

SACRE



Northumberland
County Council

Newsletter for the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for Northumberland



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Whittingham CE Primary School visits the Gurdwara in Newcastle

As a way of making their Religious Education come alive, 55 KS2 pupils from Whittingham CE Primary School travelled to Newcastle to visit Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, the city's purpose-built gurdwara that opened a few years ago and has a large dome visible from a great distance.

Cloud Singh made the children feel most welcome as they were shown around this special place of worship for Sikhs. To make the trip even more memorable, Cloud invited everyone to take part in Langar, which is the special sharing of food, because one of the key Sikh beliefs is that everyone should be made welcome and no one should go home hungry!

Religious Education certainly came alive!

Belinda Athey
Headteacher
Whittingham CE Primary School



[Click a thumbnail to enlarge](#)

“Cloud Singh made the children feel most welcome as they were shown around this special place of worship for Sikhs.”

Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated in three primary schools in the County

A moving day was experienced by Years 5 and 6 from Whalton Church of England, Belsay and Stamfordham primary schools on Monday 21st January 2019, at Whalton Village Hall. The children learned about different aspects of the Holocaust with the overriding messages being ones of kindness, love and respect for all of humankind.

Two Jewish ladies spoke to the children about events close to their hearts. One lady talked of her mother's escape to England and referred to the Kindertransport, or Children's Transport, the organised rescue effort that took place prior to the outbreak of World War Two. Another lady told the story of Tommy, who grew up in one of the camps. Tommy's father drew pictures of the life he wanted for his son and the children were able to see these drawings first-hand. Tommy was 94 years of age the following day and the children sang Happy Birthday to him! We hope he heard!

There were also several sensitively led activities which helped the children to empathise with the Jewish children caught up in the Holocaust. They decided what they might pack in their suitcases if they had to leave their homes suddenly in the middle of the night and wrote the names of some of the children who died in the ghettos and concentration camps onto candles. They decorated Stars of David, folded origami

yellow butterflies to accompany the poem "The Butterfly" by Pavel Friedmann and wrote messages of hope for our future on blue doves.

Our many thanks go to Deanna and Kim who freely gave up their time to prepare for and tell these poignant stories so that the memory of the Holocaust is not forgotten and to promote tolerance and respect in the increasingly multifaith and multicultural society in which we live today.



"There were also several sensitively led activities which helped the children to empathise with the Jewish children caught up in the Holocaust."

A member of the Commission on RE visits the SACRE to explain about its ground-shifting 2018 report

Dr. Joyce Miller, a member of the Commission on RE, kindly spent an hour with the Northumberland SACRE during its June meeting. She provided many helpful insights into why [“Religion and Worldviews: the way forward”](#) contains what it contains, why RE would benefit from the report’s many recommendations, and how, although the government has said it will not act on any of the most substantive recommendations, only two stakeholder groups in the UK’s RE community have major reservations about its content. In other words, the report has secured almost universal approval from within the UK’s RE community.

Dr. Miller emphasised that, while there are many schools in which RE is of a very high standard, such high standards are encountered “patchily”. The very best RE is exemplified by “entitlement, equality, objectivity, critical thinking, pluralism and inclusivity”. Although there is evidence that many manifestations of organised religion are being “rejected”, the thirst for spiritual awareness and knowledge and understanding about religion and belief remain strong.

One of Dr. Miller’s most startling revelations was that, although approved locally (as in law they must be), a third of all RE agreed syllabuses have been generated by regional or national bodies or RE experts contracted to undertake the task, which therefore compromises the extent to which such syllabuses are genuinely local (all the agreed syllabuses generated by Northumberland in the last 20 or so years have been products of total control at local level, even when ideas have been adopted or adapted from documents that have secured national approval).

Dr. Miller has not given up hope that the report may yet find approval with a future government – and, of course, there is nothing to stop SACREs or schools from acting on at least some of the report’s content. Any report about RE that secures the almost universal approval of the UK’s RE community deserves to be taken very seriously.

See Northumberland [SACRE Newsletter number 39 \(January 2019\)](#) for a short article about the report, where information is provided about accessing the report online.



“The very best RE is exemplified by ‘entitlement, equality, objectivity, critical thinking, pluralism and inclusivity’.”

An excellent resource to help teachers teach about secular worldviews

One of the findings of the recent survey about RE and collective worship in Northumberland schools was that many schools want to teach more about secular worldviews such as Humanism, but, other than the excellent information and teaching and learning resources available from Humanists UK (see below for the website), suitable resources are quite hard to come by.

