

# SACRE



Northumberland  
County Council

Newsletter for the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for Northumberland





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

It is not too late to add data, etc. to the survey about RE and collective worship undertaken by schools in Autumn 2018. Our article in April 2019's SACRE Newsletter summarising the data, etc. 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](mailto: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/1FAIpQLScwJU0i6tSNV1Z4O\\_3luwi6gxE-WOYQuM9Mkmg-jM089EP4SA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScwJU0i6tSNV1Z4O_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.



# The academic year's best and most important CPD event!

When Northumberland County Council held its last all-day RE Conference (Autumn 2018), teachers who attended said in large numbers that the next such CPD event should involve visits to houses of worship in Newcastle so teachers can have encounters with such destinations before bringing their pupils and students.

The SACRE is pleased to announce that, on 18th March 2020, a coach will depart from County Hall in Morpeth at about 9.00am for visits to the ISKCON Centre, the Sikh Gurdwara at the Big Lamp, the University of Newcastle Mosque and the Orthodox Synagogue. All four of the houses of worship are already popular destinations for Northumberland schools, so people who join the group will experience first-hand places on the radar of many of our schools. About an hour will be spent in each house of worship so that everyone has a good look around and gets a feel for what their pupils and students can expect when they visit. In most cases you will also meet the person or persons who will be your hosts when you return with your pupils and students.

Anyone who would like to attend this important and invaluable CPD event should in the first instance contact Phil André at [phil.andre@ntlworld.com](mailto:phil.andre@ntlworld.com) who is assembling a list of teachers, etc. who want to travel to

Newcastle on 18th March 2020. Your names will be forwarded to County Hall as soon as they reach Phil so your booking is confirmed. This article and invitation to attend the event will be followed up very early this term with a letter sent to every school inviting others to join the group. By then we will know exactly what charge each delegate will incur. We can cope with about 40 delegates on the day.

As things firm up, delegates will be provided with information about appropriate dress and arrangements for lunch, but we advise everyone to bring a camera to take photos (if photos are not allowed, you will be advised in advance) and a little spending money. The spending money will be useful because we might manage an add-on mystery visit over the lunch break.

The coach will depart from our last house of worship at about 3.25pm, so we will back at County Hall by about 4.00pm.



*"In most cases you will also meet the person or persons who will be your hosts when you return with your pupils and students."*

# Whittonstall First organises a brilliant week of activities around the time of Inter-Faith Week 2019

What a wonderful week Whittonstall First School had celebrating Inter-Faith Week. We had lots of lovely visitors in school and the chance to do lots of different activities relating to religion that linked to our whole school topic of Celebrations.

On the Monday, Reverend Helen of Whittonstall St. Phillip and St. James Church opened our Inter-Faith Week talking about symbols of Christianity and we used this as a starting point for a comparison with different religions. In the afternoon the children enjoyed a lovely workshop with Phil André, an RE specialist, discussing branches of Christianity. The children now have an understanding of how Christianity has different denominations.

On the Tuesday, JIJ Studios from Ryton in Tyne and Wear came to teach a Bollywood dance class. As well as learning some Bollywood moves and a fabulous routine, we created our own actions and story. The children discussed with the dance tutor how Bollywood routines are normally made up of household jobs which are then assembled into dance moves. The children developed their skills of using their bodies to express a thought or feeling.

On the Wednesday, Mrs Taster, from Tiny Tasters, taught Class 2 how to make Jewish Boureka and Class 3 how to make a Buddhist Stew. As well as getting hands on with our individual ingredients and utensils, we discussed and applied the principles of eating a healthy and varied diet, used a range of cooking techniques and discussed seasonality and how and where the ingredients were grown and processed. The children were very keen to try the ingredients. The dishes were then taken home and enjoyed with our families.

On the Thursday, the Islamic Diversity Centre visited school to run workshops with all the children. We enjoyed learning about Islam and some of the Muslim celebrations, festivals and ways of life. The children then compared this to their own understanding of Christianity.

On the Friday, we visited the Hindu Mandir and the Sikh Gurdwara on Westgate Road in Newcastle. The children had a chance to look around the buildings and explore how each faith is practised. In the Hindu Mandir the children could see visually what we had

been learning about in the Autumn term. Cloud Singh provided a guided tour at the Sikh Gurdwara. The children were welcomed with food as an offering as we entered the place of worship. We moved around the Gurdwara, where we followed how a Sikh would come and pray.

