



## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**Date** Thursday 9 June 2011  
**Time** 1.30 pm to 2.20 pm  
**Venue** Committee Room 1B - County Hall, Durham

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### **Business**

#### **Part A**

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.  
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's  
agreement.**

1. Introductions, Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 March 2011 (Pages 1 - 4)
3. Chairs Comments
4. Matters Arising
5. SACRE Updates - Report of the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education and the Education Development Advisor (Pages 5 - 12)
6. Celebrating RE
7. SACRE Briefing - 19 July 2011
8. Date of the Next Meeting
9. Any Other Business
10. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

**Colette Longbottom**  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
1 June 2011

To: **The Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**1. Church of England**

Canon L Burton, Revd. J Jewsbury, Mrs J Katsambis and Mrs D Mowbray-Pape

**2. Other Religious Denominations and Faiths**

J Bainbridge	- <b>Methodist Church</b>
I Derrache-Thompson	- <b>Islam</b>
S Baker	- <b>NUT</b>
W Gray	- <b>Buddhism</b>
B Guymer	- <b>Baptist Church</b>
J Kidd	- <b>Methodist Church</b>
I Osborne	- <b>Roman Catholic</b>
J Pallister	- <b>Roman Catholic</b>
S Purba	- <b>Sikhism</b>
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	- <b>Hinduism</b>
D Sadlik	- <b>Judaism</b>
S Brown	- <b>Assemblies of God</b>
C Spencer	- <b>Bahá'í Faith</b>
M Stephenson	- <b>United Reform Church</b>

**3. Teachers Associations**

Mrs C Callaghan	- <b>NUT</b>
Mrs A Carter	- <b>R E Curriculum Group</b>
Ms A Hartley	- <b>NAS/UWT</b>
Mr P Lamb	- <b>SHA</b>
Mrs J Pearce	- <b>R E Curriculum Group</b>
Mr P Welch	- <b>NUT</b>

**4. County Council Representatives**

Councillors J Blakey, M Dixon, S Iveson and M Simmons

**Specialist Inspector (Religious Education and Citizenship)**

Isobel Short

**Educational Development Advisor (Religious Education and Citizenship)**

Catherine Robson

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

**At a Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held at the County Hall, Durham on Wednesday 2 March 2011.**

**Present:**

**J Bainbridge in the Chair**

**1. Church of England**

Canon L Burton, J Katsambis and D Mowbray-Pape

**2. Other Religious Denominations and Faiths**

**Roman Catholic**

I Osborne

**Methodist Church**

J Bainbridge

**Assemblies of God**

S Brown

**Judaism**

D Sadlik

**Buddhism**

W Gray

**Bahá'í Faith**

C Spencer

**3. Teachers Associations**

**R E Curriculum Group**

A Carter

**NUT**

S Baker and P Welch

**4. County Council Representatives**

Councillor S Iveson

**Specialist Inspector (Religious Education and Citizenship)**

Isobel Short

**Educational Development Advisor (Religious Education and Citizenship)**

Catherine Robson

## **1. Introductions, Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Blakey, Councillor Dixon, Councillor Simmons, C Callaghan, Ijou Derrache-Thompson, A Hartley, J Kidd, J Pallister, J Pearce, Bhakti Rasa, M Stephenson and I Hunter Smart.

Linda commented that she had concerns about members who don't attend SACRE meetings regularly and don't submit their apologies. Linda stressed that we need members to be present especially when discussing the Agreed Syllabus.

Judith Bainbridge and Isobel Short suggested that they should meet to discuss memberships. Isobel could write to groups asking if they are still interested in being members of SACRE, this would give them an opportunity to select alternative representatives.

## **2. Who Are We? Presentation**

Wendy Gray gave a presentation about Buddhism and how her faith affects her life. Wendy was thanked for an interesting and informative talk that was appreciated by all.

## **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 4 November 2010**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 4 November 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **4. Publication of Papers**

Isobel informed members that Democratic Services are working towards introducing an electronic system which will provide efficiencies in producing agendas and packs of committee papers. SACRE papers would be published on Durham County Councils website 5 clear working days before the meeting to comply with access requirements.

## **5. Chairs Comments**

Judith Bainbridge had received 3 letters in response to the SACRE data letters that were sent to schools in December 2010. One school had questioned the role of SACRE and whether SACRE had acted beyond their remit in monitoring exam entries. Judith had written to the school to outline the responsibilities of SACRE and affirm that they had not acted beyond their remit.

