

Durham SACRE

The RE Inspector Report *Autumn Term 2014*

Durham RE Networks

The Autumn Term RE networks are as follows:

- Tuesday 4 November – primary (38 applicants)
- Friday 7 November – special (3 applicants)
- Tuesday 25 November – secondary (17 applicants)

Agendas will vary but all 3 networks will focus on RE in the new Ofsted Framework.

In addition, the **REImprove Group** (a small group of primary RE co-ordinators focusing on monitoring and evaluating RE provision and sharing good practice) have met twice – 7 October, 4 November.

RE Contracts

I have visited several primary schools this term to support them in their RE provision eg:

- staff meetings on RE in the curriculum
- producing an RE Curriculum Map for mixed age classes
- developing the RE co-ordinator role
- planning units of work.

Several schools are now contracting me to produce overview plans and then visit the school to go over them with teachers. This is helping to build up a bank of plans and resources based on the Agreed Syllabus.

I have visited 3 secondary schools to develop planning materials, work with non-specialist RE teachers and evaluate provision in RE.

Regional RE Hub

A successful application has been made to Culham St Gabriel's to develop a RE Hub in the region. The idea of the hub is to strengthen partnerships and collaboration across the North East region by developing 2 research-based groups for teachers:

- developing strong leadership in RE (primary schools)
- developing enquiry based learning in RE (secondary schools)

It is anticipated that these groups will include teachers from a range of schools and geographical areas. Partners include NERLRC, the Church of England diocese, local authorities, SACREs and regional RE networks. It is hoped that this will inspire and support RE teachers and leaders and strengthen capacity for outstanding RE provision in the region. It is anticipated that Durham Local Authority and Durham SACRE will be at the heart of this initiative. Planning meetings will take place over the next few weeks with clear action planning.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Durham schools have received an invitation to the National Holocaust Memorial Day at Durham Cathedral on Friday 30 January 2015. The theme this year is "Keeping the Memory Alive". If you would like further details about this (it may be that SACRE members could attend) could you please contact Joni Stidwell at joni.stidwell@durham.gov.uk (03000 267800).

Courses Next Year

This may seem a long while off, but Durham Education Development Service begins to plan the courses they will offer next academic year in February. I would be very interested to hear the thoughts of SACRE members about what EDS could offer in relation to RE and collective worship.

It may be good to offer a course for teachers around diversity of religious beliefs, enabling teachers to build up subject knowledge. If you would be willing to help by running a small workshop (similar to the Interfaith Conference but for teachers not students) please let me know. I would be very grateful.

School Queries

I continue to be contacted by school leaders on a range of queries relating to parental withdrawal of their children from RE and/or Collective Worship. In particular this term, schools have raised concerns about visits to places of worship in the region.

RE, Collective Worship, SMSC and Ofsted

As you may be aware, Ofsted published a revised Handbook in September for inspecting schools. This contains increased emphasis on SMSC development and focus on promoting British values and preparing children for life in modern Britain. There is also reference to Collective Worship and detail about the type of RE syllabus to be used in different types of schools.

Interfaith Week

The Annual Interfaith Week in England is taking place from 16-22 November. The 3 aims of Interfaith Week are:

- strengthening good interfaith relations at all levels
- increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK
- increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

The Interfaith Week website encourages all sorts of groups to become involved, attend and organise events. It has suggestions for the sort of events that could take place. Whilst Durham LA and SACRE are not holding a Student Interfaith Conference this year, this could be something that could be held another year.

Farmington Fellowship

Farmington Trust offers Fellowships each year to enable RE teachers to undertake research and development around RE practice. The Trust pays for teacher release time (up to 30 days) from their school. I am notifying schools of this opportunity and giving out leaflets about the fellowships at network meetings.

Raising the Profile of RE

The national campaign to keep raising the profile of RE, particularly with Government, continues. REC, NATRE and RE Today attended for the first time the three main political party conferences in September. At each conference there was a RE stand (mainly to get MPs to pledge support for RE) and a fringe Question Time event at each conference.

RE Bursaries

The DfE announced in October that bursaries are to resume from September 2015 for secondary RE teacher trainees. This is a result of an exerted campaign in the RE community to prevent the decline in applications for RE teacher training. Good news indeed!

REC – Religious Education Council

SMSCD – Spiritual, Moral, Social Cultural Development

NERLRC – North East Religious Learning Resources Centre

NATRE – National Association of Teachers of RE

DfE – Department for Education

RE Today – a publishing company promoting RE resources in schools