

SEEING OUR SYLLABUS DIFFERENTLY: FOOD FOR THOUGHT, OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

What are we trying to do when we teach RE in our classrooms? One of the current answers circulating in the RE world is that it should aim primarily to develop religious literacy. Arguably there has never been a more pertinent time to ensure that our pupils are religiously literate. It's a phrase we all need to get to grips with, if you are not doing so already. But what does it actually mean? Mary Myatt, lead RE consultant and OFSTED inspector recently summarised 'religious literacy' as

- Informed responses to ultimate questions
- Understanding the beliefs, practices, values and ways of life of religions and non-religious world views
- Understanding the nature of religious language
- Understanding the diversity of religion and belief in the contemporary world
- Understanding the impact that religion can have on individuals and society

Alongside this, those who work in Church schools need to take seriously the findings of 'Making a Difference?', the recent review of RE in C of E primary and secondary schools. This concluded that, 'There is a need to clarify how the distinctive place of RE in Church schools should be translated into high quality teaching and learning. Schools need more support to improve the quality of the design of the RE curriculum. A more coherent and strategic approach is needed towards continuing professional development with a stronger focus on improving the quality of planning, teaching and assessment. Greater emphasis should be placed on thinking theologically and the art of theological enquiry as a distinctive Anglican contribution to the improvement of RE nationally'.



It is a lot to take in!

The Diocese is starting a two year process of reviewing and revising the syllabus with all of this in mind, aiming to make sure that issues of religious literacy, theology and appropriate support for the teachers in our primary schools in particular are addressed. Your RE subject leaders have been asked to give you the opportunity to have your say about the current syllabus – what works or does not work for you. Please join in the discussion so that the syllabus of the future feels like it is designed with you in mind! I am on the end of my email to 'listen' to your views and suggestions.

Asking and answering the "Big Questions"

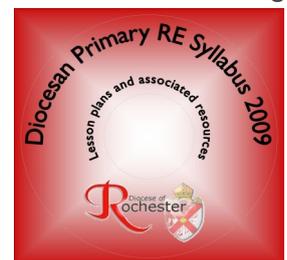
A number of you attended the training about the five world faiths led by some of our secondary colleagues from Bexley. Another area for which they are able to offer support is that of enquiry into ultimate questions especially for years 5 and 6. We will therefore be offering a CPD session on:

Friday 19th June 2015 from 1.30 pm—4pm

Cost £30 plus VAT (£36)

At the Rochester Diocesan Offices, St. Nicholas Church Boley Hill ME1 1SL

Book with Teresa (teresa.spearink@rochester.anglican.org)



RESOURCES FOR TEACHING THE RELIGIONS IN THE CURRENT SYLLABUS

Sikhism

The date of Baisakhi in 2015 is April 14. Baisakhi or Vaisakhi is the biggest Sikh festival. Sikhs may sing, dance and offer thanks to God. In Punjab it is also a harvest festival but primarily it is the day when the Khalsa or Sikh brotherhood was established.

If you are doing work on Sikhism in Key Stage 2, this festival makes a great basis for an RE unit on Religion, Family and Community.

See more at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zftfgk7>

<http://www.vaisakhibirmingham.org/vaisakhi/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories/lets-celebrate-vaisakhiperformance>



Christianity

A set of 8 eye-catching A3 size Christian festival posters which schools would find useful to display in the school entrance hall or when looking at the round of the Christian year. The pack includes: Advent, Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Holy Week, Lent, Pentecost and Remembrance Sunday. Only £9.99

<http://www.kevinmayhew.com/festival-posters-multi-pack.html#.VXAr-c9ViBY>

Hinduism

The Little Book of Hindu Deities: From the Goddess of Wealth to the Sacred Cow by Sanjay Patel

A Pixar animator offers a colourful, close-up look at the most important gods and goddesses of the Hindu religion, in full-colour illustrations, with concise profiles and stories from Hindu mythology.

A follow-up 'big poster' book is also available.

Judaism

Shabbat Shalom Grover Grover finds out about Shabbat and learns what goes on the Shabbat table and why. A fun way of finding out about Shabbat from a Jewish version of Sesame Street. Also programmes on Passover, Mitzvah and other Jewish topics and celebrations.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucEIPOxR-bs>

Islam

In order to support both teacher subject knowledge and also learning for pupils, look through the clips

below. Many of them are short – some will provide a contextual information and, therefore, confidence for the teacher, whilst others will be more suitable for use in the classroom with the pupils. You will need to make that decision based on your own school situation. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zvwq6sg> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zpdtbsbk/videos/>



EVENTS

Commonwork is an organic dairy farm, conference and study centre, combining education programmes with social enterprise, to work towards a more just and sustainable world...

