

# **REview East Sussex June 2016**

## **National News**

### **Commission on RE**

It is the Religious Education Council's intention to establish an independent Commission on RE, which will look into the complex range of issues that relate to the legal and wider policy framework around the subject. During February and March the REC has been consulting on a draft set of terms of reference for the Commission, as well as considering what sort of experience and expertise we would like the commissioners to bring. We hope to establish the Commission in June and will ask the commissioners to independently investigate the issues and report back with findings and recommendations

The RE Council has now sent out a consultation to the authorised representatives of its member organisations asking for their comments on the draft Terms of Reference which were approved at the last meeting of the REC Board. Members are also welcome to arrange a meeting to discuss these, or any other aspect of the Commission, with the CEO at a time of mutual convenience. The final terms of reference for the Commission was approved at the meeting of the REC Board on 16<sup>th</sup> April. (More to follow)

### **Campaign legacy sees teacher recruitment momentum continue**

The second year of the Beyond the Ordinary campaign to attract people to apply for PGCEs in secondary RE is now underway. They are building on the legacy of last year's efforts, which saw RE PGCE recruitment in 2015 outperforming all other PGCE subjects generally, and other humanities subjects in particular. This year, the campaign is focused on using social media and direct communication with degree students.

Most recent UCAS statistics are even more encouraging:

- In mid-January overall numbers of RE applications were over 30% higher than last year, far outperforming other subjects as a whole
- Applicants with either a conditional place or a holding offer numbered 210 – up over 150 per cent on the equivalent 2014 figure (80).

### **Young Ambassadors' News**

The REC were also happy to hear from a couple of Young Ambassadors teams with an update on the projects that they have been involved in this term. They are now hoping to secure donations to enable Young Ambassadors for RE from all over the country to travel to a conference in London where they will present their findings to each other.

### **RE Quality Mark Conference**

The REQM team is very grateful for the generous support from the Hockerill Foundation which funded the third RE Quality Mark Conference, held at Liverpool Hope University and attended by 50 delegates, including colleagues from schools which had achieved the RE Quality Mark. The conference focused on sharing examples of high quality practice which had enabled schools to achieve the award and to continue high quality provision. A number also shared the findings from the classroom based research which

they had undertaken with support from Liverpool Hope, Canterbury, UEA and Worcester universities.

The keynotes were given by Dr Debra Kidd who reminded colleagues of what a 'Curriculum with Conscience' looks like; and Dr Mark Chater who scoped the potential policy changes, the REC's proposals for a national commission to gather evidence and make proposals on RE.

Colleagues from all phases heard about research and new ideas from early years, special educational needs, primary and secondary sectors. These were followed up with further conversations during the breaks. Some excellent feedback on the conference has been received, with many teachers looking forward to implementing ideas which came from the conference.

The presentations from the conference can be downloaded from the REQM website: <http://reqm.org/news>

The REQM team are currently looking for a replacement to manage the project. Both Mary Myatt and Jane Brooke who not only launched the project but managed to date, have decided to step down. We wait to see who will be appointed to carry on this successful work.

### **RE Quality Mark Grants**

Thanks to REC members Keswick Hall Trust, Culham St Gabriel's Trust and Westhill Endowment Trust, there are a number of grants available for small schools (fewer than 150 pupils) and schools requiring improvement which would like to apply for the RE Quality Mark. The grants are managed by the RE Council and schools can indicate on their application forms if they would like to be considered for a grant.

For more information about the RE Quality Mark and to download the application form, please visit the [REQM website](#) or email Sylwia Urbaniak, the new REQM Administrator, at [admin@reqm.org](mailto:admin@reqm.org)

### **Lord Winston and Chief Rabbi speak at Teaching Judaism conference**

On 22nd February, more than 90 teachers of RE attended the first ever Teaching Judaism, held jointly by The Board of Deputies of British Jews and Partnerships for Jewish Schools at the Western Marble Arch Synagogue, aimed at educators teaching the new Judaism GCSE syllabus.

Rabbi Mirvis spoke about the essence of Jewish prayer while fertility expert Lord Winston gave a talk entitled 'Why Bother Learning About Judaism', in which he spoke about the interplay between faith and science.

Representatives from exam boards AQA, Edexcel, Eduqas and OCR also answered questions about new GCSE requirements and changes to the syllabus.

Delegates also attended workshops run by leading educators on various facets of the new syllabus which will be examined for the first time in 2018, which were popular and well-received.

