

## Education Durham report to SACRE – November 2023

*Prepared by Sarah Blakeman, Senior Advisor for Education Durham*

### Introductory comments

This report provides a summary of the professional development and networking opportunities available to RE leaders and teachers, observations from Ofsted inspections and training opportunities that have been shared with our advisory team. These will be standing items in each termly report, with the addition of data in the spring report. Additional items can be included, on request from SACRE members.

### Professional development

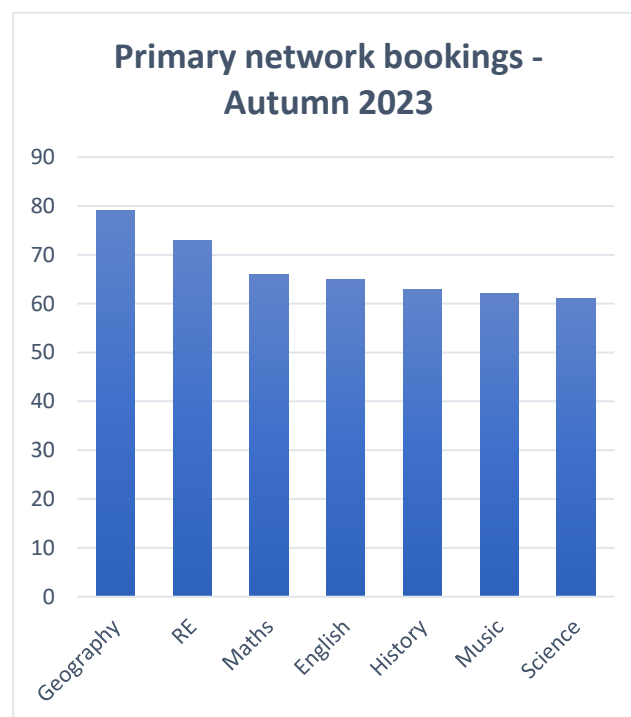
Education Durham continues to offer networks, courses and contracted support for teachers and leaders of RE in primary, secondary and special schools. For schools with service level agreements, attendance at all networks and most courses is free. Bespoke support can be 'paid for' using an allocation of hours that each school receives.

### RE subject leader networks

There are three primary, and three secondary RE networks scheduled for the academic year. These are held termly and are led by Catherine Robson, Assistant Head Teacher and former Head of RE at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School.

The primary network recruits very well, with 73 bookings this term, as the table to the right indicates.

Secondary subject network numbers have fallen significantly in recent years. This is a trend across most subjects and is largely due to academisation, with some larger trusts hosting their own cross-school networks. Four bookings were made for the Autumn term secondary network.



## **RE courses**

We are offering three RE courses this academic year, which have been put together in response to contract requests and conversations with RE leaders at network meetings. Course booking numbers will be available in the spring report.

### **New to leading Primary RE – 14/11/2023**

Taking on subject leadership can be a daunting task. This course will support new subject leaders in understanding the key principles of RE and build their confidence in developing the subject in school. Discussions will centre around ensuring that a robust and well-sequenced curriculum is in place as well as exploring the responsibilities of the role, how to make the best use of subject-specific resources and how to support children to develop a love of RE, in and beyond the classroom.

### **Buddhism and religious diversity in the primary classroom – 14/02/2024**

The course will support all colleagues teaching religious education in primary schools to develop subject knowledge and confidence. The day will be divided into two parts. Part 1 NATRE will deliver training around the following unit questions from the 2020 Durham Agreed Syllabus for RE: why did the Buddha leave home and how is the Buddha special to Buddhists? How do Buddhists express their beliefs? Part 2: the session will focus on planning and delivering lessons that explore religious diversity in the local area.

### **Digging deeper into assessment in primary RE – 01/05/2024**

The Education Inspection Framework places an emphasis on pupils knowing more and remembering more. In this short course, subject leaders will be guided through key considerations when deciding how and when to assess pupils in RE. Participants will consider the different purposes of formative, summative and diagnostic assessments as well as their strengths and limitations. The facilitator will highlight the sticky knowledge that we want pupils to know and remember, whilst factoring in how to capture disciplinary learning taking place. Participants will leave with increased confidence around their own assessment systems that are based on the nuances of the subject but match the school's context.