Save 15 per cent on a school visit to Commonwork Organic Farm Enjoy the freedom of outdoor learning at Commonwork Organic Farm and Gardens and save 20 per cent on the cost using the PROMO CODE: DoR. Choose from a variety of hands-on programmes, recently updated in line with the new curriculum and led by experienced tutors: environmental arts, seasonal cooking, rocks and soils, mini-beast habitats and brickmaking... or let us put together a programme to suit your learning needs.

Work-related learning in Commonwork gardens We also offer 6- or 12-week programmes for **Specialist Schools** based on a work-related learning curriculum. Visit <http://www.commonwork.org/education/school-programmes> for more information

Quality or Quantity: how do we know our teaching works?

We are in the final stages of an EU-funded project to produce a new teaching resource to help evaluate the effectiveness of teaching around global citizenship. For further information on the resource and workshops, contact juliee@commonwork.org

Outdoor learning, Global learning

Commonwork can also offer full-day, half-day or twilight CPD sessions in making the most of the outdoors, global learning and school linking. For further information contact juliee@commonwork.org

For families

Enjoy a day out at **Commonwork's Summer Open Day**, with hands on cooking and craft activities, guided tours, stalls and good food and drink. Sunday 12 July (11am-4pm) at Bore Place TN8 7AR. Entry fee at gate includes all activities. Adults £7; Children (2-12) £3. Visit <http://www.commonwork.org/courses-and-events/commonwork-summer-open-day-2015> for more information.

Have fun on the farm during our **Summer Holiday Activities** programme: choose from cooking, crafting or pond dipping. Activities run 3-7 August and 24-28 August. Cost from £10-15/child; parents free.

Visit <http://www.commonwork.org/courses-and-events/summer-holiday-activities-august-2015>

MORE RESOURCES

Bishops in Action

Bishop Brian is retiring later this year and the Diocese will be thinking about appointing a new Bishop. This gives us the opportunity to think about what a Bishop does for us all. There is a website which helps us to find out about Bishops, how they are consecrated and installed, and what their role is in the church:

<http://bishopsinaction.co.uk/>.



Children's Songs

Andy Rayner wrote and produced a Lord's Prayer Project for Churches East, as well as the Waiting for Christmas material and an African Centenary children's song. He has put all his children's songs on a new website where they are freely available for you to use. Do have a look and learn some of the songs! Excellent for finding out the things Christians believe.

www.schoolsongs.org.uk

It's Our World Environmental Arts Project



It's Our World is a project aiming to create the largest online collection of artworks celebrating the environment, as seen through the eyes of its future custodians (aged 4-19 years). Participants are invited to bring their local landscape, coastline or neighbourhood to life

by creating an artwork to celebrate where they live.

Some CofE Schools have already shared their artwork on the Online Gallery (this picture was created by a pupil at Bishop Winnington Ingram CE School) and the deadline has been extended to the end of November so there is still plenty of time to share your school's art. The collection will be handed over to The British Library in December to coincide with COP 21 World Leaders' Climate Change Summit in Paris.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES 2015

2015

JUNE

Thursday 18th June

RE Support Group -Parish CE Primary School BR14HF
(Bromley schools)



******Please note: this session will focus on assessment and it would be helpful if all those attending could bring along a range of books to help us with moderation and with the sharing of best practice.******

Friday 19th June

Asking and answering the 'Big Questions' **1.30 pm—4 pm** - **Cost £30 plus VAT**
The Rochester Diocesan Offices, St. Nicholas Church, Boley Hill Rochester ME1 1SL

Wednesday 24th June

Bishopscourt Garden Party and Evening Service. The Service starts at the Cathedral at **5.30pm**. This is a service specially created to reflect the joys and concerns of those leading our schools. The second part is a Garden Party from **6.30pm to 8.30pm** at Bishopscourt which is just up the hill from the Cathedral

OCTOBER

Monday 5th October

Foundation Governor Induction Training **4.30 pm—6.30 pm** to include: the roles and responsibilities of the Foundation Governor of a CoE School. Key aspects of Church School governance including Christian Distinctiveness, SIAMS Inspection and Buildings/Finance, opportunity to ask questions about your role and share your experiences with other Governors

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 4th November

RE Support Group—Bennett Memorial Tunbridge Wells TN4 9SH **1.30 pm—4 pm**
(please park on the road as parking is limited in the school grounds)

Thursday 5th November

RE Support Group—Rochester Diocesan Offices ME1 1SL. **1.30 pm—4 pm**

Friday 6th November

RE Support Group -Crayford Community Hall (Bexley Schools) **1.30 pm to 4 pm**

******HEADS AND CHAIRS BRIEFINGS******

After consultation with schools there will now be 1 breakfast meeting and 1 afternoon meeting

Thursday 1st October

Breakfast meeting **8 am (coffee) —10.30 am** The Holiday Inn Wrotham TN15 7RS

Friday 2nd October

Diocesan Offices St. Nicholas Church, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL **1.30 pm— 4pm**