The situation is rapidly changing, however, as publication of “Exploring Secularism” by the National Secular Society (NSS) confirms.

“Exploring Secularism” is intended for secondary and high schools, but RE teachers in other schools will find it of use, not least because of the way it defines terms with enviable clarity and reveals how teaching about secularism allows for in-depth discussion about the fundamental British values.

Although the very thoughtful “Guide for Teachers” is the book in the two-volume set that teachers in all schools will find helpful because it contextualises teaching and learning about secularism, the “Core Principles: Teachers’ Resource Pack” is where you find many ready-to-use lesson plans that are bound to stimulate much discussion and debate among pupils and students. Among the questions pupils and students will engage with are:

- What is secularism?
- Who is a secularist?
- How do secularists think about decisions?

- Why do people support or oppose secularism?
- Where does secularism come from?
- What different types of secularism are there?
- What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?

In the right hands, some of the pre-existing lesson plans can easily be adapted for use with Year 5 and 6 pupils.

If interested in getting this excellent resource for your school, make contact with the National Secular Society at admin@secularism.org.uk or ring 020-7404-3126 or 020-7324-3060. In July we were advised that Northumberland schools might be eligible for a few free copies, if they agree to pay for the postage and/or make a small donation to the NSS. However, in an act of unusual generosity, **teachers can download the resources for free** via the NSS website (www.secularism.org.uk). From the home page click on “**Campaigns**”, from where teachers should access “**Education and Schools**”. From there, one last click leads to “**Exploring Secularism**”.

To access the teaching and learning resources available from and/or recommended by Humanists UK, go to their website (www.humanism.org.uk/) and, from the home page, click on “**Education**”. You will be amazed how much information, etc. there is – and it is free. Moreover, ready-to-use lessons plans are available.

