



RE Centres Southern Regional Group

www.recentres.org.uk

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Chair: Lydia Revett
Hampshire County RE Centre
Falcon House, Romsey Road, Winchester
SO23 5PL Tel: 01962 863134
lydia.revett@hants.gov.uk

Newsletter Editor: Ian Knight
Winchester Diocesan Resource Centre
Diocesan Office, Old Alresford Place,
Alresford SO24 9DH Tel: 01962 737349
ian.knight@winchester.anglican.org

Letter from the Chair

Our October meeting here in Winchester was useful in many ways. It was lovely to welcome the group to my centre and Ian's, especially those we had not met before - Linda Rudge from Keswick Hall and Katherine Tuck from Guildford. All of us benefited from the chance to meet and exchange news and views, and to share ideas and examples of how we go about marketing our centres. Thanks to Ian for organising this meeting, particularly as he was about to pack up and move to a new site!



The 25th annual summer conference this year is looking very interesting, centring round visits to two places of worship in Hertfordshire. We meet on Wednesday 9 July at All Saints' Pastoral Centre, London Colney www.allsaintspc.org.uk/ for lunch at 1pm, followed by a visit to Radlett and Bushey Reform Synagogue www.radlettreform.org.uk/ with a business meeting and exhibition of new resources in the evening. We'll stay overnight at All Saints, where there is a McCrimmons bookshop for anyone who is interested in purchasing resources, before visiting Watford Central Mosque on the morning of Thursday 10 July. Lunch will be at St Albans Diocesan Resource Centre www.stalbanseducation.org.uk/Resources/Resource_Centre.htm providing a chance to browse before we depart. I am really looking forward to this conference, being organised this year by Ron Upton, and hope to see lots of you there.

Our thanks must be expressed once more to those others who continue their work to support the group - to Ron Upton for the group's finances, to Sue Bloomfield for membership and subscriptions, to Ian Knight for our newsletters and to Heather Collins for minuting our meetings. Their efficiency and generosity with their time makes my life much easier.

I look forward to seeing you in July.

With best wishes

Lydia



25th Annual Conference
Wednesday 9 - Thursday 10 July
All Saints' Pastoral Centre
Radlett & Bushey Reform Synagogue
Watford Central Mosque
St Albans Diocesan Resource Centre
£55.00—please book by 31 May



RE Council Meeting - 7 November 2007 - The Welsh Experience



Held in Cardiff, since the RE Council (REC) is that of England and Wales, it was interesting to hear how the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DECELLS) has put together a review of their curriculum and published for consultation a national exemplar framework for RE which is hoped local SACRE agreed syllabus conferences will use as a model. We were not able to see it in detail, but were informed that it focuses on the learner, through the development of skills by

- engaging with fundamental questions
- exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practices
- expressing a personal response

within a range (the context through which skills can be developed). It is hoped to produce guidance and training materials in the spring and summer 2008. Roger Palmer, Head of Curriculum and Assessment 3–14, DECELLS, said that they hoped this would enhance the status of RE by giving it the status of a national curriculum subject.

RE COUNCIL – DCSF PARTNERSHIP

Brian Gates reported that DCSF funding had been in place for 18 months and is 'likely to continue' in order to take the REC's National strategy for RE forward.

- **REC office** at 1 London Bridge – this has been secured, offering a physical location for the REC and meeting room facilities in central London.
- **Website** – www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk (contact Lydia or Chris for a logon and password) There were reportedly 85,000 hits in October 2007. The Executive is considering associate individual membership of the REC, in addition to current organisational members, as well as studying the feasibility and desirability of a listing of those with professional links to RE by name and professional base.
- **Administrative Officer** reporting to the REC executive: the appointment of Dr Sarah Smalley was announced (previously Cambridgeshire LEA advisor and AREIAC chair).
- Raising the **public profile of RE** – a workshop discussion took place, chaired by John Gay, from which responses will be collated by the Executive, with a view to drawing up a draft tender/strategy, since part funding from the DCSF has been allocated in principle for publicity and promotion of the subject.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RE

- **Current position with Government ministers and DCSF:** the Executive has met with Lord Adonis and subsequently Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools and Learners. Brian added that the minister was minded to revise Circular 1/94 but this has not been announced as he is still deciding on the nature and scope of consultation.