Members discussed the content of the letters and Isobel explained that the information used came from the Local Authority data analysis. Anne Carter had received a letter which had questioned A\*/A underachievement. Anne was annoyed by the letter as they had achieved an A\* - C pass rate of 70%.

In response Isobel suggested that SACRE could decide to stop sending data letters to schools but that SACRE has a responsibility to monitor the teaching

of RE; this includes supporting and challenging schools in attainment and achievement at Key Stage 4.

Paul Welch stated that the Task Group had spent considerable time analysing each school in great detail and the letters were sent to challenge schools.

Members discussed the issue of the balance between encouraging and supporting schools and RE departments in offering challenges so that RE is on par with other subjects.

It was suggested that a paragraph is inserted into the letter written to every school explaining the purpose of the SACRE data letters.

## **6. Matters Arising**

Referring to item 7 from the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2010, Isobel asked members if they would prefer an Open SACRE Task Group session in the Summer Term or to dedicate the next SACRE meeting in June to discuss the Ofsted Report.

Members agreed to an Open SACRE Task Group in the Summer Term.

## **7. Agreed Syllabus Conference**

Isobel is starting work on the Agreed Syllabus for the launch in 2012. Members will take part in an Agreed Syllabus Conference in June.

## **8. Interfaith Week**

Judith congratulated Catherine Robson on arranging a very successful Interfaith Week Event in November. Catherine thanked SACRE members for attending the event at Spennymoor and asked members for theme suggestions for next year.

Catherine Robson informed members that Durham SACRE in partnership with Carter House and the Cathedral are arranging an art competition for secondary schools to look at the value of Religious Education in the North East. Entries will be judged from 1.00pm - 3.00pm on the 5 May at County Hall. Catherine invited members to contact Jo March if they were interested in judging the competition.

## **9. Collective Worship**

Isobel Short provided Collective Worship training for SACRE members on the 13 January 2011. Members who attend thought the training was very beneficial. Isobel is in the process of arranging half day teacher training sessions on Collective Worship for schools.

Irene Osborne asked if Isobel could circulate the Collective Worship training material to members that were unable to attend the training session in January. Isobel agreed and would circulate electronically.

## **10. SACRE Annual Report**

Isobel Short presented the Annual SACRE Report (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted the report and were asked to email any comments to Isobel.

## **11. SACRE Updates**

Isobel Short presented the SACRE Updates (for copy see file of minutes).

Government are encouraging schools to apply for Academy status. Shotton Hall is now an academy, two other academies in County Durham are opening in September with another 5 schools registering an interest in Academy status.

Academies are no longer Local Authority schools; as a result SACRE would no longer have an official role in these schools. The legal position of RE in Academies is still unclear. Guidance 2010 states that non-faith Academies should teach RE according to the Agreed Syllabus but that is not the case under the Academies Act 2010 where RE may no longer be statutory.

Isobel wrote to SACRE members in January informing them of the Governments proposals of introducing a new English Bacculaureate which excludes Religious Studies. Isobel has written to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education with concerns that the exclusion of RE will have a detrimental effect.

The response from the Government as to why RE is not included in the English Bacculaureate is because RE is already a compulsory subject.

Concerns about the position of RE due to this Government initiative were discussed.

## **12. Date of the Next Meeting**

Thursday 9 June 2011.

### DURHAM SACRE - JUNE 2011 LOCAL UPDATES

- 'Celebrating RE' was a month-long event held in March 2011 to raise the profile of RE noticeably and showcase good work in schools. Here in Durham we developed a vodcast on the value of RE (see below) and held an art competition for secondary schools. Winners will experience a day at Durham Cathedral and the Angel of the North, considering the importance of art in religion and spirituality.
- Durham Education Development Service (EDS) has been able to fund a project which develops the use of functional skills (English, mathematics, ICT) in RE. Sharon Lupton, Head of RE at Sedgefield Community College, is producing some excellent work around this:
  - presentation and analysis of census data to discuss the question "Is England religiously diverse?"
  - development of questionnaire of school population to find out beliefs about the existence of God and reasons for this.

This work will prove extremely useful for our Agreed Syllabus development.

