



# SACRE NEWS

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Autumn 2021

RE and Collective Worship news and updates for teachers, governors and SACRE members

## CONTENTS

SACRE NOW AND NEXT.....	2
SACRE meetings this term:.....	3
SYLLABUS REVIEW AND CURRICULUM DESIGN .....	3
RE NETWORK MEETING – A REPORT on last term.....	4
OFSTED RE RESEARCH REVIEW .....	5
RESOURCES FOR RE.....	6
CROSS-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES.....	7
COLLECTIVE WORSHIP.....	8
FOODBANKS AND HARVEST.....	9

## Why RE Matters

The ability to understand the faith or belief of individuals and communities, and how these may shape their culture and behaviour, is an invaluable asset for children in modern day Britain. Explaining religious and non-religious worldviews in an academic way allows young people to engage with the complexities of belief, avoid stereotyping and contribute to an informed debate.

[REC Website](#)

SACRE are happy to receive comments and articles for future editions. Contacts:

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# SACRE NOW AND NEXT

Despite the lock downs, Bracknell Forest SACRE has continued to meet and has attracted new members, as the meetings have been broadcast on YouTube for the whole world to see. There is a forward plan in place to get RE back on track across the Local Authority area. Three key priority areas have been identified:

## **Priority 1 Understanding the local context**

This is mainly an internal SACRE priority, as SACRE seeks to gather information about the local context and look to understand the relationships between schools and worship centres. However, SACRE will be looking at school websites and sending out surveys to find out more about how your school is doing at the moment.

## **Priority 2: Promoting good religious education**

There is already a lot of work that SACRE does in this area. This newsletter, the RE Network meetings and the resources that the hub have produced are some of the ways in which good RE is being promoted and supported by SACRE. With the syllabus review due to start soon as well, this will be an area that is further developed.

## **Priority 3. Monitoring Religious Education and collective worship**

This is one of the key duties of a SACRE, and particularly in the current climate one of the hardest to do well. We will be using the RE Network meetings, surveys and hopefully eventually visits to schools to engage with RE and collective worship, in order to find out how we can best support you in providing a high-quality education.

As you will see from these priorities, SACRE needs to gather evidence about how well teachers across the local authority feel supported in delivering good quality RE. There will be a survey sent to schools that will seek to gather information about what is going well and what the challenges are. Please help us to make sure that the support we are offering is what you need by answering the requests for information. There is no intention to use any of this information to pass judgement. This is about finding out how SACRE can better support you in your work.

The information gathered will also be used to ensure that the syllabus review creates a locally agreed syllabus that is fit for purpose and provides teachers with the information and structure that they need to create high quality RE curricula in schools.

There is currently a vacancy for a Buddhist representative on SACRE, and a secondary school Headteacher would be welcome to join us. Please contact any of the [SACRE officers](#) if you are interested.

## SACRE MEETINGS THIS TERM:

Tuesday 9 November 5.00pm – 7.00pm – venue TBC

For more details contact Lizzie Rich: [lizzie.rich@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:lizzie.rich@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)



SACRE meetings are open to the public and the agenda is published 7 days ahead of the meeting

## SYLLABUS REVIEW AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

The Pan-Berkshire RE syllabus was launched in 2018 and needs reviewing by 2023. Since the last review, the [Commission on RE](#) published their report, and recently Ofsted has published a [Research Review into RE](#). Bracknell Forest SACRE will continue to work with the other five Berkshire SACREs to produce the new syllabus and intends to take account of these reports in the creation of the new syllabus.

The hub will be looking for teachers to be involved in the creation of the new syllabus, particularly in producing support materials. Look out for the survey and for emails about how the process is going and for opportunities to get involved. The best way to get involved from the beginning is to come along to the RE Network meeting this term.