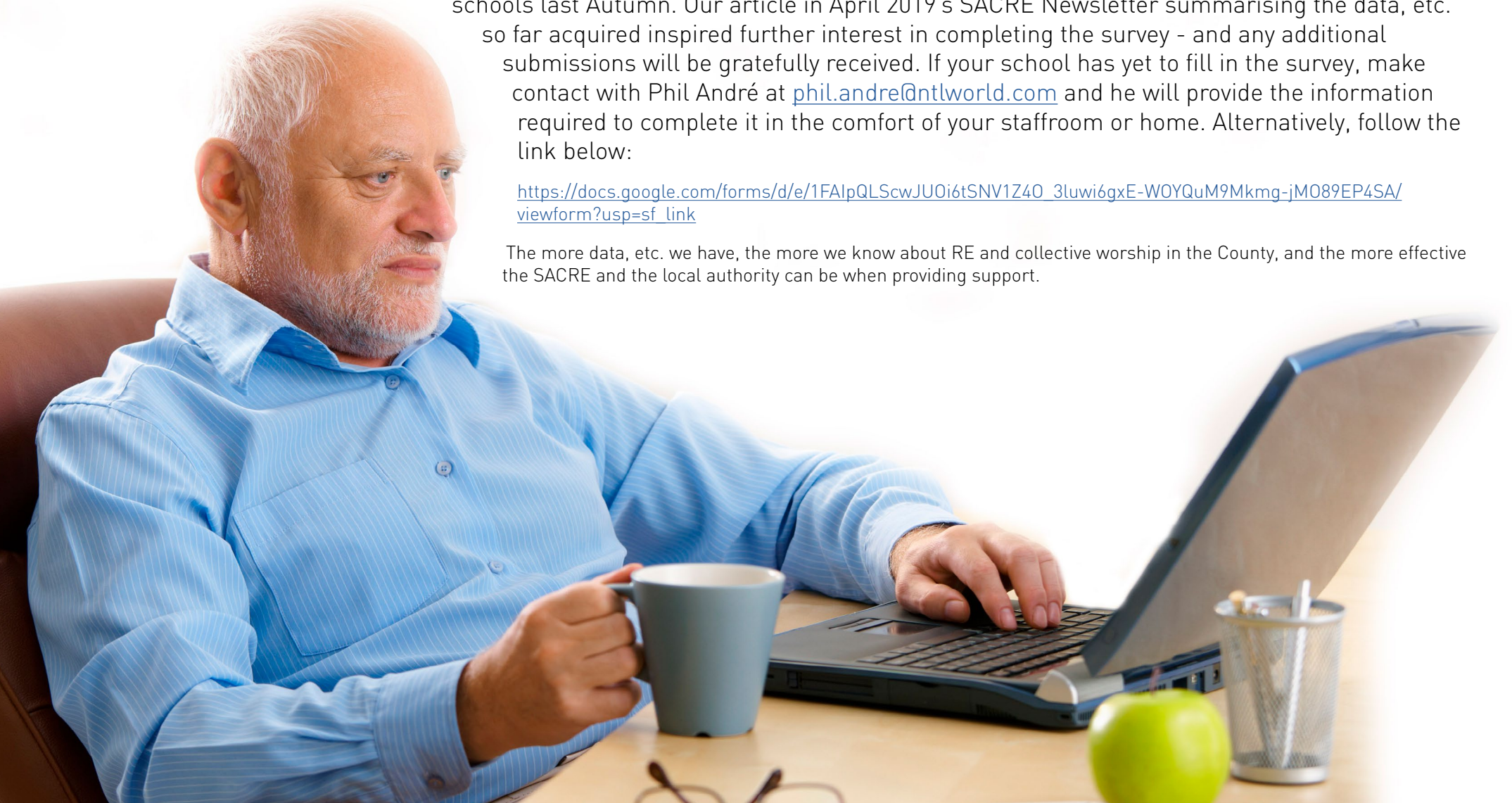


Still keen to fill in the survey about RE and collective worship circulated to schools last Autumn?

It is not too late for us to add data, etc. to the survey about RE and collective worship undertaken by schools last Autumn. Our article in April 2019's SACRE Newsletter summarising the data, etc. so far acquired inspired further interest in completing the survey - and any additional submissions will be gratefully received. If your school has yet to fill in the survey, make contact with Phil André at phil.andre@ntlworld.com and he will provide the information required to complete it in the comfort of your staffroom or home. Alternatively, follow the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScwJU0i6tSNV1Z40_3luwi6gxE-WOYQuM9Mkmg-jM089EP4SA/viewform?usp=sf_link

The more data, etc. we have, the more we know about RE and collective worship in the County, and the more effective the SACRE and the local authority can be when providing support.



National Interfaith Week: help to raise the profile of RE/RS within the school!

This year, National Interfaith Week runs from 10th to 17th November and, as in the past, we are confident that many Northumberland schools will use the opportunity to examine religion and belief within the wider community, thereby helping to raise the profile of RE/RS.

As you probably already know, National Interfaith Week:

- **highlights** the good work done by local faith, interfaith and faith-based groups and organisations
- **draws** new people into interfaith learning and cooperation
- **enables** greater interaction between people of different backgrounds
- **helps** develop integrated and neighbourly communities
- **celebrates** diversity and commonality, and
- **opens** new possibilities for partnership.

Building good relationships and working partnerships between people of different religions and beliefs is part of the year-round work of many people and organisations across the UK. Having a National Interfaith Week provides a focal point, helping to open interfaith activity up to a wider audience so that more people are made aware of the importance of this vital work and are able to participate in it.

The three aims of the Week are:

- strengthening good interfaith relations at all levels
- increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith and belief communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and wider society, and
- increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Good luck planning events. Do not forget that the Agreed Syllabus for RE has information about people who, and places which, can help you make National Interfaith Week a great success. Also access the National Interfaith Week website (www.interfaithweek.co.uk/) for information about what is happening in our region and further afield. You never know: information about an event posted on the website might provide a springboard for one of your own events. The Interfaith Week website also has some useful planning tools including:

The Interfaith Toolkit

Activity ideas for different organisations

Publicity and branding pages

Guides, including social media starting points and key messages.

You can also access "Interfaith Week: Stories from 2018, Inspiration for 2019". This publication includes planning tips for 2019 and an illustrated look back at Interfaith Week in 2018, which was the tenth Week in England and Wales. Examine the inspiring examples included in the report at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-stories-from-2018-inspiration-for-2019>

For any further advice, contact the Interfaith Week Network Team on 020-7730-0410.

If you hold an event associated with National Interfaith Week, why not tell a wider audience about it by writing an article for publication in the next SACRE Newsletter? Go on, flaunt your success!