The children now have a deep understanding of other faiths and how other people live.

**Victoria Endacott**  
Class 2 Teacher  
Whittonstall First School

Click a thumbnail to enlarge



# Scholarships for teachers from the Farmington Institute

Applications for the 2020 to 2021 Farmington Scholarships are now open. These are scholarships for teachers of Religious Education and associated subjects in UK secondary, primary and special schools. Headteachers who wish to undertake research into either Religious Education or Values Education are also eligible to apply.

Scholarships cover the cost of tuition, essential local travel and, by negotiation with the school, the salary of a replacement teacher up to point 6 of the main pay scale. Scholarships last for a maximum of 30 days and can be taken at a local university (the Farmington Institute has links with 12 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) or be home-based with a local tutor. Further information and an application form can be found on the Farmington Institute website: <http://www.farmington.ac.uk/index.php/farmington-scholarships/>

The website above reveals that the Farmington Institute has links with York, Durham and Glasgow universities, all of which are within relatively easy travelling distance for teachers and headteachers living or working in Northumberland.

The SACRE recommends this as an excellent way for teachers and headteachers to refine their knowledge, skills and understanding about Religious Education and Values Education.



*“Farmington Institute has links with York, Durham and Glasgow universities, all of which are within relatively easy travelling distance for teachers and headteachers living or working in Northumberland.”*



# Holocaust Memorial Day, 27th January 2020

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is, as always, on 27th January, and we are confident that many Northumberland schools have already planned events on or around this date. The theme for 2020 is “Stand Together”, so it is likely that many events will reveal what happens when people from different backgrounds share a common concern for the preservation of human life irrespective of issues such as race, ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexuality and/or ability/disability.

**N**eedless to say, many examples of how groups of people are marginalised and scapegoated can be examined both in the past and today. All these are worth reflecting on. This year's theme is intentionally broad and open-ended.

If your school has yet to confirm how HMD will be commemorated, we suggest that an outstanding starting point for ideas is the HMD Trust website ([www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk)), where, among other things, you can find out what is happening in other parts of the country and access lots of excellent teaching and learning materials.

2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and this is certain to feature prominently in the forthcoming commemorations. But so will the concept of the Righteous Gentiles (or the Righteous among the Nations) who stood together with the Jews and other marginalised and scapegoated groups (e.g. the Roma and Gypsies) to try to avert their marginalisation, scapegoating, persecution, massacre and genocide.

While the Holocaust/Shoah will always be the focal point for HMD events, this year we imagine that, for added topicality, attention will be directed to the plight of the Rohingya Muslims, the Uighurs, the Yezidis

and the Kakais, and the vulnerability of Christians living in many parts of the Middle East.

Above all, HMD is designed “to challenge prejudice, racism and discrimination, and to promote diversity, equality and harmony between communities”. Consequently, schools which address HMD confirm their commitments to community cohesion, equality, diversity, inclusion and challenging extremism and radicalisation.

If schools wish to share with a larger audience what they did to commemorate HMD, send a summary to Phil André at [phil.andre@ntlworld.com](mailto:phil.andre@ntlworld.com) and it will be published in a forthcoming SACRE Newsletter.



# Year 3 at Morpeth First immerse themselves in Hinduism!

On Tuesday 26th November, Year 3 children from Morpeth First School spent the day learning about Hinduism. The day began with a visit to the Hindu Mandir in Newcastle (and lots of mums and dads came to offer help and support). The children were very excited and, out of the 52 that were there, only one had been inside a Hindu Mandir before, so this was a new experience for the vast majority of them (and it was a new experience for the adults).

On our way up the stairs we all took off our shoes and the children were interested to learn that this was a mark of respect to the animals from which the leather is made. We were very lucky to have Phil André, the County's part-time RE consultant, join us on our visit and his wealth of knowledge immediately engaged the children. They learnt about the daily life of a Hindu and how they aim to pray at least twice a day. Throughout the visit, we observed Hindus coming into the mandir to worship. Seeing this first-hand was a fantastic experience and the children compared this with their own experiences of a church.

After discussing many different features inside the mandir, the children were given some time to explore and find some of the things that had been mentioned. We were intrigued by the colourful shrines containing the different forms of God and the stories associated with them. The walls were covered with pictures of God and the children enjoyed describing them and making comparisons.

