

SACRE

NORTHUMBERLAND
Northumberland County Council

Newsletter for the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for Northumberland



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Whitley Memorial CE First School

Awe and Wonder at Newcastle Cathedral

On Wednesday 25th January 2017, the Year 4 children from The Whitley visited Newcastle Cathedral. The main aim of the visit was to enrich the RE curriculum, especially the topics of Prayer and Places of Worship.

On arrival, the children and staff were warmly welcomed by Canon Steven who talked about the structure of the day and gave background information about the cathedral. The children sat calmly, silenced by the awe and wonder of their new environment.

Following the introductory session, the children were split into groups to partake in a carousel of three different workshops/experiences. Canon Steven led one of the workshops, which was about prayer and key pieces of cathedral furniture. The children listened very carefully and successfully answered the questions. They really enjoyed the practical demonstration of baptism performed by the Canon. Everyone was fascinated by the explanation of why the tower has moved over the years; it was caused by digging work to lay pipes for the first gas lights in the world on Mosley Street.

Another experience was led by Mrs. Gibb. The focus of this activity was to learn about icons through the medium of craft work. The children created their own icons by choosing and drawing a biblical figure. They successfully used their imagination to decorate and embellish their designs. The icons will be displayed in the school and on the school website.

The third session was Godly Play and was led by Mrs. Robertson and Mrs. Scarlett. This was the first experience of Godly Play for both the children and staff and everyone was extremely impressed. It was a very spiritual experience for all and gave everyone a time to question, wonder and reflect in a calm and peaceful environment. After the story, the feast was a great success and a lovely sharing time for both the children and staff, and everyone was extremely impressed.

Overall, everyone had a fantastic religious education experience which not only fulfilled both AT1 and AT2 of the old RE syllabus, but also delivered so much more. It was an outstanding visit which the school would highly recommend to others.

The Whitley would like to express praise and thanks to the welcoming and professional staff who led the visit and also to the children whose behaviour and positive attitude to the experiences made the school very proud.

A conversation overhead from one of the children on the way home summed up the whole day: "I don't want this visit to end as I have had such an awesome day."



"...The focus of this activity was to learn about icons through the medium of craft work"

Heddon-on-the-Wall St. Andrew's CE First commemorates Holocaust Memorial Day, 2017

In Key Stage 2, we have been learning about the Holocaust. We listened to stories from Holocaust survivors provided by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and thought about where discrimination happens around the world.

We thought about genocide during World War Two and more recent similar events in Rwanda. "Newsround" shared the information in a way that was accessible to us all.

We wrote prayers and each child chose a powerful line. We wrote the line on a special stone which will go in our Holocaust Memorial Garden. We also created a display inspired by the artist, Chava Rosenzweig, who had an exhibition at the Imperial War Museum based on the Star of David.

To see some of the work Year 3 pupils produced in school, go to:

<https://heddonschoolyear3.wordpress.com/2017/01/27/holocaust-memorial-day/>

You will see photos of the children at work and our Holocaust Memorial Garden.

Andrew Wheatley
Headteacher
Heddon-on-the-Wall St. Andrew's CE First School



Some Forthcoming Festivals/Commemorations

21 April - 2 May	Ridvan	(Bahai)	21 June	Midsummer Solstice	(Pagan/Druid/Wicca)
23 April	St. George's Day	(National)	21 June	World Humanist Day	(Humanist)
23 - 24 April	Yom Ha-Shoah/Holocaust Day	(Jewish)	27 June	Eid-ul-Fitr	(Muslim)
24 April	Lailat-al-Miraj	(Muslim)	5 July	Birthday of Guru Hargobind	(Sikh)
1 May	Beltane	(Pagan)	9 July	Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Bab	(Bahai)
10 May	Wesak/Visakha Puja (Buddha Day)	(Buddhist)	9 July	Dharma Day	(Buddhist)
13 May	The Night of Forgiveness	(Muslim)	7 August	Raksha Bandhan	(Hindu)
14 - 20 May	Christian Aid Week	(Christian)	14 August	Krishna Jayanti	(Hindu)
23 May	Anniversary of the Declaration of the Bab	(Bahai)	15 August	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	(Christian)
25 May	St. Bede the Venerable	(Christian)	18 August	Paryushana	(Jain)
25 May	Ascension	(Christian)	25 August	Ganesh Chaturthi	(Hindu)
28 May - 26 June	Ramadan	(Muslim)	1 September	New Liturgical Year	(Orthodox Christian)
30 May	Dragon Boat Festival	(Chinese)	1 September	Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib in the Harminder Sahib	(Sikh)
30 May - 1 June	Shavuot	(Jewish)	2 September	Eid-ul-Adha	(Muslim)
4 June	Pentecost	(Christian)	5 September	Hungry Ghosts Festival	(Chinese)
16 June	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev	(Sikh)	11 September	Ethiopian New Year	(Rastafarian)

P.S. Anyone seeking to identify the dates for additional festivals and/or commemorations from April to early September should access the many lists available on the internet. Some of the best such lists (in terms of inclusiveness and accuracy) derive from the BBC and RE:Online. The Shap Working Party on World Religion also produces a very good list, but the list must be purchased whether in hard or electronic form.

