



# RE Newsletter

Spring Term 2022

## SIGNS OF HOPE?

Christians have just celebrated Christmas, with its message of hope for the world through the birth of Jesus as saviour of the world. There are small signs of hope emerging in the battle against Covid-19, and the approach of spring with longer days, more sunlight, and the regrowth of vegetation. Spring festivals are often about colour and new life, and Christians look forward to the hope expressed through the resurrection of Jesus, remembered at Easter.

This edition of the newsletter contains advance notice of all the training coming up this term, as well as reports on the training offered last term.

If you want to be kept in touch with what is happening around ODBE then [Subscribe to ODBE's e-bulletin](#) for a fortnightly update.

If you have comments or feedback on any of the resources or information contained in this newsletter, or if you wish to submit an article for next term or request support from the diocesan RE adviser please contact:

Anne Andrews by [email](#) or phone 07884 655097

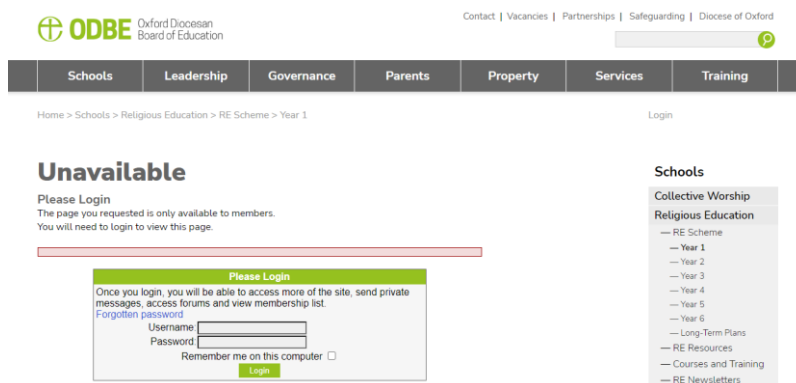


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# OXFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION WEBSITE

ODBE has a new, much easier to navigate website: [www.odbe.org.uk](http://www.odbe.org.uk). If you have tried to access the RE Scheme of Work on the new site, you will have noticed some differences and may have seen the screen shown here:



If your school is in the Diocesan Service Level Agreement (S4S), an email with the username and password will have been sent to the school on 20 October 2021 by the school's adviser. These details will give you access to the whole website, including the primary RE Scheme of Work for schools. If your school is not in the agreement, but you have purchased the scheme of work you should have received an email from me, also on 20 October 2021 with the details that you need. Please note, that once you have put the correct details in, the site redirects you to the home page, so follow the link to the scheme again. Alternatively, log in using the username and password before following the link to the scheme.

If your school is not in the agreement and has not purchased the scheme of work then, as always, the scheme is not available to you. Do contact me if you need any help either with logging on, or you wish to purchase the scheme. The scheme is currently still available for £200 for all the units from Year 1 to Year 6. This is a one-time cost, as all revisions and alterations are added free of charge.

The scheme is undergoing a review and rewrite, so that it better reflects current thinking about the disciplines of theology, social/human science, and philosophy, as well as the issue of coherence. The new units will initially appear alongside the old units, as alternatives. They will at this stage continue to be in draft format as I would really appreciate feedback on them. They will be subject to continuing ongoing development, especially as all of the locally agreed syllabuses are either being reviewed, or about to be reviewed. An email will be sent to schools for whom we have contact details when the first of the new units has been uploaded.

Do remember though, that the scheme of work is not statutory. How and what you choose to teach in RE must relate to the Locally Agreed Syllabus if you are a VC or a community school. In a VA school, the governors must approve the scheme of work that you choose to use. In all cases, the exact content and methodology remain the responsibility of the school. The school's Christian vision should also be considered when deciding what and how to teach RE. Support and advice are available from the diocesan adviser or your school adviser.

