

## RE Today's RE Updates Autumn 2022

SACRE receives updates on what is happening in the world of RE. We thought you might like to have this information – about resources and events, and other news updates. Please pass this on to your RE subject lead!

### Resources

#### Inclusive Judaism: resources from the Jewish Museum of London

Classroom resources, including an extensive image library, open up the diversity of Jewish communities. Developers, Shereen Hunte and Eliana Mendelsohn, say: *The teaching of Inclusive Judaism is important for many reasons and ensures that:*

- *The Jewish community is represented authentically.*
- *Students truly understand what it means to be Jewish, in all its diversity.*
- *We are able to connect to each other's experiences with empathy and compassion.*

See: [Inclusive Judaism - The Jewish Museum London](#)



#### Visits, videos and other resources for the classroom

##### THE ARTS SOCIETY BIRMINGHAM

##### Birmingham faith visits

The Arts Society Birmingham has worked with six faith communities to provide guidance and materials on six places of worship. Teachers can find a 4-page booklet, three videos introducing the building and community, and a related quiz for each place of worship.

Supported by a generous grant from Westhill Endowment Trust, The Arts Society Birmingham has collaborated with six different places of worship, Birmingham Faith Leaders and other organisations to produce resources designed to enhance a school visit, or to support a virtual visit, to a place of worship for children 8 to 13 years.

Actual visits to the places of worship may be arranged by contacting them directly. Contact details are provided on the Illustrated Guides. <https://birmingham-faith-visits.theartsociety.org/>

#### £600 grants for teaching Christianity

The Jerusalem Trust's

##### Small Grants to Schools Scheme

Resourcing the teaching of Christianity within Religious Education

The Jerusalem Trust's Small Grants to Schools Scheme supports the teaching of Christianity within Religious Education. The scheme operates by providing schools with grants of up to £600 to purchase resources for use in RE lessons.

The scheme is open to state funded schools in England and Wales, with 60% awarded to secondary schools and 40% to primary schools.

Details and application information: [www.regrants.org.uk](http://www.regrants.org.uk)

## NATRE Spirited Arts 2022 WINNERS!

Over 30,000 young people from around the world took part in the Spirited Arts competition last year, with entries from Australia, Bahrain and Thailand. 523 schools took part, selecting their pupils' best artworks, and sending 3196 entries for judging. 27 winners have been selected and are now in the [Spirited Arts online gallery](#).

Categories in the 2022 competition included:

- ‘God’s Good Earth?’, which invited pupils to explore the threat of climate change and the beauty of the earth
- ‘Searching for God’, where pupils considered their personal search for God, regardless of whether they are atheist, agnostic, or believers in God, and
- ‘A view of the world’, where pupils were encouraged to explore their own worldview.



Mollie (13) - Winner

The competition is supported by the Jo Cox Foundation. This year entrants were invited to develop a creative response to the 2015 quote from the late Jo Cox MP:

**“we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us”.**

[www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-gallery/2022/](http://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-gallery/2022/)

## NATRE Spirited Arts 2023 – new themes announced

Will your school join hundreds of schools from around the world taking part in this year's Spirited Arts competition? Entries are welcomed in (almost!) any art form pupils can think of. Winning entries will provide a good response to one of the 5 themes, and judges will be asking is it original? Is it well-crafted? And (most importantly!) is it excellent RE?

## The 5 themes

1. "We have more in common than that which divides us."
2. Green faith, green future? ['God's good earth?']
3. Where is God today?
4. Faith in action, values in action.
5. Sacred space and holy buildings
6. Religion and animals



More details here [www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2023/](http://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2023/)

## Training and CPD opportunities and other support

NATRE's annual Strictly RE conference returns on 28-29<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Taking place online for the third year, the conference themes explore: **depth, diversity and Abrahamic worldviews**

Before the weekend: 13 weekday seminars

On the weekend: 3 keynote, 21 workshops, seven virtual staffrooms

Workshops include:

- Thinking out loud- joining the dots to help children think more critically (Primary)
- Introducing Philosophy and Philosophers to the Primary Classroom (Primary)
- Dharmic Lenses on the Climate Crisis (Secondary)
- Creating a core RE Programme for KS4 (Secondary)



- Interfaith conversations - exploring creative projects that deepen pupils' understanding in RE (Crossphase)
- Special RE (Crossphase)
- Championing and advocating for RE with parents (for SLTs)

Pay for the weekend, get access to recordings and downloads for ALL sessions!