## **Contracted support**

Over the last 12 months, there have been 27 hours of contract requests to support with the development of RE. This is broadly in line with requests for support with other subjects. RE requests have come from:

- Seaview Primary School
- Shield Row Primary School
- Sunnybrow Primary School
- The Meadows Special School
- Walworth Special School

Requests vary in nature but supporting new subject leaders has been a common theme:

- Support for a new subject leader to identify the key areas within RE and to consider curriculum progression
- To hold a staff meeting to upskill and inspire them in order to improve the teaching of RE
- To support a new subject leader in knowing how to adapt the RE Agreed Syllabus for an SEMH setting (social, emotional and mental health)
- Sustained support for newly appointed RE leader
- To support senior leaders by giving advice on curriculum implementation and identifying links with cultural capital/ enrichment opportunities
- To map out the progressive substantive and disciplinary knowledge across key stages

### Ofsted deep dives

Last year, it was agreed that a summary of Ofsted comments on RE from reports published on Durham schools would be compiled and presented to Durham SACRE at each termly meeting. There have now been four 'deep dives' into RE: one in 2021 and three this year. These 'deep dives' involve a more in-depth review of subjects and include conversations with the subject leader and other teachers, observing lessons, speaking to pupils and reviewing work. The extent to which these subjects are fed back on in Ofsted reports varies greatly, with some subject deep dives getting a paragraph or two and others being scarcely mentioned. The deep dive subjects do not receive a judgement in isolation: the findings from these are triangulated with other evidence to establish a verdict around the quality of education being offered by a school.

<b>Woodham Burn Community Primary School</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2021	Requires improvement
"Plans in other subjects, such as religious education (RE) and science, are not sequenced in enough detail to ensure pupils in every class learn the right things in the right order."		

<b>Wingate Primary School</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2023	Good
"The religious education curriculum helps pupils to compare different faiths as well as non-religious views. Pupils are active citizens in the community."		

<b>South Stanley Junior School</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 2023	Requires improvement
"In religious education, leaders have prioritised teaching pupils about religious diversity. Plans are well developed to support this."		

<b>Woodhouse Community Primary School</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2023	Requires improvement
"At the moment, the impact of the wider curriculum is variable. In some subjects, pupils do not remember what they have been taught. For example, in religious education, pupils have a limited		

understanding of some of the key aspects of the Christian faith, including why Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter.”

Of the five Ofsted inspection reports that have been published this term, two have referenced RE or SMSC:

**Easington Colliery Primary – inspected 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023:** ‘Pupils embrace difference. It matters to them that everyone feels included in their community’.

**Bowes Hutchinson C of E Primary – inspected 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023:** ‘The ethos of the school is strongly underpinned by pupils’ faith. Pupils benefit from strong links with the church and regular collective worship is a meaningful experience for them. Pupils learn about the role they play in the community. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed attending and offering contributions to Harvest Festival’.

More reports will be available to review in the spring term.

We are still awaiting the publication of Ofsted’s subject report for RE. Six reports have been published since February 2023, so we anticipate the RE report being released soon. The research review (2021) is a useful document for to signpost teachers and leaders to: particularly around inspection. It emphasises that RE forms a key part of a child’s personal development in addition to being a key foundation subject in the curriculum.

### Training opportunities for SACRE members and schools

#### *Collective worship*

20th November 2023, 4.00-5.30pm

This session will share the present legal position of the government on collective worship and then share what a number of SACREs are doing to support collective worship practice in their schools.

#### *In conversation with NASACRE*

23rd November 2023, 6.00-7.30pm

North East SACRE chairs, vice-chairs, LA offers and SACRE advisors are invited to represent your perspectives and views at a national level, understand your local context, your concerns and successes and hear your views on national developments and opportunities.

#### *How may SACREs effectively monitor schools?*

Tuesday 5th December 2023, 7 - 8pm

This session is a chance for SACREs to come together and hear about and consider a range of strategies and practices that build relationships with schools and enable SACREs to monitor RE and Collective Worship.

## **Farmington Scholarships for leaders and teachers**

[Leaflet 2024-25.pdf](#)

The Farmington Institute (Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford) are offering scholarships for head teachers and teachers of religious education and associated subjects for the academic year 2024-2025.

There are two types of scholarship – university-based (with St Chad’s College, Durham being the local host) and school/ home-based. University-based scholarships may be taken in the form of day release for up to 30 days. School/ home-based scholarships may be taken in the form of day release, e.g., 1 day a week over a term or year, or for continuous periods up to 30 days.

Head teachers can study any subjects which would be helpful to their schools. School teacher scholars are free to study any aspect of religious education they wish, but preference will be given to applicants whose work can be seen to be of direct value to the teaching of RE in schools.

The scholarship will cover the cost of tuition, essential local travel and, by negotiation with the school, the salary of a replacement teacher up to main pay scale point 6.