



Summer 2009
Secondary

RE NEWSLETTER

Special points of interest:

- News from THE NASACRE AGM
- QCA Consultation
- Successful 6th form conference
- SACRE(D) event
- New GCSEs in RE

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Cambridgeshire Advisory Service

To: RE Subject Leaders and Teachers

THOUGHT PROVOKING NEWS!

At the Annual General Meeting of NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs) last week, the lead HMI for Religious Education, Mr Alan Bryne, reported to the meeting his concern about what was happening to RE in secondary schools.

Since September 2008, Ofsted has had a statutory obligation to report on a school's duty to promote community cohesion. The outcomes of the reports have revealed significant issues regarding RE in the curriculum. Some schools see that good RE contributes much to the agenda of community cohesion and other schools have little regard for this subject and contribute to the negative attitudes towards the subject and people's beliefs.

In a recent article in the TES (Friday May 29th 2009) entitled "MP demands urgent action as new data reveals race -bully exclusions are soaring", it stated

that 'much of the bullying centres on religion.' The article suggested that schools try to create environments that allow pupils to explore issues around different faiths and races. Is there a link between this increase in racist bullying and the demise of RE on the curriculum? Mr Bryne stressed how important it is for schools to address this ignorance and ensure that RE is integrated properly in the curriculum. RE is still a statutory subject in the basic curriculum.

The second major point that caused much discussion was the evidence from the HMI subject inspections, conducted since last September. These inspections showed that **one third** of our secondary schools were deemed as 'inadequate' in the provision and quality of RE. This is a very different picture from only two or three years ago. It was suggested that the new KS3 curriculum has resulted in many curriculum managers/headteachers marginalizing the subject or erasing it from the curriculum,

particularly at KS4. This is very serious and a worrying picture.

Delegates at the AGM were very worried and felt this was a retrograde step, especially when many school communities are diverse, reflecting an increasing pluralistic society.

I wonder what RE is like in your school now? Two years ago the local SACRE conducted a survey which demonstrated a variable position of RE in the county. But there needs to be accurate evidence presented to QCA following the first year of the new KS3 curriculum. It is time to check what is happening. I will be contacting Heads of RE to consider what is happening in Cambridgeshire schools to see if the same situation is being mirrored in Cambridgeshire as nationally.

Successful 6th Form Conference

Last term both Peterborough SACRE and The King's School, Peterborough, sponsored a sixth form conference for students of Religious Studies from both Peterborough City and Cambridgeshire. The event was planned and organised by Mr Ian Forsyth, Head of Religious Studies at The King's School, and the key speaker was Dr Robert Beckford. He delivered two lectures, one entitled 'Who wrote the Bible?' and the second one centred on a film he had made entitled "The Great African Scandal." Both talks prompted much discussion and debate between him and the students.

It was good to see schools from both authorities supporting the event and making it possible for a high quality speaker to come to such an event, providing stimulating debate, as well as enhancing critical thinking skills. Many thanks must go to Ian for arranging this highly successful event and it is hoped that another sixth form conference will happen again next year. Look out for details of the 'annual lecture' for sixth formers next year.

Talking of sixth form conferences, there is some planning happening for a 6th Conference at Hills Road Sixth Form College, supported by

Cambridgeshire SACRE, entitled ' Religion and the Media'. Look out for details in the coming weeks for this event.

'Celebration of the SACRE(D)' Event November 4th 2009, Over Community Centre

Cambridgeshire SACRE are organising an exciting event to be held on November 4th at Over Community Centre, 3.30pm-6.30pm for all Primary RE Subject Coordinators and Secondary Heads of RE Depts., along with their headteacher. SACRE want to celebrate how much good RE contributes to Community Cohesion and aids spiritual and moral development of all. It is also half way through the life cycle of the Agreed Syllabus and it gives teachers an opportunity to meet SACRE members, and air their views about the Syllabus. This will provide some valuable information to SACRE members when they begin to review the syllabus and a chance for teachers to meet their local SACRE members. It also affords opportunities to establish links with faith communities.

The nature of the event is to offer a twilight session to all who lead RE in the county, to thank them for their hard work and have free CPD in the form of workshops from a wide range of faith communities and academics. Displays from publishers will be available. There will be much more detail to follow but please keep that date free and come along to this event.

Art Competition

As well as a wide range of workshops to choose from there will be the winning entries of an art competition SACRE is going to set in the next few weeks. Please think about submitting entries when you receive details of the competition shortly. It will follow the lines of NATRE's Spirited Art competition.

More FREE CPD for RE Teachers KS3 Religious Education

On September 30th at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park there is free CPD for a whole day on planning and implementing the second phase of the new secondary curriculum. Kathryn Wright, the Eastern Regional Adviser for RE, will lead a

practical day, focussing upon Year 8 students, and bring to notice details of excellent practice in other parts of the country where there has been some innovative, challenging RE. The aim of the day is to make this a very practical day, resulting in producing exciting schemes of learning that incorporate concepts, skills and processes. It is hoped that every one of our secondary schools will send someone from their department to this event.