# CPD OPPORTUNITIES

## Diocesan RE Networks:

**Wednesday 26 January 2022** (Online using Zoom)

Theme: Creating and using concept maps and knowledge organisers

This session will explore a range of uses for knowledge organisers and concept maps and give delegates an opportunity to work in breakout rooms to create resources.

Please book on Eventbrite for this [RE Network](#)

**March 2022 – various dates - see table**

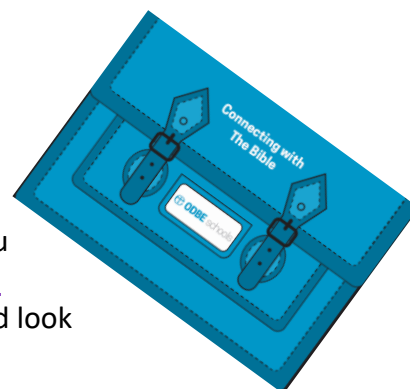
Theme: Work moderation. Participants will need to bring samples of work to discuss with colleagues.

Please choose the venue that is most convenient for you and let the host (listed below) and [Anne Andrews](#) know that you are planning to attend. This is important so that you can be contacted in case of last minute changes or cancellations.

Binfield (RG42 4EW) – Thursday 17 <a href="mailto:Emily.Fenner@binfieldschool.com">Emily.Fenner@binfieldschool.com</a>	Great Horwood (MK17 ORG) – Wednesday 9 <a href="mailto:pshaw@greathorwoodschool.org">pshaw@greathorwoodschool.org</a>
St Mary's, Datchet (SL3 9EJ) – Wednesday 9 <a href="mailto:mgilbert@datchetstmarysacademy.co.uk">mgilbert@datchetstmarysacademy.co.uk</a>	St Mary's, Wavendon (MK17 7AA) – Wednesday 16 <a href="mailto:adicks@stmaryswavendon.milton-keynes.sch.uk">adicks@stmaryswavendon.milton-keynes.sch.uk</a>
Lambourn (RG17 7LJ) – Wednesday 9 <a href="mailto:KChaconAlvarez@lambourn.excalibur.org.uk">KChaconAlvarez@lambourn.excalibur.org.uk</a>	Benson (OX10 6LX) – Tuesday 8 <a href="mailto:head.3181@benison.oxon.sch.uk">head.3181@benison.oxon.sch.uk</a>
St Peter's, Earley (RG6 1EY) – Wednesday 9 <a href="mailto:aflorides@earley-st-peters.wokingham.sch.uk">aflorides@earley-st-peters.wokingham.sch.uk</a>	Hanborough Manor, Long Hanborough (OX29 8DJ) – Wednesday 9 <a href="mailto:apea2579@hanborough-manor.oxon.sch.uk">apea2579@hanborough-manor.oxon.sch.uk</a>
St Mary's, Mortimer (RG7 3PB) – Wednesday 9 <a href="mailto:SMasters@mortimerschools.org">SMasters@mortimerschools.org</a>	Christopher Rawlins, Adderbury (OX17 3NH) – Tuesday 8 <a href="mailto:ngos3453@christopher-rawlins.oxon.sch.uk">ngos3453@christopher-rawlins.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Hazlemere (HP15 7PZ) – Wednesday 9 <a href="mailto:CDevereux@hazlemere-ce.bucks.sch.uk">CDevereux@hazlemere-ce.bucks.sch.uk</a>	Wychwood (OX7 6BD) – Thursday 10 <a href="mailto:afin0577@wychwood-pri.oxon.sch.uk">afin0577@wychwood-pri.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Buckingham Park (HP19 9DZ) – Thursday 10 <a href="mailto:jbailey@buckinghampark.org">jbailey@buckinghampark.org</a>	Goring (RG8 0BG) – Thursday 10 <a href="mailto:Ailsatoolin@goring.oxon.sch.uk">Ailsatoolin@goring.oxon.sch.uk</a>

## NEW: Connecting with the Bible - Online Launch

The new [Connecting with the Bible](#) resource will be arriving soon in schools and there will be two opportunities to attend an online launch on Monday 31 January. This session will give you an introduction to the resource, discuss how it may be used and give you an opportunity to ask questions. You may attend at either the [14.00 - 15.30](#) or [16.00- 17.30](#). Click the link in the time that suits you best and look out for the packs arriving in schools soon.



