



RE Newsletter

Summer Term 2024

IT'S GOING TO BE A BUSY TERM

I love the picture on the cover page. This is a pupil at Ibstone School on World Book Day who decided to dress up as Jesus. Thank you to Ibstone school and the parent for allowing us to share this picture. It's a timely reminder that RE is a subject that inspires many pupils.

This term's newsletter offers reports on the spring term RE Network meetings and reminds you of some of the fabulous resources that are out there for you to use. Don't forget all the usual places to go for quality resources and CPD: RE Online and Culham St Gabriel's probably offer the most comprehensive selection.

Work is continuing on the Diocesan Scheme of Work (2023) and new units have been added, with more to follow. We intend to have all the units written and uploaded by May half-term. Do look out for some changes in the questions as we are improving the breadth and depth of the content. There is also a space on the website for us to share any resources, unit plans, documents that you produce. I am keen to receive any mixed age or mixed phase planning that you feel has been successful.

Work on the Milton Keynes and Pan-Berkshire Syllabuses is beginning to make good progress and we hope to have some drafts available by the end of the summer term. Remember that if you are a VC school, you must by law be following your Locally agreed Syllabus. Academies must either offer the Locally agreed Syllabus or something better!

I usually finish this section by reminding you that I am available to offer support, but I am already fully booked for the summer term, so if you are looking for support, please consider booking now for the autumn term. From October half-term to February half-term any twilight sessions will need to be online, due to eye condition that makes driving in the dark problematic.

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



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

CONTENTS

IT'S GOING TO BE A BUSY TERM	1
DIOCESAN TRAINING THIS TERM	2
RE NETWORK MEETINGS.....	2
NEXT YEAR	3
NATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	3
RE HUBS	3
PLACES OF INTEREST AND SCHOOL SPEAKER TRAINING	4
NATIONAL MAT LEAD NETWORK	4
NATIONAL UPDATES	5
READY FOR WORK? A NEW CAMPAIGN	5
INTER-FAITH NETWORK	6
OFSTED RE SUBJECT REPORT	6
REPORTS FROM SPRING TERM RE NETWORKS	6
SALVATION – A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE	6
ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS IN RE	7
RESOURCES	8
GOD AND THE BIG BANG	8
SPRINGS DANCE COMPANY	9
REAL PEOPLE, REAL FAITH.....	10

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. You will not receive the link in time for the meeting if you have not booked a place and entered the correct, delegate email into the required fields on the booking form.

Bookings usually 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.

RE NETWORK MEETINGS

Thursday 18th April 4.00pm – 5.30pm on Microsoft Teams

More on Theology, Human and Social Science and Philosophy and how to ensure pupils make progress

*Serving our communities in a Christ-like way where education enables all to flourish
Humility| Fellowship| Counsel*

[Tuesday 2nd July](#) 4.00pm – 5.30pm on 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.

NEXT YEAR

Next academic year we are changing the name to **RE Leadership Development Network** to better reflect the aims and purposes of the sessions. The meetings will remain online from 4 – 5.30pm and the dates for next year are below. Put them in your diary now:

Autumn Term: Thursday 3rd October 2024 and Wednesday 27th November 2024

Spring Term: Tuesday 28th January 2025 and Thursday 20th March 2025

Summer Term: Wednesday 21st May 2025 and Tuesday 1st July 2025

NATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

RE HUBS

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

Check out the new [RE Hubs](#) if you want to find information about some of the training opportunities for CPD in RE nationally.

*Serving our communities in a Christ-like way where education enables all to flourish
Humility| Fellowship| Counsel*

PLACES OF INTEREST AND SCHOOL SPEAKER TRAINING

273 School Speakers and 115 Places of Interest are live on the RE Hubs website (nearly 400 different people and places). 100% of those who have attended our training have rated it 4 or 5 out of 5 stars. They are grateful for the support and opportunity to find out what others are doing, and highly recommend this to others.

"Great to Network and to meet other practitioners. Always keen to hear about what has worked for faith leaders,"

"Very focused and engaging presentation where we were able to share and learn from Experience. I thought that 90 minutes was just right! I will recommend this training to other friends. Thank you so much!!"

We are aware it remains a challenge for some schools to provide their pupils with experiences and engagement from a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. RE Hubs is designed to help schools, SACREs, and Interfaith Networks make these connections. The more places and speakers we can advertise, the better we can help to bridge these gaps, ensuring that pupils get to meet and learn from lived experience.

Registering is easy and free, simply by visiting our website (<https://www.re-hubs.uk/get-involved/get-involved/>) and click to register as a place of interest or a schools speaker or both. Do get in touch with your RE Hubs Lead if, as an organisation, a bespoke session would be helpful or if you have trained elsewhere to see if we can advertise what you do.

NATIONAL MAT LEAD NETWORK

Do you lead Religious Education across a MAT?

Why not join our national MAT RE network and have the opportunity to meet with other RE Leads from MATs across the country. This is a great opportunity hear from other MAT RE leads about how they have engaged & informed SLT on RE and find out where other MAT RE leads go to support RE learning.

