

The latest news from SACRE

Slough SACRE has been very busy in support of RE in local schools. It has developed a significant loan collection of resources which are housed at St Mary's CE Primary School. There are items retained following the closure of the Slough RS Resources Centre and many new artefacts and books. Work on cataloguing these resources is on-going. It will be published on the SACRE website (<http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/sacre-documents.aspx>) as soon as it becomes available.

The SACRE also continues to provide a meeting each term for those who teach RE in primary schools. Last term's was held at the mosque in Stoke Poges Lane and was supported by people there who host school visits to the mosque. Apart from the wonderful refreshments they provided, we were able very helpfully to share perspectives on schools visiting places of worship. Teachers talked about the challenges and joys for them and hosts also expressed what worked and what was rather more problematic for them. In particular, the meeting considered some materials developed jointly by Slough and five other nearby SACREs to support school visits to places of worship. These were positively received by everyone present. For this reason, we plan another meeting in a place of worship to try out the materials in a practical way.

Members of the SACRE have also attended the AGM of the National Association of SACREs. There they heard Charles Clarke speak about the report about religious education and collective worship in schools which was published soon afterwards. In order to support Slough teachers members have also kept up to date with other national initiatives which might have an impact on the local context.

This newsletter highlights some opportunities open to teachers and news of what is happening in the RE community at large. The SACRE is, however, very keen to hear from schools about the support they would like and also to hear of successes that can be shared with other schools as examples of good practice.

Get in touch with Jo Fageant, Slough's RE consultant at jefconsultancy@hotmail.co.uk or on 07723 350617 if you have requests or ideas to share.

Spring Term meeting for Primary RE teachers

This term's meeting will take place at **St Mary's Church, Church Street, Slough, SL1 1PJ from 4.00-5.30pm on Tuesday 22 March.**



Following on from last term's meeting we will be using the materials which were shared and are now available on the Slough SACRE website. Rev. Andrew Allan has kindly offered to make available some of the church's artefacts to enrich our visit and help us explore how these materials can help teachers plan for engaging and focused visits to places of worship. We will start the meeting with an overview of the materials and their purpose for those who were unable to attend last term's meeting at the mosque. The rest of the session will be an active exploration of how the pupils' workbook can be used for different age groups. Before the end of the session there will be a chance for everyone to share the outcomes of their work in order to demonstrate the flexibility of this resource.

To get the most out of this opportunity it will be valuable to bring something with which you can take digital photographs. This will enable you to complete your own version of the workbook and also capture a bank of pictures you can use in other contexts.

So what is this resource ?

It is not always easy to know how to get the best out of a visit to a place of worship or how to link it with the enquiry approach in the RE syllabus. The ideal is that teachers will have visited the place

prior to taking pupils. However, this is not always possible and we rely on the recommendations and risk assessments of others. Having made what could be a significant investment (finance and time) in such an event we want to achieve as much as possible from it. Often this results in providing a rather vague and all-embracing agenda for visit hosts to address. All visits should be part of an overall unit plan in RE. All concerned should understand how the visit will contribute to the unit of work. It might also provide time and opportunity for pupils to explore other questions that interest them BUT each visit should have a clear, planned learning intention. Visit hosts say over and over again how much easier it is to respond to a specific agenda than something which is too broad.

The resource, which has been called ***Crossing the Bridges*** is designed to help both teachers and visit hosts achieve the best possible outcomes from school visits.



There is an **information form** which enables a place of worship to describe the facilities and features it can offer. These forms can be shared with teachers at meetings and also on the Slough SACRE website—even if the places available to visit are outside of the local area.

There is a **booking form** which enables teachers to let host communities know exactly who will be visiting and the intended learning outcomes of the visit.

Hosts, and visiting speakers in schools, often report that they have received little or no feedback about the success of whatever event they were involved with. Schools are good at saying 'thanks' but do not always help speakers and hosts, through specific feedback, to improve the service they offer. Many would welcome this, especially if it is set against clear planned outcomes which were shared before the visit took place. For this reason there are two

versions of a **feedback form** so information can be exchanged in both directions. It is hoped that these forms will serve as the basis of a shared endeavour to develop the best practice for successful visits.

For the visits themselves, there is a **workbook** for pupils to use. This is a blank template and can be developed in a variety of ways. It can be pre-populated with as much/many or as little/few information/pictures as the teacher wants depending on the ages and abilities of the pupils. The workbook requires a focus for a visit. This could be determined by the teacher or might arise as a key questions from pupils themselves. It also requires pupils to reflect on what they have learned from the visit.

To help illustrate how these workbooks might be used there are five **exemplar versions** completed as though by pupils of different age groups. They illustrate possible KS2 responses in the main. However, secondary RE teachers might be able to use them in ways which would suit KS3 pupils.

The key to the workbook is its **versatility and flexibility**. It can be used in any place of worship to explore any concept or question with any age group up to KS3.

We hope teachers and people in places of worship will start to try out these materials and be prepared to share their reflections about them and also some samples of pupils' work which arise from them.

New GCSE specifications for RS

As a secondary teacher of RS have you decided on the examination board you will be using and the course your students will follow? The SACRE thought it might be helpful to offer a meeting for all secondary RS teachers at which ideas and decisions can be shared. This would ensure schools/academies know where others are teaching the same course and can share expertise. It will also provide a time to meet with Jo Fageant, Slough's RE Consultant, to discuss any professional development opportunities you would like the SACRE to make available. Please contact Jo as soon as possible at jefconsultancy@hotmail.co.uk to let her know whether you can/would like to attend a meeting from 4.00-5.15pm on Wednesday 23 March.