## Understanding Christianity – New Full Course



**27 January 2022 09.30am - 15.30pm – Day 1 *Now Online***

**2 March, 23 March, 27 April, 11 May, 15 June, and 29 June - online Zoom sessions from 16.00 – 17.00pm**

Understanding Christianity is a resource that helps teachers to explore Christianity with their pupils from a theological point of view. This course is designed for schools accessing the training for the first time and the cost includes the price of the resource. The same delegate should attend all sessions. Access to the full Understanding Christianity website is given to delegates at the start of the online course, and certificates at the end. ***Packs will be posted out to delegates.***

## Development Thinking in RE

30 March 1.30 – 5.30pm Online Conference using Zoom

Featuring Dr Richard Kueh (HMI) and Ryan Parker (St Albans) this half day session will provide teachers with an opportunity to consider curriculum design and “ways of knowing” in the light of the Ofsted RE research review. This will build on last year’s conference discussion about Balanced RE and worldviews and will follow a similar format of keynote speeches and discussion/activity groups. There will also be opportunities for questions and online networking with colleagues.

All costs and booking links are to be found in the [Development, Training and Support](#) brochure that was sent to schools in May 2021 and is available on the diocesan website.

## Next Term

**Thursday 19 May 2022** (Online using Zoom)

Theme: Connecting Units, Connecting Language

The session will explore some of the ways to make the RE curriculum coherent using language as a ‘Golden Thread’ and as a way of ensuring progression.

This session is already available to book on [Eventbrite](#)

**Week commencing 20 June 2022** - in person across a variety of locations, hopefully similar to those in March 2022

Theme: Setting priorities for 2022-2023, producing action plans, resource and idea sharing. This will be a collaborative session, hosted but not led by a school.

All sessions run from 16.00 – 17.30 pm

*The themes for the above meetings may be altered in the light of national RE developments*

# NETWORK MEETINGS: AUTUMN 1 & 2

## Retrieval Practice and Effective Learning

This session looked at a variety of ways that teachers can and should build retrieval practice into their classrooms. Retrieval practice gives pupils frequent opportunities to actively revisit their learning, generating information that they should have learned. Research into memory has identified that revisiting and using information at spaced intervals helps to move information into long-term memory.

This process has implications for both teachers and pupils.

- Teachers need to be really clear about what it is that pupils need to know. Only then can retrieval practice be focused on the important or core knowledge that pupils need to know.
- Teachers need to be familiar with what pupils should already know from previous years. This will help to ensure coherence of the curriculum and progression, as well as providing opportunities to continue to embed previous learning.
- Pupils also need to know what they are expected to know, so teachers need to be communicating well what the expectations are about what will be learned.
- Teach pupils how to use retrieval activities independently, so that they can improve their own learning. This is important as they move through the school and will enable them to revise efficiently. To ensure that they are taught this, retrieval practice needs to be planned and intentional.
- This kind of learning needs to become a habit, so retrieval needs to be built into the routines of learning, but also well-spaced to maximise its effectiveness.
- What is being retrieved also needs to match to that which will later be assessed, both in term of content and disciplines. If higher order thinking skills are essential to assessment, then these need to form part of the retrieval practice activities.