We are flagging this up now so that you can make sure that you keep this day free and seek permission from your senior management to come. This is the first time your local SACRE have sponsored such training. More details about the objectives and activities of the day are to come shortly but I am using the newsletter to flag this now to encourage you to support this training event.

Exchanging Resources

I meet so many RE teachers in the county who are working long hours, often the only specialist in the department, producing resources for colleagues and developing extensive schemes of work, week after week, month after month.

At a recent network meeting at Cottenham Village College I was thrilled when two colleagues offered some of their materials to go on the portal for others to look at and adapt as they see fit.

There is no one way to teach RE and, although we have an Agreed Syllabus, it is for schools to decide their schemes of learning, ensuring they meet the needs of the Agreed Syllabus, but that are fun, challenging, creative and flexible.

I have had some schemes of work by a few colleagues in the past year. Thank you so much for those but I would like more. Thank you to Matt Sandford at Cottenham Village College and Jessica Miller at Bassingbourn Village College for sharing their PowerPoints and schemes. If you have any materials that you think are suitable for the portal please e-mail them to me or phone me

and we can discuss how best to use the resources.

Using 'Aim Higher Funding to support good RE'

HSEP (Huntingdonshire Secondary Education Partnership) Network group is an active group of RE teachers that meets once a term. They have recently decided to use 'Aim Higher funding' to support pupils from Year 9 to visit several places of worship in Peterborough. This is being planned for June 30th and each Year 9 pupil will have to report back to their class what they saw and felt about the trip. Another benefit from this trip is to deal with any misconceptions pupils may have about people of faiths.

NEW GCSEs in Religious Studies

Some of you may not be aware but I have this year become a chief examiner for one of the exam boards for Religious Studies. If I can help and support your teachers in any way please do not hesitate to contact me.

I have had great pleasure in meeting many of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Heads of RE recently at 'Get Started' events throughout the country. They, and many other teachers from around the country, have informed me of how positive they feel towards the changes in the new GCSEs, particularly the focus on the two assessment objectives. I do hope that many of you have been able to attend the free INSET being offered by all four exam boards because there are changes with all the exam boards. It is to be hoped that the greater focus upon the skill of evaluation will lead more of our students to adjust better to the demands of AS/A level Religious Studies courses.

Very Important QCA Consultation

If you haven't heard or seen in the media, QCA have asked for comments and feedback from anyone involved in the teaching of RE to look at the draft 'Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2009'. This is to replace the long-standing document 'Circular 1/94'. It is now out and, as ever in the RE world, is causing a stir!! Please have a look at it and make any comments yourself. The local SACRE will also be sending a response to the

document following its next meeting.

New RE Level Descriptors

Were you aware that in all the National Curriculum Subjects and RE there are changes to the wording of the level descriptors used for assessment? This is another area that QCA are consulting teachers. If you look on the QCA web site you might like to comment upon these. There are not such significant changes regarding RE, compared to other subjects but you might like to have a look and judge for yourself. See www.qca.org.uk

Interfaith Projects

Jonny Vincent, Head of RE, at Linton Village College and Ray Mitchell, Head of RE, at Bottisham Village College are currently undertaking an interfaith project funded by the Society for Interfaith Dialogue and Action, using pupil voice to evaluate a teaching resource entitled 'Valuing Diversity'. The aim is to explore attitudes and values of young people towards people of faith and consider if attitudes and perceptions have changed following teaching a unit of work based upon the resource 'Valuing Diversity'. We wait to hear the outcomes. These will be materials for QCA case studies. It is really good that RE departments are willing to be involved in such projects.

ICT "You tube" clips

There are so many video clips that could be a very good way into delivering good RE. If you have any that you have used and that you could recommend, please let Julie Gillies, my business support assistant know, and we can add these to resources on the portal. It would be helpful if you could suggest areas from the

Agreed Syllabus that the clip could relate to.

Local news: RE Request

The head at The Kings Schools has asked if anyone uses the RS Boardworks? As a department they are thinking of changing some of their SOL. They want to maybe visit a school and see it in action. Can anyone help? If you can, contact Mr I Forsyth at forsyth.i@kings.peterborough.sch.uk

Courses Autumn Term 2009

30 Sep 2009 - Let RE Lead the New KS3 Curriculum, Hinchingsbrooke CP, PE29 6DB
9.30 a.m.– 4.00 p.m. Code 19633
NB - This is a **free course** for Cambridgeshire Heads of Department and Teachers of RE.

RE Network Meetings Autumn Term 2009

10 Nov 2009 - Ely Community College, CB6 2SH 4.15 pm - 5.45 pm Code 19545

19 Nov 2009 - Hills Rd 6th Form College, CB 2 2PE 4.15 p.m. - 5.45 p.m. Code 19546

To book a place on the above or request further details, please phone 01480 375634 or e-mail CAS@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

To find out about the objectives for the courses above look at the details on www.cas.ccceducation.net

The HSEP RE Network meeting will be held at St Peter's School - date to be confirmed.

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