### RE Primary Network Meeting

Tuesday 30 November 4.00 – 5.30 on Zoom

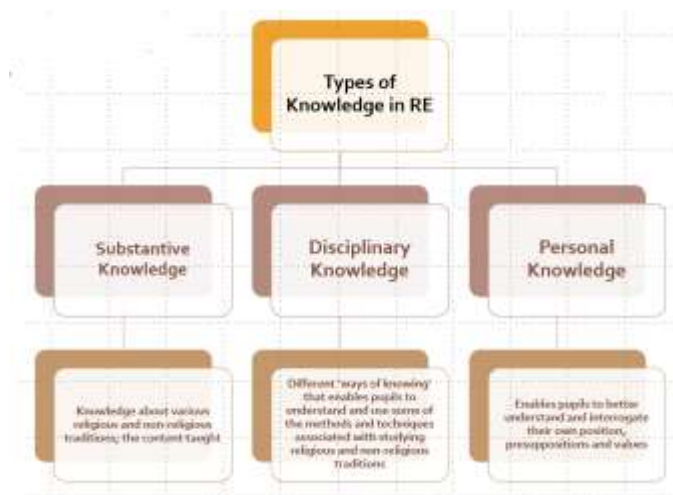
Topic: Do we need anti-racist RE?

*Ensuring that RE does not promote stereotypes or reinforce prejudice.*

Bookings through Can Do website

# RE NETWORK MEETING – A REPORT ON LAST TERM

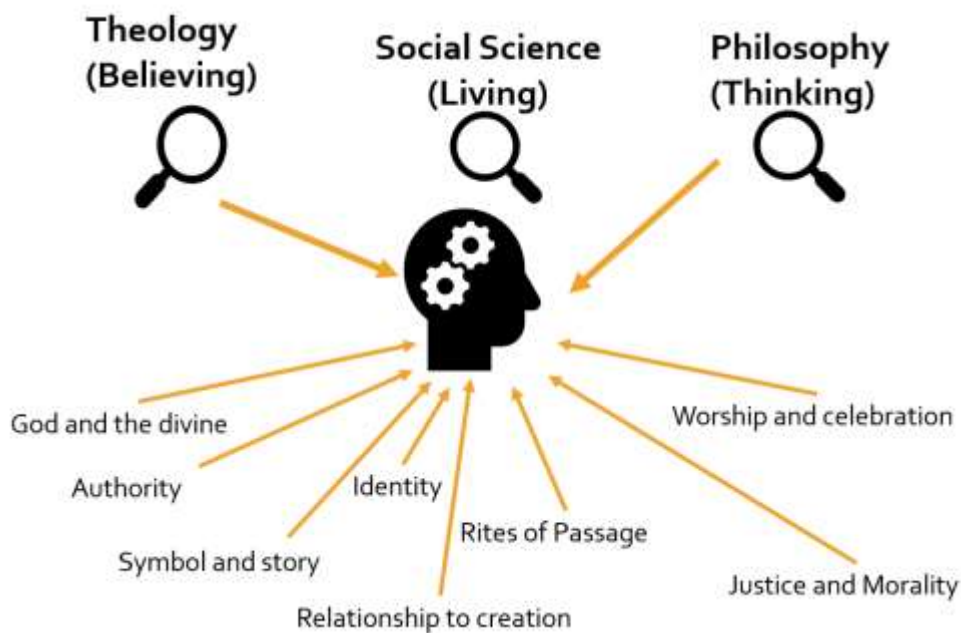
The summer term RE Network meeting picked up on some of the ideas from the Ofsted RE Research Review and discussed the types of knowledge that the report mentioned



Thinking about the different types of knowledge, teachers began by identifying the substantive content that they were teaching in a particular unit of work. Working out in advance exactly what we want pupils to know makes it so much easier to plan how a unit is to be structured. This also makes assessment easier too, and this is part of what Ofsted means by the curriculum being the progression model.