- Many thanks to all SACRE members who volunteered to be interviewed by Gayle Hackett. Gayle is producing a short film (vodcast) for use in schools on the value of RE. Gayle is a real expert in producing vodcasts and has led some training of secondary teachers to help them create their own short films. When this is ready, we will showcase at SACRE.
- At the last SACRE meeting in March members requested an open session of the SACRE Task Group in order to discuss the Ofsted long report and its findings on RE in primary schools. This has been arranged for Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup> from 1.30pm in County Hall. Isobel will lead discussion on the Ofsted report. Catherine will present findings from the NQT questionnaire on training needs. And a nice surprise – our friend Marilyn Longtaff will return to present her report on SACRE RE audit visits to primary schools. Invitations will be issued to all SACRE members and papers made available to all.

### NATIONAL UPDATES

#### **RE in English Baccalaureate**

Please find attached report on latest developments.

#### **NASACRE Annual General Meeting**

I attended this on May 11<sup>th</sup> in Birmingham on your behalf. The whole day was most valuable not least because of the opportunity to discuss national developments and difficulties with others.

The key note address was given by Dr Robert Beckford on the title "Engagement with young people in the Big Society". Dr Beckford is a theologian, teacher, author and TV presenter.

Items discussed in the AGM business meeting included:

- NASACRE may have an uncertain financial future as some SACREs are already indicating that they may not be paying annual subscription fees. This could affect core functions of NASACRE work.
- A request made for more SACRE members to use the NASACRE website.
- 'Celebrating RE' has generally been a huge success and several MPs did attend the launch of the month at the House of Commons. It is unclear how much Michael Gove has been aware of the month and what his response is. Examples of events, resources and good

practice is being added to the website by Sharon Artley, independent consultant. Sharon did also state that the month has highlighted a continued lack of understanding amongst some practitioners about what good learning in RE looks like.

- The issue of humanist representation on SACRE was raised again (this issue was discussed at the 2010 AGM). 2010 guidance did not make the position clear and clarity will now only be gained if a court ruled on the issue. In the meantime, NASACRE advice states that full membership to Committee A is 'outside the law' but recognises that some SACREs have full membership of humanism in Committee A, whilst others do not.

The new Chair designate to the Religious Education Council (REC) is John Keast OBE. He gave a 'State of the RE Nation' address and made the following points:

- the state of RE varies from place to place across the country and is, therefore, very mixed.
- RE is generally better than it was 15 years ago and 30 years ago. RE has made enormous progress over that time BUT he is not sure whether it is better than it was 2 years ago.
- The profile of RE is tied up with the profile of religions and how it is regarded in this country by individuals, communities, the media etc.
- We know the profile of RE and religion has been raised in the last 10 years and religions, belief and matters of faith are contestable. So, the state of RE nationally will also not be clear or perfect as we are dealing with contestable ideas in the RE classroom.
- The state of the RE nation at present is critical - Local Authority cuts, new types of schools, statutory nature changed (through academies/ free schools legislation), curriculum questions (dismantling of National Curriculum), qualifications (eg there has been enormous growth in RE at GCSE so the impact of English Baccalaureate (E Bacc) may be particularly severe).
- The RE world in the last 9 months "has shown how effective we can be when we work together to make a case". John congratulated all who have taken part in these actions to influence and improve RE.
- There are 3 priorities that are important for the future of RE:
  1. Resolve the E Bacc question soon as academic credibility of RE is under threat by the exclusion of RE from it
  2. RE should be involved in the review of the curriculum (even though it is not a national curriculum subject)
  3. Resolve questions about the role of SACREs including relationships with academies.
- A key questions for us all to ask: Where does authority lie in RE? Who is the guarantor of RE? Does authority lie in the RE community? (meaning local communities including professional organisations and faith groups). RE should continue to have both national and local importance and elements. What does local mean? - Local Authorities but also individual local schools, community representatives (local councillors), professionals (eg practitioners and university lecturers), representatives from faith communities.
- What is the embodiment of the RE community? Locally it has been SACRE, nationally it has been REC. BUT the question is "How well do these umbrella organisations ensure all people from different backgrounds work together?" SACRE needs to be an effective embodiment of the local community as much as possible.
- The REC will have a strategic plan for the next 5 years so members can know what approach is being taken as the embodiment of RE community nationally.
- To take advantage and remedy threats to RE we must work together.