The next meeting is on 25th APRIL 2024 - 4:00 TO 5:30PM

Book your place here: <https://forms.office.com/e/BZaHDGG69J>

This event will be free for all RE leads in MATs who have NATRE or AREIAC membership. If you are not a member of either organisation, we encourage you to join or a fee will be payable to attend this meeting of £100 <https://www.natre.org.uk/membership>
<https://www.arei.ac.org.uk/join-arei.ac>

*Serving our communities in a Christ-like way where education enables all to flourish
Humility | Fellowship | Counsel*

NATIONAL UPDATES

READY FOR WORK? A NEW CAMPAIGN

A new initiative has been launched about RE Lord Bilimoria on the [REThink RE website](#). It is called the Ready for Work Campaign. If you know anyone who employs people encourage them to visit the [RETHINK RE](#) website and sign the petition.

This is what he writes:



As former President of the Confederation of British Industry and Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, I've always been keen to highlight the importance of high-quality Religious Education in schools.

Over the last decade the subject has evolved to provide a much-needed place in the classroom for young people to engage with the complexity of modern belief, avoid misconceptions, and leave school ready to work with people around the world from all walks of life.

Yet I am concerned with the standard of Religious Education in many schools across the country. RE teachers are some of the most passionate in the country, but a lack of funding and proper support for the subject has led the outgoing Chief Inspector of Education to describe teaching of the subject as 'generally of a poor quality'.

This is why I'm launching a [Call to Action](#) for employers and business leaders, a chance for them to stand by students who have expressed an interest in a high quality education in religion and worldviews as preparation for the future workplace.

I'd like to invite you to [sign our Call to Action](#) pledging your support for the subject. As a business leader concerned with the future of an inclusive workplace, your support will be invaluable to our campaign.

Kind regards

Lord Karan Bilimoria, CBE, DL, FCA

He was interviewed on Radio 4 Sunday programme on 24 March and can be found on BBC Sounds. The section on RE starts about 18 minutes into the programme. He talks about the value of Religious Education and there are some interesting responses from the other contributor, a member of the National Secular Society to the programme. What do you make of the arguments? What would you say to the NSS about the relevance and importance of RE.

INTER-FAITH NETWORK

The Inter-Faith Network (IFN), which for many years has spearheaded much of the interfaith work that has been carried on in this country. Inter-Faith week which runs annually in mid-November has been one of the most visible initiatives. Sadly, the government has now withdrawn funding and the IFN will be formally closed at the end of April. Some local inter-faith groups may continue to function if they had become independently or self-funded. Look out for local initiatives in the autumn term round Inter-faith week.

OFSTED RE SUBJECT REPORT

This long-awaited report has still not been published. We will update you as soon as this is published.

REPORTS FROM SPRING TERM RE NETWORKS

SALVATION – A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



The January RE network was privileged to hear from Sharon Masters, (Mortimer Schools) and Marion Standing (ODBE Adviser) on their recent trip to India.

They shared some of the photographs of churches in India, enabling delegates



to see the fusion of Christianity with Indian tradition.

The crosses by the altar in one church were festooned with the same kind of garlands that frequently adorn the Murtis in a Hindu Mandir, and in some men and women sit on separate sides of the aisle, often without chairs.

Other aspects of practice, such as communion and baptism were familiar, and other churches had pews, marking a clear path to the colonial past of the tradition. In those churches that had stained glass windows for example, nativity and Easter scenes contain western looking characters in traditional western clothing.

This introduction to Global Christianity made a perfect introduction to considering the way that we might make teaching about Easter and the concept of salvation more diverse. Delegates considered whether the traditional images of Easter such as rabbits and hot cross buns were the same everywhere, but also thought about how we might move beyond tokenistic references to the way Easter is celebrated elsewhere.

In the UK, Easter coincides with the beginning of spring and becomes for many a celebration of new life. Would that be the same in the southern hemisphere where Easter marks the start of autumn? How might that change how people think about the resurrection? This leads into considering the differences between the religious and the cultural expressions of Easter. It is very easy to focus on the different customs, particularly around food and not to look for deeper issues.

The core concepts of Easter such as Salvation, redemption, atonement, reconciliation, satisfaction, oblation, forgiveness, mercy and grace are open to varieties of interpretations. For countries where slavery or racial inequality is the historical background, many of these terms are imbued with greater significance. Liberation Theology, which has its origins in South America, sees the purpose of God's interventions in history as being more about bringing in a reign of justice than demonstrating power. So in many of these communities Easter and salvation are not about getting ready for Heaven and Eternal Life, but about making a difference now, here on earth.

ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS IN RE

This session started by considering the criticism levelled at much RE teaching by Ofsted:

- Pupils are rarely taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society (where religion and non-religion play different parts in different people's lives)
- Too often, schools do not teach topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter

In the rest of the session, we began to consider how we might assess our school's curriculum against these criteria, considering whether pupils make progress against the stated outcomes. We established that the reasons for assessing are really the following:

- To check that the curriculum is working.
- To check that teaching and learning are effective.
- To see if pupils are flourishing.

So therefore, assessment needs to link to the curriculum, assess what pupils are ACTUALLY learning and be specific. Generically created grids are not going to achieve this adequately and are often far too vague to inform teachers about either progress or attainment.