Next, we looked at the ways of knowing, or the disciplinary knowledge as it is sometime called. This is about ensuring that pupils encounter the knowledge about how to study religious and non-religious traditions. Another way of looking at it is to think of the disciplinary as the lenses through which a topic is studied. The three most commonly encountered in RE are Theology (Believing), Philosophy (Thinking) and Human/Social Sciences (Living).

When this thinking is applied to the current Pan-Berkshire syllabus, we get something that looks a bit like this, with the concepts drawn from the syllabus and the lenses as the ways of knowing.



Teachers were then encouraged to think how they would apply the disciplines to the substantive content that they considered at the beginning, and think about questions that would explore the content through the different lenses:

**Substantive knowledge area:** Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest that reflects God’s creation of the world, encourages Jewish people to have a full day of rest, worshipping and trusting in God.

**Theological focus:** Does the Torah help Jews keep Shabbat special?

**Human/Social Science focus:** How does keeping Shabbat strengthen the family and the community?

**Philosophical focus:** Is it better to follow the rules or do good?



This is an activity worth doing with the next unit that you are planning to teach. Remember that some topics will be more suited to one lens than another, so you may not be able to think of a question for each for the disciplines. Have a look at the blogs by [Joe Kinnaird](#) about how to write like a theologian, philosopher or social scientist for ideas about how these lenses might be employed.

## OFSTED RE RESEARCH REVIEW



In May 2021 Ofsted published a [Research Review into RE](#). While this document does not carry any statutory weight, or even set out the criteria for inspection into RE, it contains a lot of really good pointers as to what may constitute high quality RE. It sets out the context for the research, and summarises recent developments in RE. From a classroom teacher point of view the sections on curriculum and assessment are essential reading.

It identifies the need for RE to be taught in a coherent sequence, allowing pupils and teachers to see how learning builds on prior learning and prepares for future learning. It identifies three forms of knowledge – substantive, disciplinary and personal, suggesting that the best RE interweaves these forms. The debate between depth and breadth is aired again, with an emphasis on the need for deep learning, within the broad and balanced curriculum.

The section on assessment makes some statements that subject leaders will find helpful when discussing arrangements with senior leaders:

*“Given the limited curriculum time allocated to RE, standardised intervals for summative assessments may mean that the curriculum domain being assessed may be far smaller in RE than in other subjects. Leaders can consider whether there is enough time allocated to RE to teach and assess the curriculum.”*

There needs to be clarity about the purpose of assessment, what they are testing and why. Seeing the curriculum as the progression model ties assessment closely to the coherent curriculum.

There are some key questions that need to be asked as a result of reading this report:

- 1) How is the RE curriculum in your school constructed?
- 2) Is it a progressive curriculum?
- 3) What is the core knowledge that pupils learn?
- 4) Do you cover the three forms of knowledge?
- 5) What do you assess and how?

How you answer these questions will help you to prepare not just for a visit by Ofsted, but for delivering high quality RE to your pupils.

## RESOURCES FOR RE

**Theos Think Tank** – a film

[Nobody Stands Nowhere](#)

If you are looking for a way to encourage teachers and pupils to think about their own worldview this simple animation is a must. Lasting only 2 and half minutes, it presents a way of understanding what is meant by a personal worldview and how our views impact on who we are and what we do.



**Books at Press** — books for EYFS and Key Stage 1

[Belonging and believing](#)



Based around 8 families with different world views, each with a five or six year old child, this series looks at the lived and diverse reality of belief in Britain today. Each family reflects a particular expression of their beliefs according to their specific tradition and/or personal family background. Many of these are lesser known traditions and illustrate that a diverse range of beliefs and practices exist within a faith. The families reflect the beliefs of Tibetan Aro gTér Buddhists, Swaminaryan Hindus, Chabad Jews, Independent Community Church Christians, Hanafi Muslims, Sikhs, Bahá'ís and humanists.

More information is available on the [website](#), where the books are also available to pre-order.