Below are some good retrieval type activities and if you want more information on any of these, please read the blog by [Tom Sherrington](#) and look at the graphic produced by [Grace Hudson](#)

Quick fire quiz	Paper quiz	Silent self-quiz – words or visual and words	Paired-quiz or paired elaboration using ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions or think-pair-share
Self-explanation (often from a stimulus)	Demonstrate and Perform	Tell the story	Summarise
Map and compare	Flashcards	Brain dump	Knowledge organisers

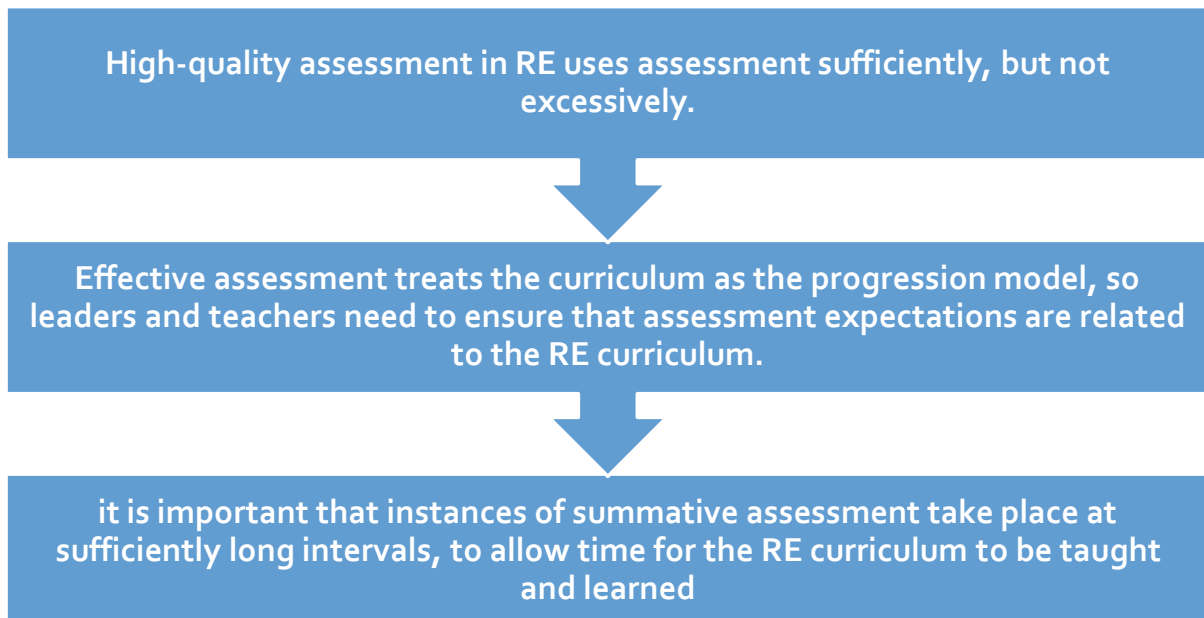
## Assessing Pupil progress

Following on from this, the second RE Network meeting of the term looked at how pupil progress might be assessed. What should the purpose of assessment be? Here are the top three:

- To ensure that teaching and learning are effective,
- To check that those pupils are making progress
- To check that the curriculum design is fit for purpose.

Like retrieval practice, assessment requires teachers and pupils to be clear about what they are teaching/learning. Progress being defined as knowing more and being able to do more is clearly a key concept here. Substantive and disciplinary knowledge are appropriate for assessment, whereas the personal development aspects of RE are not.

Drawing from the Ofsted RE Review, the following statements were discussed, and the links made to the session on retrieval practice as these ideas are closely linked.



Teachers should be able to answer three key questions about progress:

- Do pupils know what they should know? (Substantive knowledge)
- Are pupils developing specialised RE skills? (Disciplinary knowledge)
- Are they growing in confidence with the specialised RE Knowledge? (Disciplinary knowledge)

If teachers can answer 'yes' to all of these, then you can be fairly confident that a good job is being done in your school! Do take advantage of the RE network meeting in March. A work moderation/scrutiny will give you the opportunity to compare standards across schools, and see what others are doing.

