

SACRE



Northumberland
County Council

Newsletter for the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for Northumberland



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If you would like to submit an article and/or images for inclusion in the next newsletter please contact [Dave Cookson](#).



Caroline Weir – RE Advisor Update



It has been lovely getting to know some of you over this past term at network meetings and through consultation about the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE. Thank you to those of you who have given up your time to share your views with me.

Northumberland SACRE has formed an Agreed Syllabus Conference in order to review the current RE Syllabus which is coming to the end of its five year period (every Agreed Syllabus must be reviewed every five years). We would really welcome your feedback to help us to make informed decisions as we review and update the Agreed Syllabus for Northumberland.

A short questionnaire has been compiled and we would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete it so that we can gather views from as many schools as possible.

- Network meetings are still online this term, 4 – 5pm
- First/Primary schools – Monday 17th May
- Middle/Secondary/High schools – Thursday 10th June

Colleagues from Special Schools are invited to join whichever of these meetings they deem most appropriate for their context.

Please do come and join us, and invite colleagues from other schools too. The more the merrier!

Meetings will take place via Zoom and a link will be circulated shortly beforehand. Please do email caroline.weir@drmnewcanglican.org to reserve your place and be added to the mailing list.



We would really welcome your feedback to help us to make informed decisions as we review and update the Agreed Syllabus for Northumberland.

Resources to aid RE Teaching

The Northumberland LA School Improvement Team are curating resources across many subjects, including RE. Their collection can be found [here](#).

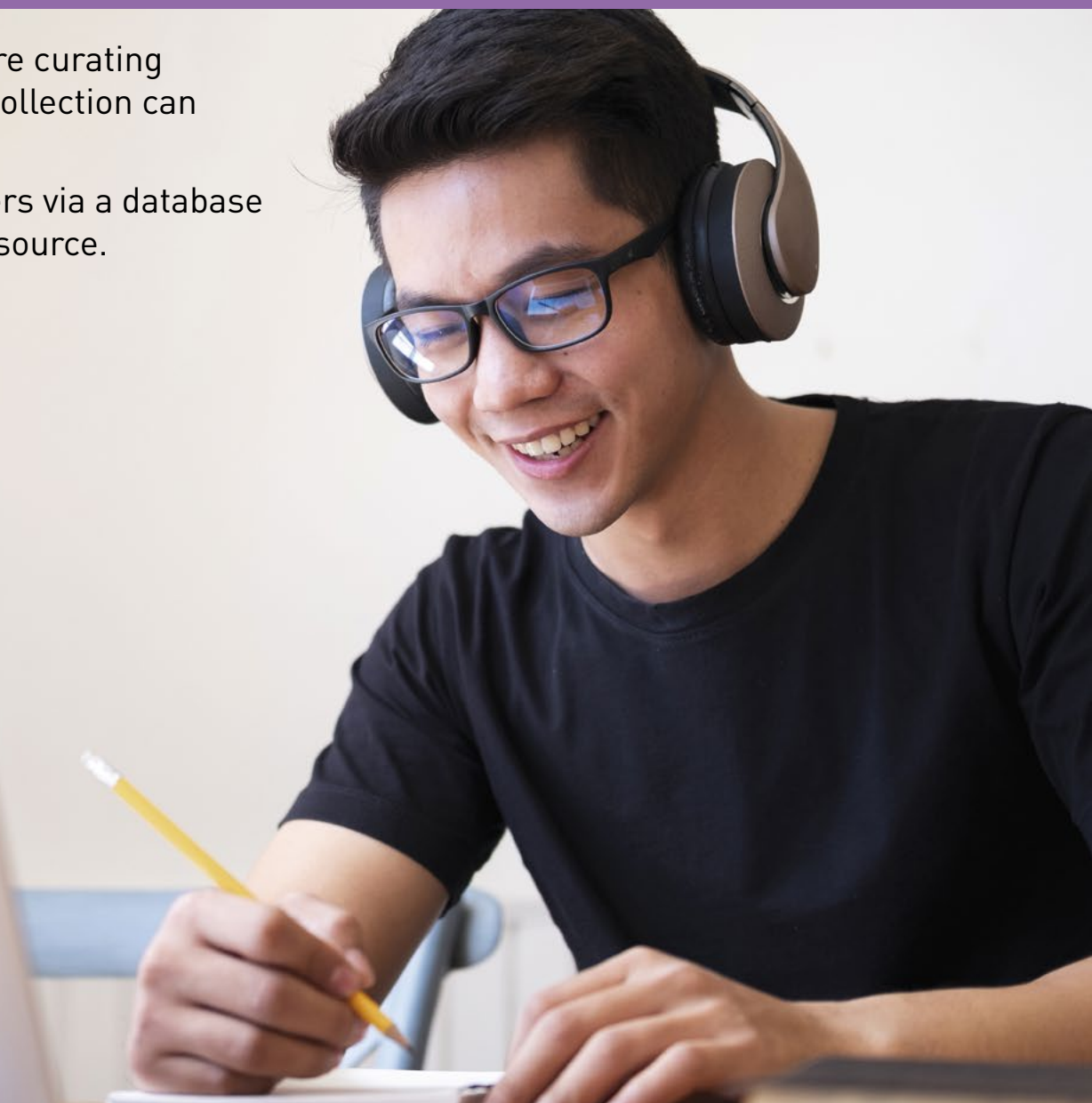
[RE Online](#) provide a range of free resources for teachers via a database searchable by key stage/religion/theme and type of resource.