### And the not so new:

[RE Online](#) has a growing website, with more resources, blogs and access to research papers. There are essays offering subject knowledge development, teaching resources and discussion starters for staff meetings.

NATRE has increased the range of free resources that are available on the website. There is a series of lessons drawing on [RE and Anti-bullying](#), perfect for anti-bullying week, Resources on [Anti-racist RE](#) as well as the [Real People, Real Faith](#) series of films produced by the Pan-Berkshire SACRE hub. A new project is underway on Worldviews, so there will be new resources coming soon. Membership of NATRE comes with a range of benefits, such as access to a wider range of resources and discounts for courses. Strictly RE, a national RE conference, is already schedule online again, for 29 – 30 January 2022 and a discount is offered on the cost for NATRE members and early booking. Put the dates in your diary. Last years' conference was really inspirational.

Twitter has a huge amount of RE related material. If you use Twitter, there is [#REChatUK](#) on the first Monday of the month. This is an opportunity to engage in a discussion with a range of RE experts on a topical issue. It's a great way to find out what other people are thinking.

## CROSS-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

### Springs Dance Company

There are two dance workshops on offer from Springs Dance Company:



To book or to find out about what can be offered, contact: 07775 628 442 or email:

[touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk)

## Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2022

This year's theme is: [One Day](#)

Holocaust Memorial Day is **One Day – 27 January** – that is put aside to come together to remember, to learn about the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, in the hope that there may be **One Day** in the future with no genocide. The aim is to learn more about the past, to empathise with others today, and take action for a better future. There is a four page document to download that suggests how this theme might be explored.

There are other groups that offer work on the holocaust, making it accessible to a range of age groups.

One such group is [Generation2Generation](#), which focuses on survivors and their children telling the family stories. The aim is to promote and inspire tolerance and understanding. They can offer visits and online sessions.

The [Holocaust Education Trust](#) offers a range of sessions, for pupils and teachers, including training sessions at Yad Vashem holocaust memorial in Israel.

CORE Education Trust's [Echo Eternal](#) is a commemorative arts engagement programme inspired by Holocaust survivor testimony to promote respect and understanding between different communities.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Nick Gibb MP has suggested in the House of Commons, in a written answer, that schools will be investigated if they are not offering a daily act of collective worship. As you are no doubt aware, this is a legal requirement for all schools, regardless of status or religious affiliation.

Collective worship is not part of the curriculum and does not need to be seen as a lesson. The requirements are for an experience that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. There is no minimum or maximum time; it can take place in any normal school group. It does not need to look like a mini Church service. It is a time to reflect, consider and if pupils wish, to pray. Take the opportunity to reflect on your school community, school values and school vision. Help pupils to see how they can engage with the world through their worship. There should not be any confessional material, no compulsion to pray or sing, but everyone should have the opportunity to be present with integrity.

There are many resources available but do make sure that what you choose is suitable for your school setting and allows for space to engage with the identity of the school. Look at [CAFOD website](#); [Simply Collective Worship](#), [Services for Education](#) and [Assemblies for Every Season](#).

Do remember that any resource needs to be adapted to meet your context, so don't feel that you have to use every element of a resource you find. Be creative. Involve pupils. Get them facilitating meaningful sessions. Most importantly, have fun and build community.



# FOODBANKS AND HARVEST

When you hear of Foodbanks in the news are you curious about the circumstances that have got people to the place of needing food that's been donated by others? I wonder who you picture as the likely recipient of that sponge pudding or tin of fruit that you place into the Foodbank collection point at your local supermarket?

Bracknell Foodbank is part of a national network of foodbanks, giving out nutritionally balanced emergency food to people in financial crisis who have nowhere else to turn. The most common cause of crisis is low income. There are also high numbers affected by benefit changes or delays, or sickness. Last year 1945 vouchers were issued, feeding 5019 people in Bracknell Forest and surrounding areas, of which 2071 were children.