### **Hindu Council UK: Questions and answers on Hinduism**

The Hindu Council has set up a website that deals with question and answers on Hinduism, covering topics such as why there are many gods in Hinduism; a mature understanding of the law of karma; the caste system; reincarnation; and a Hindu take on abortion and euthanasia. Please visit the website to find out more: <http://www.hinduismquestionandanswer.com/>

### **Hinduism Workshops for Schools**

Avesha Presentations offer a variety of resources on Hinduism, serving schools and educators all over England, Wales, and Scotland. They work with Foundation Stage, Primary, Secondary, SEN, University Religious Studies students, trainee teachers, and other professionals. They also run CPD courses and INSET sessions, specialising in dynamic, reflective workshops for teachers and students of all ages, experiential at all levels, with more academic content included where appropriate. The half or full-day workshops are run by co-founder of ISKCON Educational Services Indriyasha Das and his wife Krishna, who provide a nationwide service.

For more information on workshop content and fees, visit [www.hinduismworkshops.co.uk](http://www.hinduismworkshops.co.uk).

To make a booking, contact:

Email: [admin@hinduismworkshops.co.uk](mailto:admin@hinduismworkshops.co.uk)

or [bookings@hinduismworkshops.co.uk](mailto:bookings@hinduismworkshops.co.uk)

Tel/Fax: 01923 351 209

Mob: 07940 963 014

### **Three Faiths Forum Inter Faith Workshops**

3FF works with over 6,000 young people across the UK each academic year. Their award-winning interfaith workshops explore themes of faith, belief and identity, and allow students to ask challenging questions within a safe space. There are currently grants available for their workshops to schools in London and Birmingham for Summer Term 2016.

For more info contact [siobhan@3ff.org.uk](mailto:siobhan@3ff.org.uk) or visit

<http://www.3ff.org.uk/schools/education-workshops.php>.

### **Teach RE course**

The TeachRE course continues to develop and meet the needs of all teachers of RE. Please look out for new versions of the course to be launched in a few months time. There is a new TeachRE LITE version for use by those who work in primary initial teacher training and with NQTs, and also a module-only option of the course serving secondary teachers who want to develop their subject knowledge to teach the new GCSE and A level courses. Find out more at [www.teachre.co.uk](http://www.teachre.co.uk)

### **REC joint statement with NATRE on the APPG on RE**

On 8th March the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education met in order to discuss changes to its purpose statement. At that meeting, the APPG agreed a new purpose statement as follows:

*To provide a medium through which parliamentarians and organisations with*

*an interest in religious education can discuss the current provision of religious education, press for continuous improvement, promote public understanding and advocate effective education for every young person in religious world views.*

The original purpose had read [the changed wording is in bold]:

*To provide a medium through which parliamentarians and organisations with an interest in religious education can discuss the current provision of religious education, press for continuous improvement, promote public understanding and advocate **rigorous** education for every young person in religious and **non-religious** world views.*

RE Council Chief Executive, Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, and NATRE Chair Daniel Hugill commented:

*We are disappointed that the All Party Parliamentary Group has decided to narrow its understanding of what religious education (RE) means. RE is a dynamic subject that benefits from an ongoing debate over its nature and scope. Members of both the RE Council and NATRE continue to discuss and review the current and future shape of religious education. A broad and inclusive approach to these discussions is necessary for the health of the subject. The APPG has chosen to cut itself off from an important part of the debate. In doing so it makes itself out of touch with the reality of a vibrant part of what is going on in many RE classrooms across the country.*

### **NASACRE Conference ‘Shaping the Future’ 2016 May 17<sup>th</sup> 2016**

The RE Consultant attended this conference at the Methodist Central Hall Westminster.

#### **Keynote Speakers**

*The Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE, formerly President of the Family Division of the High Court was the first female Lord Justice of Appeal and until 2004, was the highest-ranking female judge in the United Kingdom. She has chaired many high profile enquiries and inquests. Baroness Butler-Sloss served as Chair for the recently published Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life. ‘Living With Difference’.*

The commission’s purpose was to consider the place and role of religion and belief in contemporary Britain, to consider the significance of emerging trends and identities, and to make recommendations for public life and policy. Its premise was that in a rapidly changing diverse society everyone is affected, whatever their private views on religion and belief, and by how public policy and public institutions respond to social change.