We were truly privileged to observe the 11.00am arti which involved candles, bells and singing. At this point in the visit, the children were fascinated, but they also showed great respect and remained silent throughout.

P.S. I would like to confirm what a delight it was to work with the Year 3 children all day. They were excellent in the mandir - full of interest and enthusiasm, and brilliant when panditji undertook arti. As for back in school: the knowledge and understanding they manifested was outstanding. The day confirmed how invaluable such experiences can be for pupils and students. Phil André.

Before the end of our visit, we were very kindly given the opportunity to walk behind the shrines in order to get a feel for what Hindu worship actually entails. The children loved this - and a chocolate for the bus journey home certainly put a smile on everyone's face!

Back at school, Phil André spent time in each class showing them artefacts and explaining in more detail what the different forms of God are responsible for. He also gave us many ideas for follow-up lessons to deepen and broaden the children's knowledge.

The children were interested to find out more about Rama and Sita, who featured prominently in the mandir, so we read the Divali Story and did some writing about this.

Our day ended with some Indian food-tasting, which the children thoroughly embraced. They all went home eager to tell their parents about their fantastic day of Hinduism.

**Jenny Irvine**  
Year 3 Teacher  
Morpeth First School





# The Accord Award for Inclusive Schools

People who read this Newsletter on a regular basis will remember that, in 2017, the Northumberland SACRE applied for the Accord Inclusivity Award when, during a break with tradition, SACREs were encouraged to celebrate their commitment to inclusivity as it applied the RE and collective worship. Although the SACRE did not win, it secured many honourable mentions in the report highlighting best SACRE practice up and down the land.

**W**e are pleased to announce that for 2020 the Accord Inclusivity Award will, as usual, be given to schools that can demonstrate their commitment to inclusion. We have every confidence there are schools in Northumberland that could easily secure the Award and urge such schools to consider applying for it.

Are you a school promoting an inclusive ethos committed to the growth of mutual understanding, especially on the grounds of religion, belief and ethnicity? If so, the 2020 Accord Inclusivity Award is well worth considering because it rewards schools that work hardest to promote these aims.

The annual Accord Inclusivity Award is now in its eleventh year and former Award winners have displayed a wide range of high quality and thoughtful work, with most having excelled at RE.

The annual Award is listed by Ofsted as a way for schools to complement their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and tackle discrimination). The Award is free to enter and open to all state-funded schools in England and Wales.

The 2020 Award will be judged by another respected and experienced panel of experts from a range of backgrounds. Previous judges have included former Education Secretary, Lord Baker; the then Education Select Committee Chair, Neil Carmichael; former Institute of Education Director, Professor Becky Francis; the Bishop of Buckingham, The Rt. Revd. Dr. Alan Wilson; and journalists Ian Dale and Polly Toynbee.

Due to the relatively detailed nature of the information required, a nomination form should be completed by someone at the school applying for the Award. This will normally take a couple of hours. Accord has tried to make the process of applying as simple as possible, and most of the questions the nomination form poses will have already been answered, if not seriously considered, in material already produced by the school for Ofsted, the school prospectus, newsletters or internal policy documents.

Past winners have always received press coverage for their success.

For more information about the Award please visit <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/inclusivity-award-2020/>

The deadline for entries is Sunday, 21st February 2020 and prizes will be awarded in the Spring. Please contact Accord's National Coordinator, Paul Pettinger, at [paul@accordcoalition.org.uk](mailto:paul@accordcoalition.org.uk) or on 020 7324 3071 with any queries.



# Ofsted and Religious Education

Not long ago, all schools in the County received a long and highly informative letter from Wayne Daley, the SACRE chair, entitled “The duty to teach RE to all pupils, to all years, in all schools”. The only pupils excluded from this duty are pupils withdrawn from RE by their parents or students aged 18 or over who withdraw themselves. The SACRE is delighted to report that, based on albeit incomplete data deriving from schools, the number of Northumberland pupils and students who withdraw from RE is very small, so the content of Wayne’s letter is of considerable importance for every school and the vast majority of the County’s pupils and students.

**H**ere we wish to reflect on Ofsted’s interest and concern for RE, given the new inspection framework (more information about this and many other matters can be found in Wayne’s letter).