## **RE in the English Baccalaureate (E. Bacc)**

You will be aware that the government are introducing an English Baccalaureate (E. Bacc) into secondary schools. Published results of schools will show how many students achieve A\* - C at full course GCSE in 5 key subject areas:

- 1) English
- 2) Maths
- 3) Science
- 4) Modern Foreign Language
- 5) Humanities (History or Geography)

This has caused grave concerns for the RE community including RE teachers in schools as RE has not been included as one of the humanities subjects. The likely result of this is that RE may become marginalised at KS4 as schools feel the pressure to concentrate on achieving success in the subjects above. This may have a knock on effect on KS3 and the whole status of the subject.

As well as individuals registering their concern there have been local and national campaigns to try and persuade government to include RE in the E. Bacc. This has been led by various organisations in RE. Below are some of the activities that have taken place. RE has also been debated on Question Time and members of AULRE had a letter registering their concern published in the Telegraph.

### **Durham**

Judith Bainbridge, Chair of SACRE wrote to the MP for Durham to register the concern of Durham SACRE and ask her to sign the EDM (she did). Other SACRE members and teachers in County Durham schools were also asked to do the same with their MPs. The Inspector for RE also wrote to government ministers and the Durham MP to register concern on behalf of Durham Local Authority.

Many senior leaders in Durham schools remain very supportive of RE both as a statutory subject but also as an academically rigorous subject that enables students to attain highly. However, there is no doubt that senior colleagues are under pressure to implement E. Bacc and achieve success in these subjects. Several RE teachers in Durham are contacting me to register concern about curriculum changes in their schools.

### **Early Day Motion 1375**

EDM 1375, January 2011 stated,

*'That this House notes the recent publication of league tables of school performance measuring the proportion of pupils obtaining the English Baccalaureate; further notes that the English Baccalaureate is awarded to pupils who gain GCSEs at Grade C or above in English, mathematics, science, a foreign language and a humanities subject; further notes with concern that this list of approved subjects does not include religious education; recognises that religious education is an academically rigorous subject with increasing popularity among pupils; further recognises that the rise of religious extremism around the world and in the UK means that a good understanding of all religions is vital to a well-rounded education; further notes that with the increasing emphasis on the English Baccalaureate as the primary qualification for 16-year-olds, schools are more likely to focus on the core subjects which make it up; and therefore calls on the Government to recognise the importance and relevance of religious education by including it as a core subject in the English Baccalaureate.'*

105 MPs signed this motion including Roberta Blackman Woods, MP for Central Durham. For further information: [www.parliament.gov.uk](http://www.parliament.gov.uk) Link: parliamentary business, publications and records, EDM, type in 1375.

### **EDM 1759 from Conservative MP**

*That this House supports religious education in Harlow primary and secondary schools; believes that religious education lessons can help pupils to learn about ethical and philosophical questions as well as the many faiths in 21st century Britain; notes that the Government's reforms are a real opportunity to create closer community links between schools and faith groups such as local churches; further notes that many Christians have expressed a strong enthusiasm for these reforms but are worried that the English Baccalaureate may not make enough room for religious education; and further believes that religious education should be fully included in the important proposals for an English Baccalaureate.*

Ten MPs have signed this EDM (by May 24<sup>th</sup> ).

### **Statement from Catholic Bishops regarding the place of RE in the English Baccalaureate**

The Bishops of England and Wales issued a statement regarding the place of RE in the English Baccalaureate. They are urging people to join the campaign and write to MPs. Updates are available on their website: [www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)

*This statement applies to schools in England only.*

*All children and young people deserve an excellent broad and balanced education that will help them grow to their full human potential and contribute to the common good of society. This means that the curriculum must likewise be broad and balanced so that all have the opportunity to make real progress in a variety of subjects.*

*We are therefore hopeful that the "English Baccalaureate" (E-Bac) measure will help to further the learning of children and young people in a variety of subjects. English and Maths are clearly indispensable elements of any curriculum in England, and we strongly support any efforts to raise standards in Science. Similarly, we would hope all students will have the opportunity to study a Foreign Language and important humanities subjects like History and Geography.*

*We have very serious reservations about what is omitted from the E-Bac, namely Religious Education (RE). We recognise that RE is, and will continue to be, a compulsory subject in all schools, not least Catholic schools. However, lessening the incentive for schools to offer RE as a subject examined at GCSE will inevitably have implications for the quality and availability of RE offered.*