RE and Exams in the County at GCSE and A Level

Religious Education may have suffered in recent times as a result of the subject not being classed as a “core academic subject” within the English Baccalaureate. However, it provides a vital avenue to teach pupils about life in modern Britain and the wider world.

The introduction of the new RE Agreed Syllabus in Northumberland (September 2016) has refocused the attention of the SACRE on the networks (or lack of them) within the County and the opportunities for those who teach RE to network.

The starting point was to collect details of the exam syllabus each school uses and the contact details of the RE Lead. The hope is that this will provide opportunities for some informal meetings between staff in schools.

The Northumberland SACRE is looking for ways to provide a more formal network structure in the future, and is also looking at the possibility of a conference for RE teachers in the Summer term.

In the meantime, the details of the syllabus/syllabi each school studies/study, and the contact details for the RE Lead, are available opposite.

School	Staff i.c	Contact	GCSE	A Level
Ashington High School	Suzanne Wake	suzanne.wake@ashingtonhigh.org	AQA B (current Year 11) AQA A (Christianity and Buddhism. Current Year 10)	OCR Philosophy and Ethics
Astley High School	Francesca Gannon	fgannon@astleyhigh.org	Edexcel Religious Studies (current Year 11) No Year 10 class Year 9: AQA A (Christianity and Islam)	None
Bede Academy	Julie Roberts	JRoberts@bedeacademy.org.uk	AQA A	Edexcel
Bedlington High School	Holly Durward	holly.durward@bchs.uk.net	AQA A (Christianity and Hinduism)	OCR
Berwick Academy	Alexis Widdowson	Widdowsana@berwickacademy.co.uk	OCR B (Short Course - Year 11) Eduqas Route A (Year 10)	None
Blyth Academy	Rachel Davenport	rdavenport@theblythacademy.org	AQA B	None
Cramlington Learning Village	Heather Douglas	hdouglas@cramlingtonlv.co.uk	AQA Religious Studies A: Paper 1A (The Study of Religion. Sikhism and Buddhism) Paper 2A (Thematic Studies with a focus on Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism)	OCR Religious Studies (units 1, 2 and 3 – Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and Developments in Christian Thought)
Duchess's High School	James Thompson	james.thompson@dchs-alnwick.uk	Edexcel B	Edexcel Philosophy
Haydon Bridge High School	Fran Phillipson	Fran.Phillipson@northumberland.gov.uk	OCR B (Year 11) AQA A (Year 10)	OCR A (Year 12) OCR Legacy Syllabus (Year 13)
James Calvert Spence College	Alex Lipinski	alipinski01@jcsc.co.uk	AQA B	OCR
King Edward VI High School	Gemma Cornell	gemma.cornell@the3rivers.net	AQA A (Buddhism and Christianity. Year 10) AQA B (Legacy Syllabus. Year 11)	A2: Edexcel AS: AQA Philosophy (changing to OCR Religious Studies)
Northumberland Church of England Academy	Matt Rowe	matt.rowe@ncea.org.uk	AQA B (Legacy Syllabus. Year 11) AQA A (Christianity and Hinduism. Year 10)	AQA A Religious Studies
Ponteland High School	Mark Davison Caitlin Naylor	m.davison@ponthigh.org.uk c.naylor@ponthigh.org.uk	AQA B (current Year 11) AQA A (current Year 10)	OCR
Prudhoe High School	Sarah Wills	s.wills@pchs.org.uk	AQA A (Hinduism and Christianity)	AQA Religious Studies. Hinduism and Philosophy and Ethics
Queen Elizabeth High School	David Jones	djones@qehs.net	AQA A	AQA A Philosophy
St Benet Biscop High School	Monica Kelsey	KelseyM@st-benetbiscop.org.uk	Eduqas Route B (Roman Catholic paper, but also studying Judaism)	OCR

RE/RS/Philosophy and Ethics at GCSE and A Level in Northumberland Schools; an evaluation

Data at County Hall suggest that 16 of the County's secondary and high schools teach RE/RS at GCSE and 13 teach RS/Philosophy and Ethics at A Level.