Good News for Everyone (formerly known as Gideons UK) have a number of free resources available to schools. To see what is on offer click [here](#).

We are into a much more virtual form of education whether we love it or not. Be it full school closures, whole classes self-isolating or groups of pupils across classes working from home, the job of teaching all our pupils and ensuring they make progress has become more complicated. The ideas in [this document](#) from NATRE offer some starting points and inspiration!

[Oak National Academy](#) is an online classroom made by teachers, for teachers. The free, high-quality video lessons and resources are available throughout 2020/21. RE lessons are available for key stages 1 to 4.

[BBC Bitesize](#) is a well known resource. The free, high-quality video lessons and resources are available for key stages 1 to 4.



An excellent resource about RE and Assessment (and a reminder about an excellent RE resource bank)

Many RE CPD sessions and consultations at some point turn to the question of assessing RE. For obvious reasons, teachers and TAs responsible for teaching RE should examine the RE Agreed Syllabus “Guidance” section where sound and sensible advice is provided about assessing RE, but thereafter there are many books, etc. that can be used to help with the matter.

RE Today recently published “Assessment in RE: a practical guide” (eds. Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett), which is packed with assessment ideas for all the key stages. The advantage of the book is that its content is shaped by assessment methods already used in the classroom by teachers themselves. Teachers, etc. will find overviews of 15 assessment models currently used by teachers including descriptor-based assessment, the mastery approach and the comparative judgement approach. Teachers, etc. responsible for RE assessment might decide to use one or more of the models as they are described or combine what they regard as the best ideas from two or more models to develop their own approach. Introductory sections outline general assessment issues and key principles (and the commentary dovetails excellently with what our RE Agreed Syllabus has to say about assessment).

An order for the book can be placed by phone (0121-458-3313) or by writing to RE Today Services, 5-6 Imperial Court, 12 Sovereign Road, Birmingham, B30 3FH. Alternatively, access the RE Today website.

Do not forget that this and many other resources to do with RE and assessment are on the shelves of the North-East Religious Resources Centre, which has a base convenient for many Northumberland schools at: Church House St. John's Terrace Percy Main North Shields NE29 6HS Many schools and/or teachers already pay the annual subscription to access the



30,000-plus items at the resource centre and their books about assessing RE are extremely good. If you or your school has not yet subscribed to the resource centre, perhaps now would be a good time to do so.

The annual subscription is worth it just to access the thousands of posters, the artefact boxes and the collection of films and documentaries with themes relating the religion and belief.

Launch of new inter faith secondary school resource

This time rich in faith festivals is a reminder of the diverse nature of the UK today as well as of the importance of faith in the lives of many people and of good inter faith relations.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) recently launched a [new, free to download, resource](#) for secondary schools to help them teach about inter faith encounter, dialogue and action in the UK.

Packed with real life examples and hyperlinks the resource enables teachers to construct a learning journey for their pupils to contribute to their understanding of the place of faith and the importance of cooperation in building a better society for all.

"In our diverse UK and our globally connected world, people are increasingly likely to interact with those of other faiths and beliefs. So it is more important than ever that young people have the chance to develop and strengthen skills for inter faith dialogue, learning and cooperation."

- The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs IFN

"There's real opportunity for local inter faith groups to engage with secondary schools, through this resource and through their local SACRE's to help implement the resource in schools across the country."