*Any subject studied in our schools should be taught to the highest standard, and the best quality RE opens up the mind to be receptive to other subjects and gives them context, not only in the present but in the future. It is a vitally important subject because it allows young people to explore critically and make sense not only of their own faith but of the questions concerning faith, truth and meaning in the society in which they live. At a time of increasing religious and cultural illiteracy, effectively to downgrade RE seems unwise to say the least. We therefore urge the government to reconsider its decision and include RE in the E-Bac.*

*Catholic Bishops of England and Wales  
13 May 2011*

### NATRE Campaign

NATRE have headed the campaign amongst teachers, urging RE teachers to write to their MP and fill in online surveys which can be used as evidence for government ministers. 900 teachers responded to the first survey in January. The latest request was sent to members on 23<sup>rd</sup> May:

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EBaccandREsurvey>

Please send to anyone who you think could fill this in and add to the evidence base.

### Debate at Westminster Hall

This took place on 17<sup>th</sup> May and was debated by various MPs and ministers. The debate was opened by Fiona Bruce Conservative MP who stated that the exclusion of RE from E. Bacc may have 'unintended consequences' and that one in three schools were already reducing resources and teachers for RE. The value of RE was debated by MPs from all parties. Nick Gibb concluded the debate and stated that RE should be part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and that he wanted to 'get away from the mentality that a subject is only important if it is mentioned in the National Curriculum'.

(Summary from news.bbc.co.uk)

### RE Organisations

NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE)

NASACRE (National Association of SACREs)

AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers, Consultants)

AULRE (Association of University Lecturers in RE).

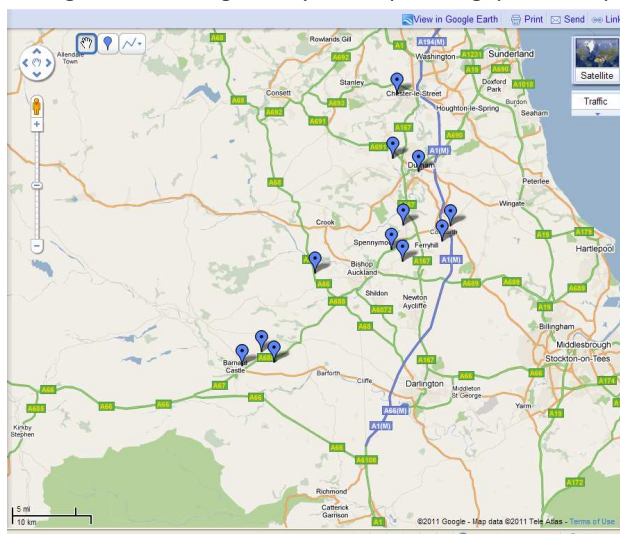
REC (Religious Education Council)

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## *Education Development Adviser's Work Summer 2011*