- **SACREs** and the 'community cohesion' agenda: Brian reported on the establishment of the community cohesion unit within DCSF headed by Hermione Gough and four staff six weeks ago. Brian said the Executive had met twice with her and she is very interested in RE, recognising its potential and the usefulness of SACREs locally to promote RE. She has been provided by the REC with examples of good practise by SACREs.
- **16 – 19 and FE:** paper circulated. Nothing new to report – not particularly on DCSF agenda at present.

SHARE AND SHOW

- **Jewish Way of Life** CD-ROM in final stages of development by the Jewish Board of Deputies. Based on the QCA framework, it will be launched in January 08 and free to every school in the country; it links with the travelling Jewish Way of life exhibition, and included teacher's resources, videos, text based information, games, animations.
- **Stapleford Centre** – David Morton is its new Director, taking over from Trevor Cooling who is concentrating on Transforming Lives – an initiative to promote teaching as a vocation to Christian churches.
- **SHAP** calendar, wallchart, pictorial calendar and journal were publicised. Contact Mike Berry on 0207 898 1494.
- Mary Hayward talked about her project at the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit on **Christianity in RE at KS3**, report available at £5, www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wie/research/wreru/book/sforsale/cinre
- Damian Lane introduced the **International Baccalaureate in RE** in the UK project. www.ibo.org/
- **Discover Jainism** textbook for KS1/2 available from www.jainology.org
- **Baha'i** project in Swindon working with dispirited youngsters www.syep.org.uk

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM INITIATIVE

Joyce Miller introduced this initiative, for which there is a manifesto, available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/outsideclassroom/. She asked for examples of good practice and for members to publicise it beyond the REC. Andrew Griffin from Price Waterhouse Coopers is also working on the project in terms of accreditation of providers, taking into account safety and quality of the experience, in order to reduce bureaucracy for teachers wanting to take their pupils outside the classroom to learn.

COUNCIL FOR SUBJECT ASSOCIATIONS

www.subjectassociation.org.uk/

Five of REC's member organisations cover different Subject Association constituencies: NATRE, AULRE, AREIAC, NASACRE and SHAP. Rosemary Rivett (REToday and NATRE) has been charged with the collation of material for a circular to go to all primary schools on RE in March in order to encourage teachers to join subject associations.

Lydia Revett
Hampshire County RE Centre

Leicester Multicultural and RE Centre



My apologies to Mary Bryceland at the Leicester RE Centre. In the last Newsletter, in spite of being a Leicestershire lad myself, I managed to get her centre totally mixed up with the Leicestershire County one (as opposed to the City of Leicester). Perhaps I can blame Google. Mary's contact details are:

Multicultural Education Service
 Children & Young People's Services
 Leicester City Council
 Forest Lodge Education Centre (*photo above*)
 Charnor Road, Leicester LE3 6LH
 Tel: 0116 222 2610 multi-ed@leicester.gov.uk
 www.leicester.gov.uk/re

Below is a photo of the Navratri box, available to schools to hire from Mary's centre.



Winchester Diocesan Resource Centre

I have had a reprieve from being consigned to the basement and the Resource Centre is now installed in the study of the former rectory on the site of the Diocesan Office. My new contact details can be found on the front of this newsletter.

Ian Knight



Autumn Meeting 30 October 2007

Ten Group members met at the Hampshire County RE Centre and immediately tucked into the coffee and distinctly-above-average biscuits kindly provided by Lydia.

Judith Lowndes, Hampshire's General Inspector for RE, outlined how the Centre works. Schools subscribe to one or more of the subject centres in the County - besides RE there are History, Maths and Intercultural Centres. The charge is currently £85 per year for one centre. Schools then select their resources to borrow, which are delivered free by a courier system.



