

Walsall SACRE July 2019: National Updates

Ofsted Framework and Handbooks published

Following consultation, the new Framework and Handbooks are available.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework#handbooks-and-framework

172. All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the basic curriculum, which includes national curriculum⁶⁶, religious education and age-appropriate relationship and sex education. Academies are expected to offer all pupils a broad curriculum⁶⁸ that should be similar in breadth and ambition.

P.42 Footnote 68: Academies must include English, mathematics, science and religious education in their curriculum.

Items for SACREs to note [paragraphs in brackets]:

- Ofsted will be using School Workforce data in its risk assessments [14]
- Complaints can trigger inspections [22]
- Ofsted will report failure to comply with statutory requirements [not specifically mentioning RE here] [44]
- RE is specifically mentioned in relation to judgements on SMSC [166, 216, 219, 222]
- The implication of 'breadth and ambition' [see Para 172 above] is that as national curriculum sets benchmark for academies, so RE in academies should be as broad and ambitious as in LA maintained schools, using an agreed syllabus.
- There is scope for radically different approaches to curriculum. Leaders need to show that they have built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing [173]. Our syllabus does this.
- Teachers need to have expert subject knowledge [181]

Inspection procedure

During inspections a selection of subjects will be chosen for a 'deep dive'. RE will take its turn in being one of these subjects inspected in this way. Schools will be expected to talk in detail about the intent, implementation and impact of RE. Anecdotally we know that some schools nationally are considering improving their RE offer as a result of the new OFSTED framework.

This was the focus of our Primary Network meeting in May which 14 schools attended. It is proving difficult to get information out to schools about these meetings. The LA put this meeting out in the Heads bulletin. We mainly rely on the RE Adviser, Fiona Moss, individually emailing schools.

Questions to consider

What further support can we offer to schools?

We will add to this to our Agenda for the Autumn meeting to hear how inspections are going nationally and in our area.

National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) Meetings with the DFE

NATRE representatives continue to meet frequently with the DFE. Recent agenda items have included discussing complaints about RE, non-compliance with the law on RE and the necessity of support for RE from government.

This year the RE community including NATRE have succeeded in persuading the DFE to raise the amount of bursary paid to those training to teach RE in Secondary schools and to provide a fully funded subject knowledge enhancement courses for secondary trainee teachers.

NATRE meet every few weeks with the DFE to liaise and lobby on behalf of RE teachers.

Withdrawal

Edge Hill University have just published a survey on withdrawal from RE

www.tes.com/news/dont-allow-parents-take-pupils-out-re-say-heads

In all NATRE surveys, through conversations and in conversation with schools, places of worship and teacher unions we know that withdrawal from RE has become a more frequent and tricky issue for schools to deal with.

NATRE have written guidance and have made this available, jointly with the NAHT, to all schools. We can also send you the full document for free if you fill in the boxes with your details.

www.natre.org.uk/membership/guidance-on-withdrawal/

This guidance has been endorsed and shared by the DfE.

This formed part of our discussions in the last meeting.

Do you know what parents can and can't withdraw pupils from? Do you know how many schools in Walsall have pupils withdrawn? How can we further share information on this with Walsall schools?

National and Regional Ambassadors

A reminder that the National and Regional RE Ambassadors are continuing to work to support and connect teachers of RE. More details here: www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/regional-ambassadors-announced/

GCSE RS BBC Bitesize

The BBC's support for RE at KS4 continues with the launch of its Bitesize revision guides for Eduqas GCSE specifications. Others will follow soon.

www.bbc.com/bitesize/subjects/zb48q6f

BBC Bitesize Religion Road

A series of 14 short films suitable for KS2 home learning have been produced. Entitled 'What is...?' They look at a religion or Worldview e.g. What is Judaism? Or What is Humanism? There is also a focus on celebrations with films such as What is Holi? Or What is Wesak?

www.bbc.com/bitesize/subjects/z7hs34j

The RE All Party Parliamentary Group

At the January meeting of the APPG for RE, NATRE Primary Vice-Chair Katie Freeman was one of four serving teachers of RE who spoke about excellent RE. Katie received her invite from her MP Luke Pollard. Katie spoke about the RE that goes on in her school and the importance of this to all her pupils to an audience including numerous parliamentarians and guests from different branches of the RE community.

Fiona Moss is attending the next meeting of the APPG on Tuesday July 16th where Nick Gibb is due to speak.

How can Walsall SACRE encourage teachers to raise the importance of RE with their MPs? Is your MP (Mps) a member of the RE APPG? Write and ask them if they would like to visit your school and see excellent RE in action.

NATRE and Culham St Gabriel's

NATRE and Culham St Gabriel's are partnering together to offer a new 200-hour DfE funded subject knowledge enhancement course. There is detailed information about the course at www.teachre.co.uk as well as information about our well established courses for those who are already teaching (Teach:RE Tailor Made). You can also email Kate Christopher directly at kate@cstg.org.uk

Fiona Moss and Lat Blaylock
RE Today/NATRE
July 2019