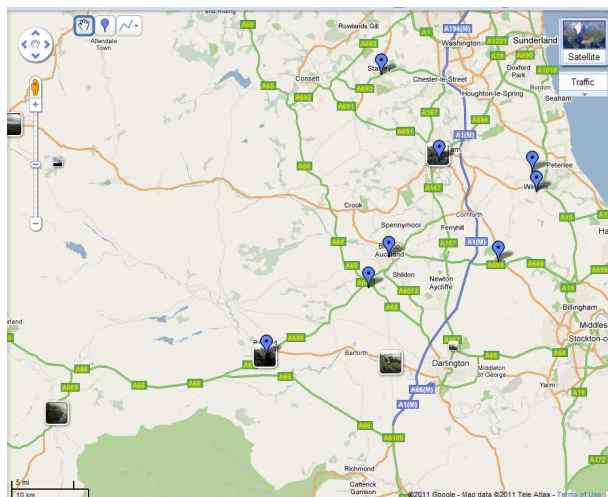
### Primary Contracts

- A. Chilton Primary School: This original contract from 2009-2010 was extended by 9 hours in 2010-2011 to continue support for the newly appointed Teacher in Charge for RE by meeting each half term. Near the end of the contract the colleague co-led a network meeting where she shared her journey of being new in post and given responsibility for RE and the value and impact of the RE contract.
- B. Silver Tree Primary School: This contract began in 2009-2010 to support the Teacher in Charge of RE to review the Long Term Plans for RE and develop assessment opportunities. The final planning and review meeting took place in autumn term 2010.
- C. Bowburn Infant and Nursery School: This original contract from 2009-2010 was extended by 6 hours in 2010-2011. The contract to deliver a whole school PD day in September 2010 grew into 15 hours to support the development of a whole-school Islam Awareness week.
- D. Evenwood C of E Primary School: This contract began in 2009-2010 and a programme of whole-school training in RE was developed and delivered. The final session to support the newly appointed teachers took place in January 2011.
- E. Rosa Street Primary School: This contract began in 2009-2010 to review and update the Long Term Plans for RE - the final support meeting with a newly appointed teacher took place April 2011.
- F. Stratforth Morritt Memorial C of E Primary School: This contract began in 2009-2010 to work with the Teacher in Charge of RE to review the Long Term Plans and develop resources for the subject. The final meeting to support the Y6 teacher with planning, pitch and progression took place in April 2011.
- G. Shincliffe C of E Primary School: Staff training was delivered following a SACRE audit where the focus was on knowledge and understanding of Durham Agreed Syllabus, the distinction between RE and Collective worship and AT2. The training session took place at Carter House to allow colleagues time to look at the resources to support their teaching.
- H. Coxhoe Primary School: This contract began in 2009-2010 to support the Teacher in Charge of RE to review the Long Term Plans for RE and develop assessment opportunities. The final planning and review meeting took place in July 2010.
- I. Roseberry Primary School: This 6 hour contract is to support the newly appointed Teacher in Charge of RE. A SACRE audit has also been requested.
- J. Evergreen Primary School: Whole team training was delivered following a SACRE audit. The focus of the staff meeting was on knowledge and understanding of Durham Agreed Syllabus and the use of P levels.
- K. Witton le Wear Primary School: Whole team training was delivered following a SACRE audit. The focus of the staff meeting was on knowledge and understanding of Durham Agreed Syllabus and pitch and progress.
- L. Toft Hill: Whole team training was delivered following a SACRE audit. The focus of the staff meeting was on knowledge and understanding of Durham Agreed Syllabus, planning, pitch and progress.



## Secondary Contracts

- M. Wellfield Community School: Supported the Head of Department by developing and delivering a four day programme to cover the two remaining GCSE RS modules to the current Y11 students.
- N. Sedgfield Community College: Currently supporting the newly appointed Head of Department with planning and pitch of the Long Term and Medium Term plans.
- O. Stanley School of Technology: Currently supporting the Head of Department and the non-specialist teaching team with pitch, progression and assessment.
- P. Shotton Hall School: Currently developing training sessions and resources for the non-specialist teaching team to increase confidence in and knowledge of the subject.
- Q. Durham Gilesgate SC&SF: Currently supporting the newly appointed NQT with planning, pitch and progress.
- R. Fyndoune Community College: Currently supporting the Head of Department with data analysis of KS4 data to inform provision, direct targeted intervention and develop revision resources to be cascaded to the faculty.
- S. Bishop Barrington School: Support was offered to cover a leave of absence that included teaching KS3 and KS4 courses, delivering a Y11 revision day and supporting the RE teaching team.
- T. Teesdale School: Supported the non-specialist team with planning and delivery of KS3 and KS4 RE. Planned and delivered the KS5 Philosophy and Ethics course in July and September.



## Network meetings and PD:

Secondary RE Networks for NQT and non-specialists: Two courses delivered in September and February.

Secondary RE Network Meetings: Two courses delivered in October and February and a final one to be delivered in June

Primary RE Network Meeting: A collective network was delivered in October and clusters now meet across the county:

- Leadgate Junior School Cluster: Met together in May.
- St Margarets C of E Primary School Cluster: Met together in May.
- Cockton Hill Infant School Cluster: Met together in March and next meeting is in June.

'Raising Achievement in KS4 RE' course was delivered in September 2010.

## Inter Faith Week Conferences 2010

Following on from the success of the SACRE bursaries and Secondary Conference in 2009, a Primary and Secondary RE conference was organised and delivered on the 16th & 19th November respectively.

## Up and Coming ....

- A. Dene Community School of Technology: To support the Head of Department with training around emerging technologies in RE.
- B. Roseberry Sports & Community College: To support the RE Subject Leader with engaging and motivational teaching.
- C. Hare Law Special School: Following the SACRE audit deliver a staff training session on RE.

*Catherine Robson*  
*May 2011*