Details and booking information, including Early Bird deals:

[www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2023/](http://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2023/)

## Free webinars for primary and secondary ECTs – a taster for NATRE ECT membership

Early Career Teachers have access to a range of free support through a series of online sessions. 'Café' sessions give you a chance to talk with experienced teachers and experts from different worldview backgrounds. The taught sessions offer expert input with a focus on practical classroom strategies.

Date – All Mondays 4.00-5.30pm	Topic
10 Oct	Café NATRE – Subject knowledge Islam
14 Nov	Taught session: Focus on Disciplinary RE
12 Dec	Café NATRE: Subject knowledge Buddhism
9 Jan	Taught session: Focus on Non-religious worldviews
13 Feb	Taught session: Focus on Hindu Dharma
13 Mar	Café NATRE – Subject knowledge Judaism
8 May	Taught session: Focus on Worldviews
12 June	Taught session: Focus on Sikhi
10 July	Café NATRE: Subject knowledge Christianity

ECT webinars booking link <http://ow.ly/VupG50KG3cP>

## Culham St Gabriel's 'In conversation' series

Extend your understanding of religion and worldviews, subject knowledge and pedagogy by listening in on conversations among teachers, researchers and other experts.

Three conversations are programmed for the autumn:

- 17 Oct: Christian ethics, animal welfare and the religion and worldview classroom (Prof David Clough and Scarlett Hayward)
- 21 Nov: Understanding understanding! What do we mean by understanding? (Prof Trevor Cooling and Dr Kate Christopher)
- 19 Dec: Conceptualising religion and worldviews for the school (Dr Kevin O'Grady)

Details and booking info here: [www.cstg.org.uk/activities/events/in-conversation/](http://www.cstg.org.uk/activities/events/in-conversation/)

Extensive back catalogue here: [www.reonline.org.uk/research/in-conversation/](http://www.reonline.org.uk/research/in-conversation/)

## Regional RE Hub leads in place and ready to go!

Under the leadership of Claire Clinton, Lead Director, a fantastic team of Regional Leads will be supporting ten regions of England and Wales. They have been recruited to build relationships with advisers, dioceses, universities, SACREs, LAs, governors, MATs, teaching school hubs and more.

The Regional Leads will also act as conduits between the regional providers of research, CPD, resources, places of worship and so on for the benefit of all RE/Religion and Worldview stakeholders.

The Regional Hub structure aims to increase accessibility for all teachers to local and regional professional development and research, and to enable teachers to teach with greater confidence through their access to the support, knowledge, training and resources available in their region.

Details and the list of Regional Leads:

[www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/the-regional-re-hubs-team-is-ready-to-go/](http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/the-regional-re-hubs-team-is-ready-to-go/)

West Midlands Regional Lead is Chris Giles from South Bromsgrove High School

## NATRE: new membership packages!

NATRE is the largest membership organisation that promotes, defends and supports RE teachers and RE teaching. It does this through producing high-quality resources and CPD, lobbying government, being involved in conversations with the DfE and Ofsted, Local Authorities and SACREs, telling teachers' stories and experiences and being a voice for all teachers.



Membership packages for students, ECTs, teachers, schools, RE professionals and RE enthusiasts!

Details: [www.natre.org.uk/membership](http://www.natre.org.uk/membership)

## Farmington Scholarships 2023-2024

Would you like to spend a term researching an aspect of RE, developing your thinking and creating ideas and resources for your school and others? Would you like the time out of school to do this? The Farmington Trust supports teachers for 30 days in a year. It could be you next year!

Applications for the 2022/23 Farmington Scholarships are now open. These are Scholarships available to teachers of RE and associated subjects in UK secondary, primary, and special needs schools. Headteachers who wish to undertake research into either RE or values education are also welcome 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 either be taken at a local university or can be home-based with a local tutor.

Closing date for applications is **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

Further information and application form: [www.farmington.ac.uk/index.php/farmington-scholarships/](http://www.farmington.ac.uk/index.php/farmington-scholarships/)

## Other information

### A level Religious Studies numbers drop for first time in 20 years

After two decades of growth, numbers of students taking an A level in RS dropped by 2.7% in 2021. The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) and the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) have warned this period of growth is now under threat after a five-year funding gap that has impacted current and future young people taking the subject.