# DHARMIC SPRING FESTIVALS

## Holi – 18 March 2022

Holi is most often known as the festival of colours, and this is certainly the element that makes it most beloved of children. While throwing coloured powders at each other provides pupils with a memorable experience, how does a teacher ensure that it becomes meaningful RE?

Looking at the significance of the colours that are most often used may begin to address the issue:

**Red** – Purity; **Green** – Vitality; **Blue** - Calm and sedateness;  
**Yellow** - Pious feeling

but looking at the stories and legends behind the festival will root it more firmly in the RE classroom, though a cross-curricular session including art has its place too.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Holi actually begins about 40 days before the festival, as a log is placed in a public place. Daily members of the Hindu community add twigs and sticks to the log to build a significant bonfire. On the first evening of Holi, the bonfire is lit, usually with an effigy of Holika and Prahlad on it. This reflects the most well-known origin of the festival, which has been celebrated for centuries and is recorded in the Vedas and Puranas (ancient Hindu writings).

The demon King, Hiranyakashyap, ordered everyone in the Kingdom to worship him, but his son Prahlad, refused, preferring to worship Lord Naarayana (an avatar of Lord Vishnu). The king ordered him to be burned in the fire, and persuaded Holika, Prahlad's aunt, to take Prahlad on her lap into the fire. She had been granted a boon that fire would not burn her, but it transpired that the promise was broken if she took anyone into the fire with her. She perished, but Prahlad was saved because of his devotion to Naarayana.

It is usual for the effigy of Holika to be made of something combustible, while that of Prahlad is fire-resistant, so that along with the coconuts that are thrown into the fire his effigy remains the next day. This is seen to represent the triumph of good over evil. On the second day, the ashes are sometimes spread over peoples' bodies, while the coconuts are eaten.

It is on this second day of the festival that the coloured powders are thrown, although the origin of this is found in the story of Krishna, rather than that of Holika. As a young man, Krishna was jealous of the fact that Radha had paler skin than he, and with the help of his mother threw coloured powder on her and her attendants to darken their skin. This custom has grown, and is now associated with love, as couples cover each other in colours.

Learning these two stories, and interpreting them, looking for symbolism and meaning will make learning about the festival more meaningful.

There are resources on the internet, such as the BBC clip from My Life, My Religion that explore Holi in a child friendly way, but also think about inviting a local Hindu to come and talk about what the festival means to them. There are usually organised events in areas with a large Hindu population, but whether these will happen this year is yet to be seen.



## Vaisakhi – 14 April 2022 (and every year)

There is some misinformation about the Sikh festival of Vaisakhi (sometime spelled Baisakhi). For Sikhs this festival is all about remembering the foundation of the Khalsa – the group of committed Sikhs, who wear the 5Ks and follow the rules of vegetarianism, no alcohol and observance of the principles of Sikhi. It is not, as commonly reported, either a harvest festival or a new year festival, though it may be both for some Hindus.



The Khalsa was created in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh Ji during the festival of Vaisakhi, when he invited people to commit themselves to following the life-style of the Gurus. Five people, from a range of castes came forward and were named the Panj Pyare (the five beloved). This is significant because it shows that the Khalsa views the entire human race as one, following Sikh teaching that all people are equal. As part of that original ceremony, Guru

Gobind Singh baptised the Panj Pyare and was in turn baptised by them, again demonstrating the equality of all people. There are a few good video retellings of the story on the [BBC My Life My Religion](#) and [Bitesize](#), as well as elsewhere. The formation of the Khalsa is a good starting point from which to explore the concept of commitment as well as the 5Ks. It may also be a good place to explore the idea of ‘sant-sapahi’ – the requirement of a baptised Sikh to be both a saint and a soldier. The Khanda symbol and the concept of miri-piri also reflect the way that Sikhi combines worldly and spiritual elements of life, not separating them as the Western world tends to.



The celebration of Vaisakhi is usually a community affair, involving processions at which hymns and prayers are recited, and sung (Nagar Kirtan). The spiritual is combined with the worldly as food is shared as well.