There is an extra charge of £18 for themed artefact boxes which are loaned for three weeks. A good tip to ensure their prompt return is to chat up the school admin officer and get them on your side! Boxes available include *Christmas around the world*, *Angels*, *Mary Mother of God*, *Orthodox Christianity*, *A Hindu Mandir*, *Diwali* and *Hajj*.

The Centre publishes a termly Newsletter which includes several reviews of new resources (free review copies from publishers are always welcome!).

To support teaching of RE according to the Hampshire RE syllabus *Living Difference*, the Centre has produced DVDs (*Visit to a Mosque* and *Visit to a Hindu Temple*), CD-ROMs (*Angels*, *A Tour of Southsea Synagogue*, *The Christian Story* and *Myth*) and several other booklets.

The day continued with the business meeting considering possibilities for the Summer Conference and then moved on to Ian's Centre for lunch and a workshop on ways of promoting our centres.

Angels



Myth



Visit to a Mosque



Visit to a Hindu Temple



What is an RE Centre?

At the last meeting of the Southern Regional Group of RE Centres, we compared some notes about recent developments in relation to the provision made by the Centres to education, and we discussed some emerging issues about the future. I offered to write this item for the Newsletter in order to start a conversation about the variety of our successes – and anxieties – that might move into a national discussion within groups and individuals elsewhere.



In order to present a summary of the current situation within the group, I e-mailed members and have compiled the responses into what I think is a partial, but accurate picture of the world in which we are operating.

The majority of respondents described 'their Centre' as being established in the 1970s; the most recent was established in the year 2000. The majority were also founded either by the local Diocesan Board of Education, or the local council (education authority). Principal users are school teachers (RE co-ordinators were mentioned, suggesting a bias towards use by primary schools) including student teachers, and/or clergy or those connected with education in church communities.

The overwhelming majority of respondents see the main purpose of the Centre that they are working with as supporting RE teaching in schools, with other uses ranging from support to parishes, and offering venues for training courses. The funding sources for activities range (almost equally in terms of support) from local authorities and Standing Advisory Councils for RE, through to charitable donations, diocesan boards of education and membership/subscription fees.

The main function of the majority of Centres is seen as supporting or improving RE in the area, with other roles such as support to local churches, young people's services and parishes also appearing in many responses. One respondent highlighted their Centre's contribution to community cohesion.

Respondents in the e-mail discussion were also asked if there were any other matters they would like to mention, especially in relation to the future of Centres. Changing the way curriculum resources are delivered to, or made accessible to, schools and other users of the Centre seemed to be a prominent point in these responses. It seems that teachers have less time to visit Centres, so 'outreach' (in educational and in ministerial terms) seems important.

The picture, as I perceive it, shows us the commitment of individuals, churches, and education authorities to the provision of 'something more' for RE teachers and those they work with in such a variety of contexts. A small number of the responses indicated some underlying anxieties about the challenges in sustaining this commitment. One respondent mentioned

specifically 'great sadness' at the loss (through funding restrictions) of some Centres within the region, and nationally.

As Director of a Centre based at, and partially funded by a University, but one which has partnership arrangements with local authorities, schools and dioceses, and which is directly supported by funding from one of the Anglican Church College Trusts, I am aware that a formal response from our Centre might have produced additional or even alternative views. It might have provided another perspective to the picture we are 'painting in words' of the lives and commitments of educators drawn to a centre for such a wide variety of reasons. Perhaps that might be an item for another Newsletter? Meanwhile, my thanks to all for welcoming me to the group, and for sharing their views in this initial discussion about such an important element in 'making RE work'.

Linda Rudge
Keswick Hall Centre for Research and Development in RE, University of East Anglia, Norwich

Christian Resources Exhibition



The National CRE 2008 is at Sandown Park, Esher from Tuesday 13 - Friday 16 May.

www.creonline.co.uk

Audio Visual / IT resources

This is quite a good website which I've just come across (you may have been aware of it for ages!) www.reonline.org.uk/it/. It is part of RE Online/Culham, and is a multi media (audio visual / IT) directory, which is searchable. It provides details of in print resources which may be useful for our centres to have and ideas of how to spend our budgets!

Lydia Revett
Hampshire County RE Centre