Our local Foodbank works with over 70 referral agencies including local charities and BFBC, who are able to issue foodbank vouchers for anyone that is struggling to access food because of financial difficulty. Based in the centre of Bracknell, running out of Kerith Community Church, over 60 volunteers from the local community run the Foodbank covering a variety of roles, some behind the scenes and some client facing. Foodbank manager Claire Mather explains how the Foodbank operates "We've experienced incredible levels of support from the local community - 97 tonnes of food was donated in 2020" (to get a sense of how much food that is, an average car weighs just over a ton!) "The support has included monetary donations which have enabled us to move forward with our plan to store all our food on-site; in addition we are now also able to provide fresh fruit and vegetables for clients"



And who is that likely recipient of the shampoo, jam or tinned soup?

Here's one story shared by a client-facing volunteer:

*A lady came along for the first time, and she was very nervous. She shared her backstory with us: she had been made redundant and then got a job in an afterschool play centre, not paying much but at least something, but then with the school closures that job went too. Her son has been made redundant 3 times over the Covid period. Each job ending and no offer of furlough. She bought her adult son with her because she didn't know what would happen. When I bought out the fully loaded trolley with our family sized staple food plus the extras of fresh fruit and vegetables she just couldn't believe it was all for her. She thought it would just be a bag of random pasta and a tin of beans just like you see in the supermarket donate areas.*

Ah yes, that bag of pasta and tin of beans that's so easy to pick up and drop off! They were my go-to items too, until I heard from Claire that they have far more pasta and baked beans donated than they need. And here's the challenge for all of us who might feel "I've done my bit for the Foodbank, I'm loving my neighbour". Sometimes our help isn't helping. It's not easy to hear that, but those unwanted items are giving the Foodbank volunteers a lot of extra work! Posted on the food collection points, there's a basic list of items provided in the three day food parcels, but depending on current donation rates, some items are more in need in any particular week. [Bracknell Foodbank's Facebook page](#) is the best place to check what's needed before your weekly shop.

With Harvest approaching what would *really* help Foodbank? Perhaps schools might rethink what you've "always done"? Around harvest time last year the Foodbank received over 10 tonnes of food, which was three times what was needed to meet the needs of their clients. Here's Claire again "We completely understand the importance of



harvest time in helping children and young people to look to the needs of others, but this year we are asking schools whether they could please do this in a slightly different way? What about planning a non-school uniform day to raise monetary donations so we can use the money raised to fund fresh food to give out along with our regular food parcels. Maybe your school could arrange a collection sometime between April-July when donation levels are lower? Or maybe you could encourage older students to join Trussell Trust's online campaign to end Hunger: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-involved/campaigns/>."

The Golden Rule found in many religions is **the principle of treating others as one wants to be treated**. For those of us who follow Christ's words and example, God is love, and we love others because God first loved us. Jesus said that the two Commandments recorded in Matthew's gospel sum up a life of faith: *"An expert in the law tested Jesus with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 'This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"*

Let's love our neighbour. Let's help. And let's do it thoughtfully.

Catrina Benham      Kerith Community Church

There are many harvest resources available on the internet to help schools plan how they will mark the season:

The [Trussell Trust](#) has created some resources for schools and churches.

Look at [CAFOD resources](#) where the theme this year is "Go Green to Brighten Up".

The [Assemblies.org.uk](#) webpage has specific harvest resources.

Most of the usual charities also have harvest resources. Check that they are suitable for your school before using.

Look at [Tearfund](#); [Hope](#); the [Salvation Army](#); [Christian Aid](#) and [All We Can](#), a Methodist organisation. Some of these resources may not be suitable for collective worship, but may support teaching in RE about how Christians remember harvest, or work on Christian organisations and charity.

For secondary schools, make a link between harvest and [COP 26](#). There is a youth summit before the main conference.

If you find other great resources, please let Bracknell Forest SACRE know, and they can be shared more widely.