Free Langar (kitchen) is central to Sikh philosophy, offering a way to fight hunger, teach compassion and express equality in action. For more information, from a Sikh perspective look at this website:



<https://www.sikhpa.com/campaigns/sikhvaisakhi/>

# HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

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 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, and act for a better future. There is a four page document to download that suggests how this theme might be explored. There are resources for Year 5 upwards, but the majority of materials are aimed at secondary aged pupils.



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.

If you use any of these resources, do consider writing a report for publication in this newsletter. It is helpful for teachers to hear from others how effective and appropriate resources are.

## RESOURCES

**For Secondary schools or CPD for teachers:**

**[BBC Sounds - Activist Sikh \(released 15 October 2021 and available for a year\)](#)**

A culture of protest is embedded in Sikhism through prayer, songs, and stories, and this inspires a sense of activism. Many Sikhs all over the world have joined together in support of protests by Indian farmers against new laws proposed by the Indian government. Suitable for secondary students or CPD for teachers.

**[Cambridge Faculty of Divinity](#)**

If you are looking for something to stretch and challenge older students, then this website may be appropriate. With titles such as [“Does God have a gendered body?”](#), [“What is the apocalypse?”](#), [“Are all Muslims the same?”](#) these short video clips introduce students to range of theologians and philosophers. There are questions for students to explore, guidance for teachers and a transcript of the video, as well as links to useful resources.

There is also a resource called [50 Religious Treasures of Cambridge](#), supporting RE, arts and humanities at KS3 and KS4

*Serving our communities in a Christ-like way where education enables all to flourish  
Humility| Fellowship| Counsel*

## For Upper Primary:

### Birmingham Schools Faith Visits

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. Although based in Birmingham, there are video clips and downloadable guides to Sikh, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist places of worship.

### Walk through the Bible

This [online resource](#), accredited by Understanding Christianity, contains videos that are aimed at older primary school pupils to help them learn and understand the content of the Old and New Testaments.



There are 10 x 20 minute videos for OT MINI and the same for NT MINI - each with a short activity part way through. The teacher PDF Pack includes activity outlines and extension materials.

There are some printed resources which will support pupils as they Walk Through the Bible with us.

1. At present the NT MINI videos have 'workmaps' - which are foldable sheets that each child can use to keep track of the stories they have learned so far.
2. The OT MINI videos also have 'workmaps' or you can request our new Activity Books instead. These contain extra activities to improve your written evidence.
3. Storybooks, which can be used to consolidate learning.

There are constant revisions and improvements being made to the resources and although you have to register, as these films and resources are available only to schools in the British Isles, they are all completely free.

### CPD and Support

Usually on the first Monday of each month Twitter fans can find #REChat. Each month a different topic is discussed on the online platform and draws experts from a range of schools and theological backgrounds. Find all the details on the [NATRE website](#).

[Culham St Gabriels](#) and the allied [RE Online](#) websites are constantly expanding their support, training, and resourcing for teachers, so make sure that you visit the sites regularly. There is always a resource of the month, and throughout this term there will be further work on the '[Ways of Knowing](#)', or disciplinary knowledge.

Please note that while the diocese advertises these resources, we are not recommending any of them. Please use your own professional judgement when looking at resources. If you use any of them, feedback would be really welcome.

## SACREs and Locally Agreed Syllabuses

**SACREs** (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) are the bodies responsible for overseeing RE and Collective Worship in each Local Authority area, so there are nine SACREs across the diocese. Each SACRE has representatives from the local council, local religious and humanist groups and teachers. These bodies are also responsible for writing, monitoring, and evaluating the Locally Agreed Syllabus for that area. Under current legislation a syllabus must be reviewed every five years, so participation in the work of SACRE can give you as teachers an opportunity to influence the RE teaching in your area. Many SACREs also run their own RE Networks, often in conjunction with the LA, so look for the one in your area.