At GCSE, the most popular syllabi by quite some margin derive from AQA, but some schools teach syllabi deriving from OCR and Edexcel. The County's Roman Catholic high school offers students the chance to study Eduqas Route B with its focus on Roman Catholicism, but students also encounter some Judaism. One high school offers Eduqas Route A, which provides students with an opportunity to study Christianity, a second world religion and philosophical and ethical issues in the modern world.

Although Christianity dominates many of the syllabi offered at GCSE, the SACRE notes with interest that students also study Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and, in no less than four syllabi/papers, Buddhism. It is therefore noted that, taken collectively, GCSE RE/RS students in Northumberland have the opportunity to study all the religions commonly described as the world religions, although Christianity is without

question the religion studied the most frequently and/or in the greatest depth.

At A Level, OCR syllabi are more popular than AQA syllabi, and AQA syllabi are more popular than Edexcel syllabi. Data suggest that at A Level Philosophy and Ethics courses are as popular as RS courses. This said, one high school is in the process of changing from an AQA Philosophy and Ethics course to an OCR RS course.

We hope that this brief survey of what's provided to many of the County's secondary and high school students will encourage teachers responsible for RE/RS/Philosophy and Ethics to contact each other to discuss what works best for them in terms of exam syllabi and why. For the information to allow for such discussions, examine the table on the previous page.



“...Although Christianity dominates many of the syllabi offered at GCSE, the SACRE notes with interest that students also study Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and, in no less than four syllabi/papers, Buddhism”

The Northumberland County Council RE Agreed Syllabus: a briefing and network meeting for teachers responsible for RE in the West of the County

DATE AND TIME: 4th May, 2017 from 1.00pm to 3.30pm. Tea and coffee will be available on arrival and half way through the session

VENUE: Shaftoe Trust Primary School, off Shaftoe Street, Haydon Bridge, NE47 6BN

As you know, Northumberland County Council launched its new and much improved RE Agreed Syllabus in September 2016, a syllabus that will be used in schools until at least August 2021.

Here is an opportunity for teachers responsible for RE in first, primary, middle, secondary, high and special schools in the west of the County to make sure they get the best out of the new syllabus. Phil André, the Local Authority's part-time RE Consultant, will:

- explain how the syllabus came into being,
- describe what each section of the three-part document contains,

- offer advice about how to meet the new statutory requirements, and
- highlight how teachers are already successfully utilising the syllabus content.

During the half-day session there will also be an opportunity for attendees to share with each other teaching and learning strategies that are working well for them so that best practice is disseminated among neighbouring schools.

To book your place on the CPD session, or for further information about it, contact **Phil André** on **01325-251130** or, even better, write to him at

phil.andre@ntlworld.com There is no problem if a second member of staff wishes to attend from the same school, or if a governor with an interest in RE wishes to attend with a teacher.

STOP PRESS. This session is **additional** to the sessions that have already taken place at Lindisfarne Middle (January) and Ashington High (March).

SACRE Reflections

As my term as Chair of the Northumberland SACRE comes to a close after nine years, it is an opportunity to reflect and celebrate.

There have been many challenges. Concern over the role of RE and its place within a crowded but more narrowly focused curriculum. The perennial issue of funding. The struggle to retain RE as a distinctive specialism. The need to convince pupils and students that RE remains relevant.

The SACRE's responsibilities are defined in law, but do not reflect the massive changes in society - still less those in education.

Ironically, at a time when RE has been diminished or dropped in many schools, I believe it is more relevant than ever.

These are times of unprecedented uncertainty and division.

It is all too easy to retreat to the comfort of the familiar or to consider the sharp rise in religious extremism and nationalism as somehow "nothing to do with us".

I am proud that Northumberland's SACRE has striven to be inclusive and representative of all faith groups and worldviews including Humanism. We have worked as a team, with respect for each other because of our shared commitment to RE. We recognise the excellent work of teachers, pupils and students. We understand that Northumberland is not typical of the multi-cultural society of which we are a part. We appreciate that

some of our more isolated communities may lack awareness of and links to more diverse communities. We are proud that SACRE members helped to establish the Northumberland Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations. Many SACRE members have established strong links with schools and I know how much these links are appreciated.

The recent revision to the RE Agreed Syllabus makes the subject more accessible while including an acknowledgement of our unique Northumbrian history and culture.

