65.00 (+VAT) per person

Non S4S: £90 (+VAT) per person

This short course is designed for those who are new to teaching. Join us as we learn about essentials of teaching RE in a Church of England School – finding out more about the purpose, the methodologies, resources, and support on offer to enable teachers to deliver quality RE.

RE NETWORK MEETINGS Dates for this year:

Tuesday 19th September 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Planning an RE Day

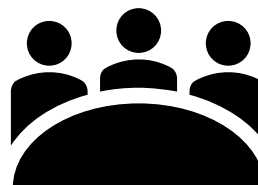
This session will explore ideas for topics and practical considerations to help you plan and deliver an effective RE day.

Thursday 9th November 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Disciplinary RE in the new Diocesan Scheme of Work

During this session we will find out how to help pupils become theologians, social scientists, and philosophers. We will look at the kind of questions that can be asked and begin to consider the implications of using disciplines in RE.



[Wednesday 17th January](#) 2024 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Global Christianity – Easter around the world

[Wednesday 13th March](#) 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Assessing the Curriculum

[Thursday 25th April](#) 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Teaching Humanism

[Tuesday 2nd July](#) 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Resource Round-Up

These sessions are free to schools that have signed up to the Service Level Agreement. For other schools there is an annual charge of £110 + VAT to join the Network.

If you teach in Milton Keynes, Bracknell Forest or Windsor and Maidenhead look out for fliers about the additional SACRE funded networks taking place in those areas.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP, SPIRITUALITY AND SPACE MAKERS

Don't forget that the Diocese offers training to support collective worship and Christian distinctiveness. If that's not your responsibility in school, please pass on to the relevant person.

8th September Online Further info & booking	4- 5pm	Living Your Vision Space Makers Network: Share, Refresh, Deepen	S4S: Free Non S4S: £60 (+VAT) for all sessions in the academic year	Recommended for: Anyone who is using Space Makers in their school
16 th October St Peter & St Paul, Buckingham Further info & booking	8.45am - 3.30pm	Living Your Vision Space Makers – the contemplative toolkit for schools	S4S: £95 (+VAT) for 1 person S4S: £195 (+VAT) for 3 people Non S4S: £165 (+VAT) per person	Recommended for: Anyone who is interested in developing Spirituality in their school <i>through this contemplative practice.</i>
11 th October Online Further info & booking	1–4pm	Living Your Vision Collective Worship and Spirituality Workshop	S4S: £45 (+VAT) per person Non S4S: £65 (+VAT) per person	Recommended for: School leaders Curriculum leads Class teachers
6th November 4-5pm Online Further info & booking	4-5pm	Living Your Vision Worship & Spirituality Network Meeting	S4S: Free Non S4S: £60 (+VAT) for all sessions in the academic year.	Recommended for: Anyone who leads or supports collective worship in school

NATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

HUMANISM

At [Understanding Humanism](#) (the education branch of [Humanists UK](#)), we offer **training for teachers at both primary and secondary level** to deepen your subject knowledge of humanism (a non-religious worldview), and support you with practical ideas for the classroom!

'Some of the most useful training I have ever been on. So many practical ideas.' **Samantha Kennedy, KS2 teacher and RE coordinator**

'This session has been really fantastic, thank you! I feel I have come out understanding humanism a lot more as even I sometimes struggled to distinguish it from atheism.' **Helena Moore, KS3-5 RS teacher**

Book your place below for the online courses on **3 and 5 October**:

Understanding Humanism Primary Teacher Training

Tuesday 3 October, 16:00–17:30

£10.00 pp

[Register here](#)



Understanding
Humanism
**PRIMARY
TEACHER
TRAINING**



Understanding Humanism Secondary Teacher Training

Thursday 5 October, 16:00–17:30

£10.00 pp

[Register here](#)

Email us at education@humanists.uk to arrange bespoke online training specifically for your school, university, or organisation.

[Humanism](#) is a non-religious worldview held by millions of people in the UK. Including non-religious worldviews in RE supports young people to develop a deeper knowledge about the wider spectrum of religion and belief. The 2018 report by the Commission on RE called for the [full inclusion of humanism in Religious Education](#).

In these training courses you will learn more about non-religious worldviews and the landscape of religion and belief in the UK. The humanist approach to life will be broken down into five core areas of knowledge to support teaching and provide with practical ideas for the classroom.