The new inspection framework highlights the statutory nature of RE and the potential for RE to become a curriculum focus during an inspection. RE **MUST** be provided to all pupils in all years and in all schools. Moreover, maintained schools and community schools without a religious designation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious designation **MUST** teach RE according to the locally agreed syllabus. Academies and free schools **MUST** provide RE to all pupils in all years, but have more flexibility about the syllabus they can use. This said, many academies and free schools without a religious character utilise a locally agreed syllabus, most often the syllabus used by neighbouring maintained schools.

Ofsted expects to see that RE “is well led and efficiently managed, and that standards and achievements in RE, and the quality of the provision, are subject to regular

self-evaluation”. The inspection framework lays great emphasis on the provision of a “broad and ambitious” curriculum, one in which RE features alongside the national curriculum and age-appropriate sex and relationships education. Inspectors will explore whether school leaders are following the basic curriculum (this includes RE) and how carefully leaders have thought through what end points the curriculum is leading to, what pupils will know and do at those end points and how leaders have planned the curriculum accordingly. This includes considering how the curriculum will address gaps in pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding and how pupils can build their knowledge, skills and understanding toward the agreed end points. In schools using the locally agreed syllabus, this means that, at Key Stages 1 to 3, teachers, etc. will have to be familiar with the implications of the requirements and the teaching and learning opportunities that will lead to their attainment.

Ofsted is also anxious to know that the curriculum content “is most useful” and “taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough

for all pupils to acquire the required knowledge and skills”. It is also keen to see that the curriculum “has been designed and taught so that pupils read at an age-appropriate level”.

All this will need to be taken into account as it applies to RE because RE might emerge as the focus for a “deep dive” during the inspection. Needless to say, teachers and others responsible for the delivery of RE in **MOST** schools in the County will need to ensure they are familiar with the content of the locally agreed RE syllabus and the statutory parts of the syllabus in particular.



# Forthcoming Important Festivals/Commemorations

5 January	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh Nanakshahi Calendar)	10 March	Holi (Hindu)
6 January	Epiphany (Western Christian)	10 March	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)
6 - 7 January	Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (Orthodox Christian, Armenian Apostolic, Rastafarian)	17 March	St. Patrick's Day (National)
25 January	Yuan Tan/Chinese New Year (Chinese)	21 March	Nawruz (Bahai, Zoroastrian)
27 January	Holocaust Memorial Day (National)	22 March	Lailat-al-Miraj (Muslim)
29 January	Vasant Panchami/Saraswati Puja (Hindu)	2 April	Rama Navami (Hindu)
1 - 2 February	Imbolc (Pagan)	4 April	Ching Ming (Chinese)
2 February	Candlemas/The Presentation of the Lord (Christian)	5 - 11 April	Holy Week (Western Christian)
8 February	Teng Chieh (Chinese)	6 April	Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)
9 - 10 February	Tu B'Shevat (Jewish)	8 April	Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)
12 February	Darwin's Birthday (National)	8 - 16 April	Pesach/Passover (Jewish)
15 February	Nirvana Day (Buddhist)	10 April	Good Friday (Western Christian)
21 February	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)	12 April	Easter Day (Western Christian)
25 February	Shrove Tuesday (Western Christian)	14 April	Baisakhi (Sikh)
26 February	Ash Wednesday (Western Christian)	17 April	Holy Friday (Orthodox Christian)
26 February - 9 April	Lent (Western Christian)	19 April	Pascha/Easter Day (Orthodox Christian)
1 March	St. David's Day (National)	20 - 21 April	Yom Ha-Shoah/Holocaust Day (Jewish)
2 March	First Day of Lent/The Great Feast (Orthodox Christian)	21 April - 2 May	Ridvan (Bahai)
6 March	Women's World Day of Prayer (Christian)	21 April	Lailat-al-Bara'a/Barat (Muslim)
8 March	International Women's Day (International)	23 April	St. George's Day (National)
9 - 10 March	Purim (Jewish)	23 April	Start of Ramadan (Muslim)
		1 May	Beltane (Pagan)

P.S. To identify the dates for additional festivals and/or commemorations from the start of January to the beginning of May, 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.



**T**he Part-time RE Consultant's main responsibilities will be to help meet the statutory and other requirements 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 about 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 apply 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](mailto:dave.cookson@northumberland.gov.uk)). If you would like more information about what the post entails, contact Phil André ([phil.andre@ntlworld.com](mailto: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](mailto: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)

Ms. S. Walton (primary 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