There are some key questions that teachers need to ask:

- Do pupils know what they should know and are they confident in understanding that knowledge?
- Have pupils developed their disciplinary knowledge?
- What skills have pupils acquired?

- How have pupils developed their understanding of ways of believing and sources of authority?
- How have they developed their understanding of the ways of living and the things that shape these?
- How have they developed their understanding of different ways of reasoning about God, humans and the world?

Small groups explored some of the ways that teachers might find out what pupils know and can do at the end of a unit. Being clear about the core knowledge to be learned and about the way that pupils will show that learning are essential to being about to plan for assessment. The new Diocesan Scheme of Work (2023), like Understanding Christianity, has building blocks and outcomes. These should be used at the planning stage and the suggested activities in both schemes selected to enable the pupils to learn the content.

We have begun to talk about how we might assess disciplinary knowledge ... but more of that on 18 April. Book you place to find out more.

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

EXPLORING THE INTERACTION OF SCIENCE AND FAITH

Based at the **University of Durham**, God and the Big Bang gives students in **Year 5 to Year 13** the opportunity to **discover, discuss and debate the compatibility of science and faith**

The workshops equip students with the tools to form their own opinions on some of life's biggest questions, exploring **curiosity, evidence and human responsibility**

Enquiries and Bookings
sarah.moring@durham.ac.uk

www.gatbb.co.uk @GatBB_UK @GatBB_UK

*Serving our communities in a Christ-like way where education enables all to flourish
Humility | Fellowship | Counsel*



YOU ARE SPECIAL

Curriculum-linked dance workshops with a focus on values

Exploring Max Lucado's book *'You Are Special'*, children will follow the story of Punchinello as he struggles to fit in with other wooden wemmicks in the village. One day his life changes forever as he learns the meaning of the words 'You are special!'.

This creative, fun-filled dance workshop provides lots of opportunity for children to explore how everyone is uniquely made and tackles the big issues of self-worth and of how we treat others.

Children will experience storytelling through dance linked to PSHE and Literature with an optional RE focus.

Watch the video here: https://youtu.be/SsXbD4U_rzs

'The children were totally engaged... a joy to behold.'

Very professional staff who were engaging, personable and enthusiastic. The dance workshop was inclusive and age appropriate... Excellent, would highly recommend.'

Mrs Hartley, Headteacher at St Mary's, Primary School, High Crompton



SPRINGS DANCE COMPANY delivers RE and PSHE through dance, creative exploration and discussion. Our curriculum linked workshops support children's spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

*** Our workshops are a great way to utilise your Sports Premium Funding. ***

Other popular workshops available include: A Christmas Story: Refugee, Creation and, EASTER.

Why not try something new with our *Parable Interactive Performance?* An adventurous, interactive and exciting opportunity for children to encounter and overcome creative challenges, accomplish tasks and influence the outcome of a professional performance, whilst absorbed in a vibrant world of dance and theatre.

'Superb workshop - accessible to all... Thank you so much...'

Passionate dance teachers who made learning fun and accessible to all... Wonderful to see my Y6 boys so engaged.'

Toni Handson, Y6 Class Teacher & Senior Leader, Good Samaritan workshops at St William Stukeley School, Holbeach.



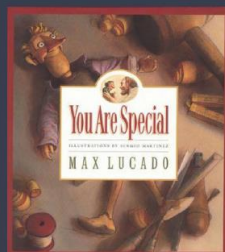
The structure and length of the workshops is tailored to the needs of the school and age of the pupils.

We can visit for a single day and teach lots of classes, or for a number of days, resulting in a sharing of work or children's performance.

To book or for a friendly chat about our work, please call us on 07775 628 442 or email: touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk

www.springsdancecompany.org.uk

"I usually get embarrassed by dancing but then I did not want to leave."
Pupil, Seabrook Church of England Primary School



SPRINGS DANCE COMPANY

'From the first few minutes of the workshop I knew that Springs had something special about them. They just had a way of engaging every child with enthusiasm, passion and hard-work. It was faultless.'

Head Teacher, Easter Project at St Andrews School, Streatham.

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, Easter** and **Parable**. 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**.

REAL PEOPLE, REAL FAITH

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE hub, funded by a NASACRE/Westhill Award is pleased to announce that the most recent films in the [Real People, Real Faith](#) Series are now available on the NATRE website. Humanist, Baha'i and Buddhist films have been added to the collection and so offer teachers the opportunity to engage their pupils in a wider range of religions and worldviews.

For each worldview there are six films – two for each of KS1, KS2 and KS3. Each film is accompanied by a brief introductory document with summary and suggested activities.

The full list of films is as follows:

Baha'i
Buddhist,
Christianity – Anglican, Baptist and Catholic.
Hindu
Humanist
Islam – Sunni and Shia
Jewish – Orthodox and Reform
Sikh



Filmed in locations across Berkshire, mostly in places of worship, these films explore some of the key features of these traditions, offering a wide diversity of voices within each worldview. Build them into your planning, especially if you are finding visits to places of worship hard to fund and organise.