- Paul Smalley, NASACRE and Edge Hill University

Developed with IFN's member bodies from across the UK the resource has five Units which start with a broad introduction to inter faith activity in the UK and then explore: inter faith dialogue; inter faith response to social needs from homelessness to food poverty and climate change; and faith communities responding in solidarity.



The COVID-19 pandemic has seen an amazing faith and inter faith response to help others. Unit 4 Faith communities in service for the wellbeing of others draws on examples of that.

The Teacher Resource follows IFN's [2019 Resource](#) for teachers working with primary school pupils.

Humanism Training Available

Are you confident enough in your understanding of **humanism** to teach it in the classroom?

Understanding Humanism (the education branch of [Humanists UK](#)), are offering **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 for the below courses that we're holding in May:

Understanding Humanism Primary Teacher Training

Tuesday 25 May, 16:00 – 17:30

£20.00 pp

Understanding Humanism Secondary Teacher Training

Wednesday 26 May, 16:00 – 17:30

£20.00 pp

You can also email the team at education@humanism.org.uk to arrange bespoke **online training specifically for your school**.



What's happened since the Commission on RE?



The Commission on Religious Education, 2016-18, was set up to assess the current state of religious education in England and to make recommendations. These were set out in our final report, Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward: <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp->

The report has been well received, with some dissenting voices. There has been some concern that this would be yet another report that would gather dust and so it is important for everyone connected to RE to know what has happened, professionally, academically and politically since then. There has been a huge amount of activity and good progress. The key areas of work are:

Professional

For primary teachers, a free training course:

A group of primary teacher educators have worked together to create a free training course for primary teachers to help them navigate their way around religion and worldviews (recommendation 6 in the CoRE report). It is available on the Culham St Gabriel's website at: <https://www.teachre.co.uk/teach-re-course/teachre-primary/>. There is also a training package for those involved in supporting new entrants to teaching.

For all teachers:

1. Support materials for teachers and syllabus writers are being developed in a project initiated by the RE Council and led by Stephen Pett of RE Today. These should be made available this year AND the REC is planning for a further three-year project to produce curriculum models that would fulfil the 'National Entitlement' set out in the CoRE report.
2. Reforming RE is the title of a book by Mark Chater (2020) and the name of a blogspace dedicated to

What's happened since the Commission on RE?

(Continued)

discussion of the National Entitlement which is the centrepiece of the Commission's final report. Details are available here: <https://reformingre.wordpress.com>. This debate is continuing in the next two editions of Professional Reflection in REToday.

3. Conversations about teaching religion and worldviews, including one with Dr Lois Lee (see below), can be found at: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/research/in-conversation/>.
4. There is also a conversation on the same site on Teaching Islam as a Worldview with Prof Lynn Revell and Dr Kate Christopher. This is a multi-disciplinary approach to Islam, developed by Canterbury Christchurch University in collaboration with teachers. The materials developed by the project, primary and secondary, will be freely available in due course.
5. These conversations about teaching religion and worldviews are on-going and details can be found on the Culham St Gabriel Trust website: <https://www.reonline.org.uk>. Next term's include Prof. Linda Woodhead and Prof Denise Cush.
6. Subject knowledge for teachers on religions and worldviews, covering 19 topics including minority religions, can be found at: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/subject-knowledge/>. Several of these (e.g. Buddhism and Hinduism) have been recently updated and expanded, in the light of the work of the Commission and the project on Worldviews.
7. The think-tank Theos has published a report on worldviews in religious education, written by Professors Trevor Cooling (the Chair of the REC),

Bob Bowie, and Farid Panjwani who was a member of the Commission. It is available at: <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>

Academic

1. 'The Worldview Project' is part of the RE Council's response to the CoRE report. It has two main strands: (i) a literature review which explored the concept of worldview across a number of academic disciplines and ii) an in-depth on-line discussion process between 13 academics to create discussion papers. They can be found at: <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Worldview->
2. A conversation with the authors of the literature review can be found at: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/research/in-conversation/>
3. An article on the CoRE report by the chair of the RE Council, Prof Trevor Cooling, can be found at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01416200.2020.1764497>
4. 'Innovative RE: Case Studies' is the work of Adam Dinham and Martha Shaw who led the 'RE for REal' project. It showcases innovative work on religion and worldviews and can be found at: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit/current-projects/reforreal/case-studies/>
5. Understanding Unbelief' is the title of an international, multi-disciplinary study led by Dr Lois Lee of the University of Kent. Details can be found at: <https://research.kent.ac.uk/understandingunbelief/>