[www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/a-level-religious-studies-results-prompt-call-for-government-support/](http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/a-level-religious-studies-results-prompt-call-for-government-support/)

This comes as research demonstrates that, in state schools in England, RS A level is one of the most likely subjects to be taken by disadvantaged students (fourth after sociology, psychology and English Lit), and that it is more accessible to students with lower prior attainment than many (11<sup>th</sup> out of 31). See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2022/04/do-disadvantaged-students-choose-different-subjects-from-their-peers-at-key-stage-5/> and [www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/](http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/)

## GCSE numbers

- The number of students in England and Wales taking a GCSE course in Religious Studies GCSE has risen to 253,225, an increase of 0.6% from last year.
- The increase was largely driven by a surprise rise in the short course in England, up 16.5% from 15,672 to 18,257.
- In Wales, amid an overall 5% drop in pupils taking GCSEs, the number of entries to RS courses fell by 11%.

The strong entry results in England saw the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) and the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) reiterate their call for a National Plan for the subject. They warn that an ongoing funding crisis and lack of a specialist teacher recruitment strategy now seriously threatens the provision of high-quality learning for the quarter of a million students who take the subject annually.

Joining the call for a National Plan was Lord Karan Bilimoria, CBE, DL, Vice President of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Chancellor of the University of Birmingham who pointed to the number of disadvantaged students going on to take the subject at A level. A study in April (see above) found they were twice as likely to take the subject than their peers, favouring it over history and geography:

"When it comes to levelling up education, the latest data shows that giving more support to religious education students at GCSE is an easy win. If RS is the humanity that disadvantaged young people are most likely to take, then backing this up with a properly funded National Plan is a must. The subject will provide those young people with the crucial skills of analysis, curiosity and intellectual confidence as part of a broad, balanced education and give them a head start in the global workplace."

[www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/take-action-on-re-say-leading-politicians-as-more-students-take-the-subject-at-gcse/](http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/take-action-on-re-say-leading-politicians-as-more-students-take-the-subject-at-gcse/)

## RE report card 2022

The reactions to the above information on examination numbers draw on the report cards mentioned in previous news updates. The RE Policy Unit from the RE Council has gathered together data on RE from the last five years and written a report card on the state of RE. There is some excellent news (such as how schools with higher rates of GCSE RS entry get higher Attainment 8 scores!) but far too much bad news (34% of academies report no timetabled RE).

The full set can be found here: [www.rethinkre.org/re-report-card](http://www.rethinkre.org/re-report-card)

How can schools respond? One way is to alert local MPs to the information here, with particular reference to the lack of Government funding given to the subject in the last 5 years (see graphic on the right). How else could you use the data?





## Draft Handbook for Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom

As part of a three-year Worldviews project, the RE Council of England and Wales (REC) has published a draft resource for Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom.

The resource sets out a rationale for a religion and worldviews approach, building on the developments since the 2018 Commission report. It incorporates a revised **National Statement of Entitlement** (NSE), which gives a clear description of an education in religion and worldviews, and sets a benchmark for high-quality teaching and learning. The resource then offers practical guidance, including how to use the NSE to develop a syllabus or curriculum, applying ways of knowing, developing pupils' personal worldviews, and what progress looks like in a worldviews approach.

Sections include:

- What do people mean by 'religion'?
- What do people mean by 'worldview'?
- The value of worldviews
- Purposes for RE in a religion and worldviews approach
- Revised National Statement of Entitlement
- Developing pupils' personal worldviews
- Making good progress
- Applying disciplinary methods
- How to use the NSE to develop a syllabus
- How to use the NSE to develop questions and construct units of work
- Making good progress: three models



The resource is primarily written to inform three Framework Development Teams, who are currently working to apply the NSE and the guidance to their own contexts. During this process, the draft resource will be tested and revised as necessary, before the publication of a final Handbook, three example frameworks, sample units of work and pupil responses, in 2024.

You can download copies of here: [www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/draft-handbook-and-nse/](http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/draft-handbook-and-nse/)

**News updates created for SACRE by RE Today Services, Nov 2022**