REPORTS FROM SUMMER TERM RE NETWORKS

DIVERSITY IN JUDAISM

'There is no one version of Judaism – that's just a statement of fact. It's based on Jewish history and the different movements and different trends throughout the centuries.'

Rabbi Romain

This was the quotation on the opening slide of the Judaism RE network meeting, and as we explored the concepts of the tradition with several members of the community, the truth of this statement became ever clearer.

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Differences in Jewish beliefs were already evident in the first century CE, as the New Testament demonstrates, with mention of Pharisees and Sadducees. With the repeated invasions of Israel and accompanying periods of exile, culminating in the destruction of the Temple, differences in belief were compounded with varied cultural expressions of Judaism.

Judaism today is often represented as a tree with many branches. There are three basic traditions: Sephardic – largely from Southern Europe and Northern Africa, Ashkenazi - mainly from Eastern Europe and Mizrahi from the Middle East and Egypt. It is the Ashkenazi tradition that has given rise to the most common branches of Judaism. These are:

- **Reform**
- **Liberal**
- **Masorti or Conservative or Traditional**
- **Orthodox**
 - Haredi
 - Hasidic
- **Secular or humanist**



The diversity shows itself in a variety of ways. For example, through different interpretations of the laws:

Is the law unchanging and binding or is it open to interpretation and adaptation?

Different ways of observing the festivals:

Is there more than one way to celebrate the Passover?

Different ways of defining who is Jewish:

Are you Jewish through your mother or your father?

When selecting materials for teaching, be aware that many present a Conservative or Orthodox perspective, and that this is not the experience of the majority of Jewish people today, certainly not in the UK or in the US, both of which have relatively large Jewish populations.

Pupils need to encounter the teaching based on ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’, which is the Jewish version of the Golden Rule. Shabbat is another key element, remembering to keep exploration of it as diverse as possible. The Jewish Museum in London has a part of its website dedicated to [Inclusive Judaism](#) which has a wide range of images of Jewish people from different communities and traditions.

Much Jewish practice is characterised by the actions a person chooses to do throughout their lives, rather than with a focus on reward or punishment in eternity. Prayer, charity and good deeds are important to many Jewish traditions. It is about developing resilience through faith and by choosing to do the right things.

The main festival to teach is Passover, as that has deep links to the values of Judaism. It is also a festival that many non-religious Jewish people will still participate in, as it connects them to the wider community.

There are several key points that teachers need to observe when teaching Judaism:

Refer to Jewish people not Jews, and to the Tanakh or Hebrew Bible rather than the Old Testament. Judaism today bears little resemblance to the religion of Biblical times. There are no animal sacrifices anymore, as forgiveness from other people is more important than forgiveness from God. Service of the heart has replaced the service of sacrifice. There are no longer any priests and no part of Jewish service that an ordinary person cannot do.

Here are some of the most helpful websites for researching about Judaism.

- <https://www.jewfaq.org/movements>
- [https://www.jewfaq.org/ashkenazic and sephardic](https://www.jewfaq.org/ashkenazic_and_sephardic)
- [BBC Bitesize](#)
- <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/real-people-real-faith/>
- [The Jewish Museum, London](#) – KS1 and 2 resources
- <https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/schools/in-the-classroom/>
- Video tour of the United Hebrew Congregation of Newcastle upon Tyne (Orthodox) synagogue - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DW52sJ_5DMA
- Manchester Jewish Museum - <https://www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com/>
- Beth Shalom - The national Holocaust centre and museum, Nottingham - <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/>
- Holocaust Centre North, Huddersfield - <https://holocaustlearning.org.uk/>
- <https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/mailling-list/>
- <https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts/videos/judaism>
- <https://www.reonline.org.uk/knowledge/jewish-worldview-traditions/>

To gain some sense of the diversity of Judaism in the UK, visit the websites of some of the main branches of Judaism:

- The Board of Deputies of British Jews - <https://bod.org.uk/> (Official representative body for the entire UK Jewish community to the government etc.)
- United Synagogue (Modern Orthodox): www.theus.org.uk
- Chabad (Ultra-Orthodox): www.chabad.org.uk
- Federation of Synagogues (Modern Orthodox): www.federation.org.uk
- Humanist Judaism: <http://humanisticjudaism.org.uk/>
- Liberal Judaism: www.liberaljudaism.org
- Masorti Judaism: www.masorti.org.uk
- Movement for Reform Judaism: www.reformjudaism.org.uk
- Sephardi: www.sephardi.org.uk

Do remember that visiting a synagogue is probably one of the best ways that you can introduce your pupils to Judaism. There are synagogues in Milton Keynes, Oxford, Reading and Maidenhead which welcome visitors. They can often provide speakers to come to you if you are not able to get your pupils out to them, and don't forget that there are ways of connecting people remotely to your classroom.