Political

1. There is support for the recommendations of the Commission from a wide variety of organisations including the Association of University Lecturers in Religious Education, the Church of England, the National Association of Head Teachers, the National Association of Teachers of RE, and the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.
2. The Department of Education has taken considerable interest in the Commission's recommendations even though the then Secretary of State's response was lukewarm, at best.
3. The REC Chief Executive met Downing Street officials to discuss the report and received a positive response.
4. In December 2018, there was an excellent debate in the House of Lords, led by Lord Alderdice: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2018-12-17/debates/A497B8C8-9BE9-4975-95E3->
5. The REC/RE Today/NATRE RE Policy Unit is working on gaining a broad political and sector consensus aimed at securing a national plan for RE in England (which was the subtitle of the CoRE report).

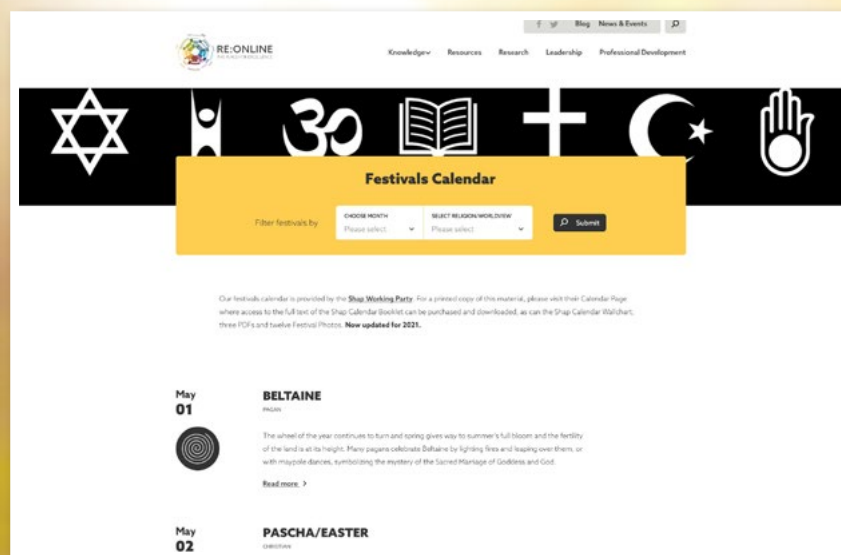
There is much to celebrate and much to look forward to!

Dr Joyce Miller

Member of the Commission on RE
Buddhist representative on Northumberland SACRE

Forthcoming Important Festivals/Commemorations

The **RE Online festivals** calendar is provided by the **Shap Working Party**. For a printed copy of the calendar, please visit the Shap Working Party **Calendar Page** where access to the full text can be purchased and downloaded, as can the Shap Calendar Wallchart, three PDFs and twelve Festival Photos.



The SACRE members

Committee A: Other Faiths

Mrs. J. Cousin: Roman Catholic Church

Reverend E. H. Marley, OBE: United Reformed Church (URC)

Represented by the URC: Baptist Church Represented by the URC:

Methodist Church (SE Northumberland Ecumenical Area)

Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara: Hinduism

Mariam Khan: Islam

Harpal Singh: Sikhism

Joyce Miller: Buddhism

Mrs. D. Van der Velde: Judaism

Mr. A. Gillespie: Society of Friends

Committee B: Church of England

Mrs. E. Bainbridge

Mr. C. Hudson

Mr. P. Rusby

Reverend J. Scott

Committee C: Teaching Associations/Unions

Mr. A. Duffield (middle school teacher)

Miss C. Naylor (secondary/high school teacher)

Mr. T. Nicholls (secondary/high school teacher)

Ms. S. Walton (primary school teacher)

Committee D: Local Authority

Councillor D. Campbell

Councillor B. Crosby

Councillor G Renner-Thompson

Councillor T. Thorne

Co-opted Representatives

Mr. S. Dearlove: North-East Humanists

Maddy Wardingham (special school teacher)

Observer (representing the academies and free schools)

Vacant

Local Authority Officers in Attendance

Caroline Weir, Part-time RE Consultant

David Cookson, Commissioner for Secondary Education and Sixth Forms

Andrea Todd, Clerk to the SACRE, Democratic Services