The main conclusions were:

- **A national conversation should be launched across the UK by leaders of faith communities and ethical traditions to create a shared understanding of the fundamental values underlying public life**
- **Much greater religion and belief literacy is needed in every section of society, and at all levels.**

- **The pluralist character of modern society should be reflected in national and civic events**
- **All pupils in state-funded schools should have a statutory entitlement to a curriculum about religion, philosophy and ethics**
- **Bodies responsible for admissions and employment policies in schools with a religious character ('faith schools') should take measures to reduce selection of pupils and staff on grounds of religion.**
- **The BBC Charter renewal should mandate the Corporation to reflect the range of religion and belief of modern society**
- **A panel of experts on religion and belief should be established**
- **Relevant public bodies and voluntary organisations should promote opportunities for interreligious and inter-worldview encounter and dialogue.**
- **Where a religious organisation is best placed to deliver a social good, it should not be disadvantaged.**
- **The Ministry of Justice should issue guidance on compliance with UK standards of gender equality and judicial independence by religious and cultural tribunals such as ecclesiastical courts, Beit Din and Shari'a councils.**
- **The Ministry of Justice should instruct the Law Commission to review the anomalies in how the legal definitions of race, ethnicity and religion interact in practice and make recommendations to ensure all religious traditions are treated equally.**
- **In framing counter-terrorism legislation, the Government should seek to promote, not limit, freedom of enquiry, speech and expression, and should engage with a wide range of affected groups, including those with which it disagrees.**

[www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Living%20with%20Difference.pdf](http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Living%20with%20Difference.pdf)

The Baroness made it clear that she was not an Educationalist or an RE specialist. She was simply responsible for chairing the commission

**Professor Adam Dinham** is Professor of Faith and Public Policy at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is also Chair of the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel), Professor of Religious Literacy, Diakonhjemmet University College, Oslo, Norway and Honorary Stephenson Professor of Leadership, Religion & Society, Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies, Sheffield University, UK. With Martha Shaw, Professor Dinham is the co-author of RE for REal: The future of teaching and learning about belief.

The report makes 10 key recommendations.

Culham St Gabriel's welcomes these and encourages the RE world to fully

engage with them and the wider findings of the report in discussions about the future of RE.

The recommendations are:

- **A statutory National Framework for Religion and Belief Learning should be developed, and be applicable to all schools, balancing shared national approaches with school level determination.**
- **Since SACREs currently play a leading part in religion and belief learning, there is an urgent need for review of their role, and the role of others, such as professional bodies and experts, in the forming of learning. This should inform and result in the appointment of a national panel to develop the framework.**
- **The National Framework panel should be mandated to consider and make recommendations about the purpose, content and structures of teaching and learning, and about the relationship between learning inside RE, outside in other subjects, and in the wider life of schools, especially in relation to the Act of Worship requirement, and to the right to withdraw.**
- **Religion and belief learning should be a compulsory part of the curriculum to age 16, and consideration should be given to what, if anything, happens in post-16 learning.**
- **Content should reflect the real religious landscape, as revealed by cutting edge theory and data in the study of contemporary religion and belief.**
- **The process of producing a National Framework for Religion and Belief Learning should determine the mix, content and location of religion and belief learning *specific* to RE, and that which takes place in a *distributed* way in learning outside of RE.**
- **GCSE Religious Studies should remain as an optional subject for schools, and consideration should be given to reframing its content to demarcate the boundary between academic study of the real religious landscape, and other religion and belief learning associated with personal, spiritual and social learning.**
- **There should be continued investment in Initial Teacher Training for subject specialist RE teachers.**
- **There should be increased investment in continuing professional development for non-specialist teachers of religion and belief.**
- **The process of producing a National Framework should include a review and decision on the name or names of religion and belief learning in schools.**

<http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/goldsmiths/169-images/departments/research-units/faiths-unit/REforREal-web-b.pdf>.

**NB The conference speeches are on the NASACRE website. If you are unable to access this please contact either myself and we can send you the materials**

[lilian.weatherley@gmail.com](mailto:lilian.weatherley@gmail.com) or [Julie.Stevens@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.Stevens@eastsussex.gov.uk)

### **OBE for Deborah Weston**

The RE world is thrilled and delighted to learn that Deborah Weston has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to Religious

Education, inter and intra-faith dialogue. We send Deborah our congratulations and good wishes.

## **Local News**

### **Faith Guidance**

This piece of work was commissioned by Brighton and Hove but in exchange for the East Sussex materials on assessment, has been adapted for use by East Sussex schools.

As soon as the materials are on disc they will be circulated to all schools. We hope you will find them a very useful resource.

### **Assessment**

The new primary support materials for assessment are almost complete. They will be put on disc and hopefully ready to be circulated to schools by the end of term

### **Future Training**

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> June am SMSC and British Values**

Joint East Sussex and Brighton and Hove training Dean's Place.

### **Date for your Diary**

East Sussex Annual conference will take place on **November 17<sup>th</sup> 2016**

Our key note speaker will be Martha Shaw co-author of the RE for REal report on Religion and Belief.

(see above)