With the launch of new syllabuses in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, as well as the development of disciplinary RE, to say nothing of a new SIAMS framework, it seemed that a new Diocesan Scheme of Work was needed.

With funding from the Bayne Benefaction, 12 teachers were released for three afternoon sessions to write the Religious and non-religious worldview units. The decision to write these units before the Christianity ones was taken because many schools already have the Understanding Christianity packs. The new scheme therefore currently references this resource, suggesting which units could be used. The intention is to produce the Christianity units, as well as some Sikhi and Humanist units in the coming year.

The new scheme takes the three disciplines of theology, philosophy, and human and social science as its structure, offering a Christianity unit and a worldview unit in each discipline for every year group. This structure will help to provide progression across the curriculum, and knowledge building blocks detail the key content to be covered. This should make identifying prior learning easier, as well as assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum. The units for each year group are not offered in a particular order, but schools should use the ideas to construct a curriculum that works for their context. Some of the Christian units for example, could have either a Christmas or an Easter focus depending on when they are taught.

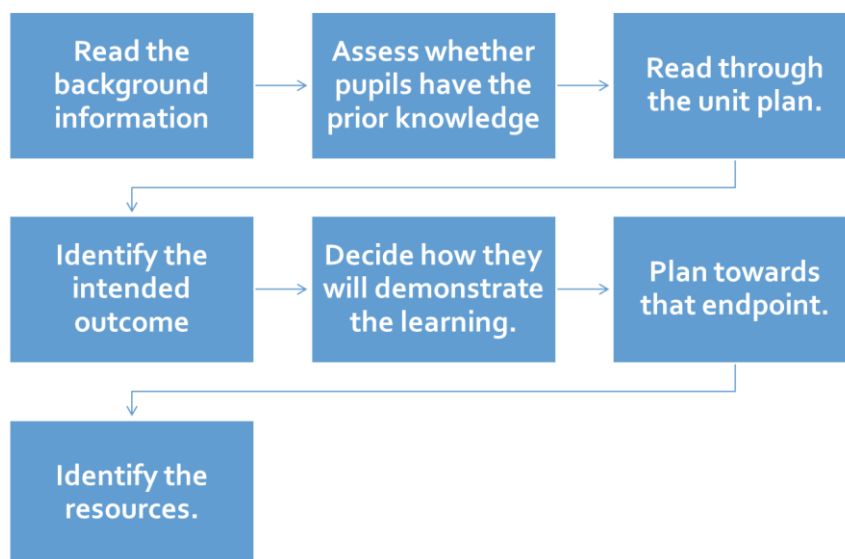
The order and range of religions on offer has been designed to meet the requirements of the new Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire syllabuses and it still fits with the current Milton Keynes syllabus. KS1 focuses on Christianity, in LKS2 Islam and Hindu Dharma alternate, as they do in UKS2. The worldview philosophy units offer the opportunity to bring in a wider range of religious and non-religious worldviews, particularly Humanism. Humanist and Sikh units will be added in due course to help meet the requirements of the Pan-Berkshire syllabus, but current units can easily be adapted to cover other traditions in the meantime.

The RE network made it clear that this is not a compulsory scheme of work. Like any scheme it needs to be adapted to meet the context of the school, the cohort and the school's vision. Units do not need to be delivered as they are presented and can be combined with ideas from other resources if that will help to deliver the curriculum that the school chooses. Schools can continue to use the old scheme, which will remain on the website. The scheme can be combined with other resources, such as Understanding Christianity, or Discovery, but make sure that if you are a VC school you follow the requirements of your Locally Agreed Syllabus. If you decide to use the scheme you need to do the following things:

- **Read the Intent document and the notes.**
- **Decide how Christianity is to be taught:**
 - Using Understanding Christianity?
 - Using your current scheme?
 - Creating your own units to answer the big questions?
- **Order the units within the year group (or ask class teachers to)**
- **Ensure every member of staff has the new long-term plan and the building blocks.**

Offers of additional units of work, using the template on the website would be appreciated. I would be particularly interested in units written for mixed age or missed phase classes.

Each unit consists of background information, prior knowledge and a range of activity suggestions and outcomes. The units are varied in their approach as they have been written by a variety of teachers, so the following planning process for a unit is suggested as a means of approach.