RE has a crucial part to play in a broad and balanced curriculum and in allowing young people to think for themselves in a world of crude stereotypes and apparently easy answers to complex questions.

My task as Chair of the SACRE has been hugely enjoyable. I have gained a much better awareness of faiths other than my own and have had the opportunity to work with some special people.

I am grateful for the support of SACRE members, in some cases over many years. I particularly want to thank Linda Papaionnou, Phil André and members of the County Hall Education Team who have been absolute stalwarts.

Councillor Robert Arckless, MBE



FREE BOOK FOR UK SCHOOLS

What is Humanism? How do you live a good life without a god? And other Big Questions for Kids, by Michael Rosen and Annemarie Young, offers young people an excellent introduction to Humanism.

The book is a fantastic resource that will enable young people, whatever their background, to learn what Humanism is, and discover how many non-religious people try to live happy, ethical, and fulfilling lives in the here and now. The book explores questions on life, death, science, nature, morality, meaning, and purpose from a humanist perspective. It features interviews with humanists, including Philip Pullman, Shappi Khorsandi, Natalie Haynes, and Jim Al-Khalili, and asks them how they approach life's biggest questions.

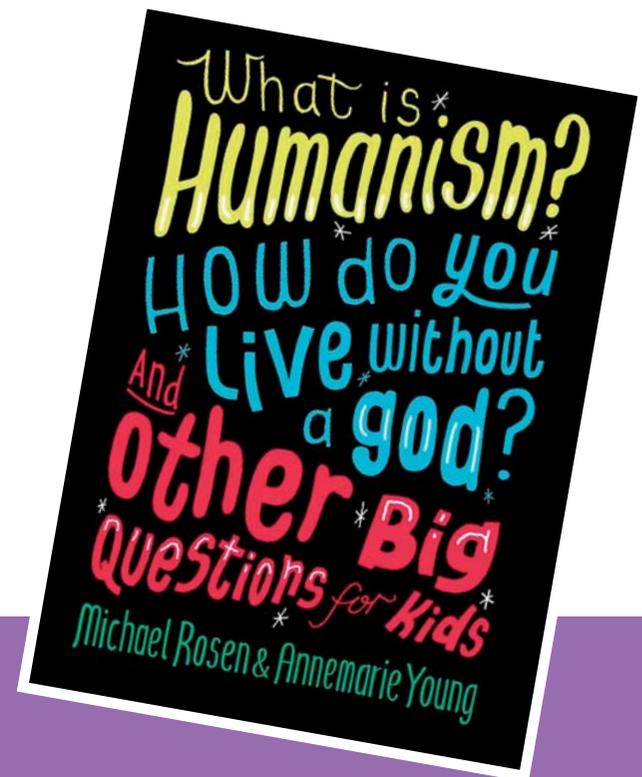
Understanding Humanism is making this fantastic book available for free to schools in the UK. To request your school's free copy, please [CLICK HERE](#) and complete the form.

Distribution of the book will take place over the first half of 2017.

Please note this book is only available for free to schools. We can only provide one copy of the book per school. If somebody from your school has already requested a copy, we may not be able to send another. The book is also available to buy online and from book shops.

For a wealth of other education resources to support you with teaching about Humanism, see our [teaching resources](#). www.understandinghumanism.org.uk

You can also request a visit from a free, local humanist school speaker to talk about the book.



CONTACT US

British Humanist Association
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London EC1V 8BB
education@humanism.org.uk

The SACRE members

Committee A: Other Faiths

Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara: Hinduism

Cloud Singh: Sikhism

Harpal Singh: Sikhism

Mrs. J. Cousin: Roman Catholic Church

Mr. D. Fenwick: Methodist Church

Reverend E. Marley, OBE: Baptist Church and United Reformed Church

Mrs. D. Van der Velde: Judaism

Committee B: Church of England

Mrs. E. Bainbridge

Mr. C. Hudson

Mr. P. Rusby

Reverend J. Scott

Committee C: Teaching Associations/Unions

Mr. M. Davidson

Miss F. Gannon

Mr. T. Nicholls

Mrs. H. Shaw

Committee D: Local Authority

Councillor G. R. Arckless

Councillor A. H. Murray

Councillor B. Pidcock, MBE

Councillor J.E. Smith

Co-opted Representatives

Mrs. C. Butterworth: North-East Humanists

Observer (representing the academies and free schools)

Steve Gibson of Northumberland CE Academy

Local Authority Officers in Attendance

Phil André, Part-time RE Consultant

David Cookson, Commissioner for Secondary Education and Sixth Forms