### Buckinghamshire SACRE

The new locally agreed syllabus is due to be launched later this term, as SACRE approved it just before Christmas. Called Challenging RE 4 this syllabus will provide a good foundation for coherent and challenging RE.

### Berkshire SACREs

The six Berkshire SACREs are getting ready to begin the syllabus review, which is due for 2023. Hopefully you have seen a link to [the survey](#) seeking your opinions about the current syllabus and indicating your willingness to help with the review and writing process. If you have not already completed this, it will take you about 15-20 minutes to do, but please take those few minutes to help shape the future RE syllabus in your area.

Bracknell Forest and RBWM SACREs both have vacancies for teacher and head teacher representatives. Please contact [Anne Andrews](#) for further details.

West Berkshire, Slough and Reading SACREs would also be interested in having more teacher representatives. Please contact [David Rees](#) for further information.

Wokingham SACRE would also be interested in hearing from teachers that would be keen to join SACRE. Contact [Stephen Vagh](#) for further information.

### Milton Keynes SACRE

The Milton Keynes syllabus should by rights be renewed this year, but SACRE has taken the decision to delay this review. The process is planned to begin this year, but will be taken slowly, so a new syllabus is not anticipated before 2023, possibly later.

Milton Keynes SACRE has vacancies for teachers. Please contact [Janet Gleghorn](#) for further details.

### Oxfordshire SACRE

The syllabus review here is also behind schedule, but work has begun, and a new syllabus should be published towards the end of the year. Keep following the old one in the meantime.

If you want to know any more about SACREs have a look at the webpage of [NASACRE](#), the national association or contact [Anne Andrews](#) or your local SACRE through the Local Authority.

# THINK PIECE: REQM GOLD AWARD WINNER

## Religious Education: The Cornerstone of Education

Religious Education is the cornerstone in a person's education. Religious Education equips people with the knowledge to engage in a multi-cultural society, the space to explore the important questions and the time to reflect on the great religious worldviews- both ancient and modern- of the world. It was with this clear vision in mind that I led the Religious Education Department at Churchmead School through the Religious Education Quality Mark process.

The Religious Education Quality Mark is a non-SIAMS, non-Ofsted organisation that awards schools based on the quality of religious education. There are three different awards: Bronze, Silver and Gold. For the quality mark, I had to prepare three comprehensive and detailed documents. First, was the evidence across Teaching, Learning, Curriculum and Leadership for each different award level: Bronze, Silver and Gold. You need to present evidence for each separate level. Second, there was a school-wide questionnaire about RE in the school with a supporting statement outlining the findings of the questionnaire. Third, we needed to present detailed examples of RE student work across KS3 and KS4. There was then a three-hour assessment of all of the documents, an interview with me, the RE Leader and the Headteacher, Chris Tomes about RE in the school. We were delighted when the REQM awarded Churchmead School the Gold Award.

My experience of the REQM process was that it was extremely thorough, and that the assessor wanted to know the detail of the different areas of impact of RE both on the students and the wider school. The process gave the RE Department the opportunity to show the ways in which Religious Education is the cornerstone of a student's education through the implementation of a dynamic and exciting RE curriculum. The process of the REQM gave me the opportunity to show the different ways in which a vibrant RE classroom can equip students with the knowledge that they need to engage and thrive in a multi-cultural society. The REQM gave Churchmead School the opportunity to express through the RE Department how it is fundamental to the formation of young people that they have a space- *sometimes the only space in their lives*- to explore the important deep questions of life. Finally, it was through the REQM process that students, staff, and the whole of Churchmead School are able to place the great religious worldviews of the world centre stage and reflect on them, ultimately revealing Religious Education to be a transformative subject. Leading an RE Department, teaching RE and leading the RE Department through the REQM process leads me to once more state: Religious Education is the cornerstone in a person's education.

Thomas Kingsley Jones, Head of RE, Churchmead School