RE IN THE NEW SIAMS FRAMEWORK

I am sure that you are aware that the new SIAMS framework is operative from September 2023. All inspections, whether postponed from previous years or not, will be inspected under the new framework. The general expectations of schools in terms of Christian character and distinctiveness have not changed with this new framework, but some of the phrasing is different. If your school is on the list for this year (and across the Diocese there are 61 of you who are) do attend the SIAMS training that is on offer. All the details are under [Living your Vision](#) training sessions on the ODBE website.

RE is now to be found in Inspection Question (IQ) 6 for all schools, and IQ 7 for VA schools. RE will be evaluated against the expectations of the Statement of Entitlement, published in 2019, as this becomes the benchmark for effective RE. RE is expected to have a high profile within the school. There must be sufficient dedicated teaching time, which is not conflated with collective worship. It should have priority in the school development plan, be well supported by the trust (if applicable), senior leaders and governors. To identify whether RE has a sufficiently high profile, ask these questions of your school leaders:

- Is RE provided for every pupil at every key stage except those withdrawn by parents. Policy?
- Is it delivered weekly or in blocks?
- Is it delivered by qualified teachers or HLTAs?
- Is there a dedicated RE leader with adequate leadership time?
- Does it have parity of expectations with other subjects?

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- Is it supported with visible displays, included in parent newsletters, on the website?
- In terms of budget, place on SDP?
- Across the MAT?

On the matter of curriculum, the new framework draws on the Statement of Entitlement. These are the audit questions you should use to evaluate your curriculum.

- Is your RE curriculum accurate?
- Is your RE curriculum challenging?
- Is your RE curriculum well-sequenced?
- Is your RE curriculum well-balanced?
- Is your RE curriculum relevant?
- Is your RE curriculum diverse?

Think about the resources that you use and where they come from. Make sure that you have sequenced your curriculum and that it becomes increasingly challenging as pupils progress through it. Well-balanced refers not only to the breadth of worldviews covered, but the inclusion of the disciplines of theology (believing) Human and social science (living) and Philosophy (thinking). Every RE training event will explore at least some of these issues, so follow the recommendation to engage in CPD as much as possible.

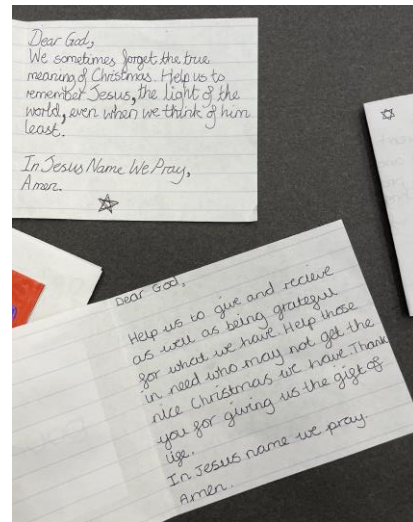
A new RE Audit tool has been produced and the RE review documentation now more closely echoes this framework.

AN IDEA FOR CHRISTMAS

Checkendon Church of England Primary School worked hard last year to support children in leading daily worship, with a surprising link to RE.

During an Understanding Christianity unit of work on the Incarnation, the children decided to share some of what they had learned to remind the rest of the school about the true meaning of Christmas. They began by each writing a prayer, some for Mary, Joseph, the donkey, and other key characters in the Nativity story. These prayers were then grouped, and children decided the order of the prayers which were then decorated and made into an Advent Calendar. The children took great delight in reading a prayer every day in worship. As the calendar was displayed in the school hall, some children also chose to go back to previous days to re-read the prayer.

This instilled a little bit of the 'real' meaning of advent and using the prayer calendar to celebrate the countdown to Christmas had a real impact. The children made comments like, 'this helped me to understand the nativity from Mary's point of view' and 'that prayer made me think about how the Three Wise Men felt, travelling all that way without really knowing why.'



Have you done any interesting work with your class in RE?

Have you got some examples of floor books?

Have you done some work on global Christianity?

Have you used resources from training you have attended?

I would love to hear from you and share that information wider.

RESOURCES

If you use any of the resources mentioned below, it would be great to have a review.

Please note that the Diocese of Oxford does not offer an endorsement of any of the resources listed. Please use your professional judgement to decide whether these materials are suitable for your school.