Some Forthcoming Festivals / Commemorations

1st September	Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib	Sikh
1st September	Al-Hijrah	Muslim
2nd September	Ganesh Chaturthi	Hindu
Until 9th September	Hungry Ghosts Festival	Chinese
10th September	Ashura	Shia Muslim
11th September	Ethiopian New Year	Rastafarian
13th September	Moon Festival	Chinese
21st September	International Day of Peace	
29th Sept - 1st October	Rosh Hashanah	Jewish
29th Sept - 7th October	Navaratri	Hindu
September or October	Harvest	Christian
October	Black History Month	
1st October	International Day of Older Persons	
4th October	Durga Puja	Hindu
8th - 9th October	Yom Kippur	Jewish
13th - 19th October	Interfaith Week of Prayer for World Peace	
13th - 20th October	Sukkot	Jewish
20th October	Guru Granth Sahib Ji given the Eternal Guruship	Sikh
21st - 22nd October	Simchat Torah	Jewish
24th October	United Nations Day	
27th October	Divali	Hindu
27th October	Divali/Bandi Chor Divas	Sikh
27th October	Divali	Jain

28th October	Annakuta	Hindu
29th October	200th Anniversary of the Birth of the Bab	Bahai
30th October	Anniversary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah	Bahai
31st October	Halloween	
31st October	Samhain	Pagan
1st November	All Saints Day	Christian
5th November	Anniversary of Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot	
10th November	Remembrance Sunday	
10th November	The Prophet Muhammad's Birthday	Sunni Muslim
10th - 17th November	National Interfaith Week	
11th November	Armistice Day	
11th - 15th November	Anti-Bullying Week	
12th November	Birthday of Guru Nanak	Sikh
15th November	The Prophet Muhammad's Birthday	Shia Muslim
16th November	International Day for Tolerance	
24th November	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur	Sikh
30th November	St. Andrew's Day	
1st December	Advent Sunday	Christian
10th December	Human Rights Day	
21st December	Yule/Winter Solstice	Pagan/Druid
23rd - 30th December	Hanukah	Jewish
25th December	Christmas Day	Christian
31st December	Hogmanay	

P.S. To identify the dates for additional festivals and/or commemorations from late August to the end of December, 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 it must be purchased whether in hard or electronic form.

Stop Press:

After many enjoyable and rewarding years engaging in a variety of tasks on behalf of Northumberland County Council, Phil André has decided it is time to retire from his post as our Part-time RE Consultant, effective from 1st April 2020. As a consequence, the local authority is looking to replace him, on a part-time basis of between 20 to 30 days per annum, with someone who ideally has recent or current classroom experience and a proven track record in relation to RE and collective worship.



The Part-time RE Consultant's main responsibilities will be to help meet the statutory and other needs of Northumberland's Standing Advisory Council for RE, which usually meets four times a year; draft and/or edit text for the termly SACRE Newsletter; provide some CPD relating to RE and collective worship; field queries deriving from schools about RE and collective worship; play a key role in the review of the RE Agreed Syllabus every five years; help to establishment network meetings for RE teachers; liaise with colleagues in County Hall to assist with their professional goals; and liaise with interested parties in the wider regional community to enhance RE and collective worship provision in the County.

Anyone who would like to be considered for the post of Part-time RE Consultant should in the first instance register their interest with Dave Cookson, Commissioner for Secondary Education and Sixth Forms (dave.cookson@northumberland.gov.uk). If you would like more information about what the post entails, contact Phil André (phil.andre@ntlworld.com).

P.S. The SACRE would welcome from teachers and others any comments about the termly SACRE Newsletter that will lead to its improvement and increased usefulness. Is the content helpful? Do you like the layout? Are there topics that require additional discussion and/or exposure? Have exciting things taken place in your school that deserve to be shared with others (if so, write an article and we will publish it)? Would you or someone you know like to add to the expertise already on the SACRE? Have you got exemplary in-house documentation you are willing to share with others so best practice spreads around the County?

Any comments should in the first instance be sent to Phil André at phil.andre@ntlworld.com, who will share what you say with the SACRE and the Local Authority. Many thanks.

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

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)

Committee D: Local Authority

Councillor D. Campbell

Councillor B. Crosby

Councillor W. Daley

Councillor T. Thorne

Co-opted Representatives

Mr. S. Dearlove: North-East Humanists

Maddy Wardingham (special school teacher)

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

Andrea Todd, Clerk to the SACRE, Democratic Services