God and the Big Bang

God and the Big Bang is a national education project based at the University of Durham which explores the compatibility of science and faith. They provide workshop days for Years 5-13 which give students the opportunity to discover some of life's biggest questions, enter into discussion with experts and engage in debate with their peers, forming and sharing their own opinions throughout the day. The workshops are interactive and engaging, developed with

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input from educational specialists from the universities of Cambridge and Oxford. They provide an excellent opportunity to develop cross-curricular learning and critical thinking.

For more information and to make a booking, get in touch with the Schools Development Officer, Sarah, by emailing sarah.moring@durham.ac.uk

Springs Dance Company



Several diocesan schools have recently had sessions from Springs Dance company. Have a look at the website to see if one of this term's sessions would suit your school.

"Thank you for doing that amazing lesson with us. I loved it!" - Pupil, Seabrook school

This term Springs Dance company are offering **Creation, The Christmas Story: Refugee** and **Bethlehem Bound**. Further details can be found at <https://springsdancecompany.org.uk/index.php/join-in/schools-workshops>

To book and to find out more please email touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk or call **07775 628 442**.

Books at Press – for EYFS

This company, headed up by an expert in RE at Foundation Stage, offers a wide range of resources and support material for the early years.

[11 comprehensive planning units](#) covering a wealth of RE topics and over 33 practical pupil activities @ £45 (or £4.99 each)

[A Wet and Windy Harvest for Puddles](#) story book with accompanying soft toy characters, explores how and why Christians celebrate harvest - making this an essential resource for the Autumn term. eBook @£13.99

[Puddles and the St Francis Service](#) big book story sees Puddles and her family enjoying the St Francis Service. (4th October) Two feline visitors arrive unexpectedly leaving everyone wondering where they have come from and who they belong to... Will they find a home?! @ £17.99

[Puddles and The Christmas Play](#) big book is a must to use with Early Years pupils at this time of year. Puddles longs for a part in the Christmas play but will she get one?! Big book @ £17.99

[Puddles](#) – the adorable cuddly soft toy cat to thoroughly engage the children. @ £16.99 plus VAT

[Belonging and Believing](#) My Family books are a must have series exploring 8 worldviews for all year round RE! @£14.99 each or Set of 8 @ £110

[NEW Video and PowerPoint Resources and Teacher's Guide](#): @£35 (per each worldview)
Christianity:

Introduction to Vesper and her family video

6 PowerPoints: 1. Vesper and being kind 2. Vesper and her special times for worship 3. Vesper and things that are special to her 4. Vesper and how the world began 5. Vesper and the natural world 6. Vesper and her dedication ceremony

Humanism:

Introduction to Wilf and his family video

6 PowerPoints: 1. Wilf and this one life - be happy 2. Wilf and the importance of family and friendship

3. Wilf and a humanist baby naming ceremony 4. Wilf and how the world began 5. Wilf and how humans came to be part of the natural world 6. Wilf and the natural world (*This resource is also available on the Humanism for Schools website free of charge*)

Introduction to Nia and her Bahá'í family video @ £7.99 and Introduction to Yusuf and his Muslim family video @£7.99

[Curriculum planning support documents](#) linked to the respective curriculum for England, Wales or Scotland @ Free to download.

RE Hubs – <https://www.re-hubs.uk/>

A new website has been launched which is intended to become a one-stop shop window for all things connected with RE. You can find faith speakers, places to visit, information about local groups and national training. It's in its infancy so some sections are a little sparse still but keep checking for updates!

RE HUBS

Home Hubs Calendar Upskill Get Involved About Contact Search

Hubs
Find your hub location

Calendar
Courses and events

Local groups
Find local groups

Places of interest
Find places of interest

School speakers
Find school speakers

ITT/ECT & NQT
Access our support area

News & blogs
Read latest news & blogs

Get involved
Register to be featured

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Creative for Climate Justice

Although not strictly RE, Christian Aid Christian Aid is excited to invite schools to take part in a courageous advocacy project:

- supporting children to learn about climate justice
- using creative arts to share their messages
- engaging their local MP and wider community.

In partnership with Oxfam, CAFOD, Send My Friend, and The Climate Coalition, they will be hosting an exhibition of children's artworks in Parliament in December. For more information and to register for the project email jgrear@christian-aid.org



I hope to see lots of you at the various training events. I wish those of you who are due SIAMS or Ofsted all the best. We would love to hear your feedback on experiences with the new SIAMS as well as anything in this newsletter.

Have a great term.

anne.andrews@oxford.amglican.org