

RE REVIEW NEWSLETTER



Quarterly

Asserting the value of RE as a subject on the curriculum

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Project manager's report

Welcome to the third and penultimate RE Review Newsletter. The project remains on schedule and we look forward to sharing the final publication with you in just a couple of months' time through the plans we have for disseminating its findings during the Autumn.



Dr. Janet Orchard, RE Review Project Manager

Task Group Two (TG2) has been meeting since March and will complete its Working Paper by the end of July. You can read more about the members of TG2 later in this newsletter.

Their working paper will be developed further by a Phase 3 specialist writer during August (see below) and, in the final Review document, will recommend ways in which the RE community might act strategically to increase the impact we have on practice in schools as well as on policy makers, particularly where assessment and qualifications are concerned.

Meanwhile, you can still find the draft programmes of study on the REC website if you haven't yet had a chance to see them: <http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/programmes-of-study>. The wider public consultation on the draft programmes of study for RE closed recently and our first

reading of those responses gives us grounds for cautious and qualified optimism.

71.5% of those of you who expressed a view agreed or strongly agreed that the draft programme of study broadly captured your views of the aims and purposes of RE as a subject. 70.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they would be helpful to RE teachers in schools, who would be able to work with the statement of the purpose and aims for RE which it provides. We are pleased with these findings but certainly not complacent.

Whilst over half of the people consulted expressed satisfaction overall with the subject content set out for each key stage, this approval was muted relative to other responses gathered during the consultation process. The comments help us to understand where there are concerns but also suggest that opinions about the best way forward are divided. Even with the best will in the world, it will not be possible in Phase 3 to reconcile all of these.

The Review's independent external evaluator, Professor Lorraine Foreman Peck, is currently analysing the data gathered in more detail and her report will be available on the REC website once this link is active. I'd like to thank very warmly all those, whether individuals or groups, who took the time and trouble to participate.

Looking forwards

Phase Three of the Review is now under way. I am delighted that after a further round of highly competitive recruitment once again, **Lat Blaylock** has been appointed as a specialist writer for Phase Three of the Review. Editor of RE Today magazine, Lat is a national RE adviser in the UK who trains about 1500 primary and a similar number of secondary teachers of RE every year through his professional development courses. These cover a wide range of topics, including RE for infants, spiritual development 4-19, assessing primary RE and GCSE learning.



Lat has just the particular skills and experiences we now need to develop the draft materials into final guidelines during this crucial phase. He offers continuity with earlier work undertaken on the Review too, having been a member of the Phase One Expert Panel. As he undertakes his work, Lat will take into careful consideration the views expressed in the public consultation exercise.

A second specialist writer will be approached to undertake a similar exercise for the working paper produced by TG2 and we will announce this appointment on our website once it is confirmed. For this and further, more detailed information on the RE Review and other important initiatives for the subject being led by the REC, please follow this link: <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org>

Task Group Two, Phase Two of the RE Review

Appointing the task groups for Phase Two of the RE Review through a competitive process of selection was difficult and demanding for everyone involved, not least because these were conducted by telephone. Good for the environment as

well as the tightly constrained RE Review budget, most people involved found this a curious, sometimes unsettling, certainly memorable experience. It was good for RE to see so many strong applications from people representing a range of backgrounds and perspectives on the subject as well as complementary skills and experiences. We are only sorry that there weren't more posts available. However, the successful applicants were:

Hazel Henson (Chair, Task Group Two), who has been a primary phase teacher and headteacher for nearly twenty years, leading RE in a variety of schools: urban and rural, denominational as well as community schools, in four different local authorities. Hazel combines headship at Pilsley C of E primary school with advisory work and she is currently seconded on a part time basis to Derby Diocesan Board of Education. She has been developing the diocesan infrastructure to respond to the developments in recent educational policy. More recently she was appointed to lead "The Christianity Project", a curriculum development initiative being pioneered by the Church of England and the Cambridge Interfaith Project.

James Holt, who is Deputy Secondary Programmes Leader and Senior Lecturer in RE at the University of Chester, responsible for teaching RE at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Prior to his appointment at Chester, James was a secondary head of RE, head of faculty and an Advanced Skills teacher and a member of the PCfRE executive (now NATRE). James is a Principal Examiner for International GCSE Religious Studies and GCSE Religious Studies. He also represents The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on the REC, having previously served his church as a bishop.

Jennifer Uzzell, who is not only a senior examiner and free-lance RE consultant, but the co-director of a company of funeral directors. She has been a teacher and subject leader in RE and RS and is both a Principal Examiner and Chief Examiner at GCSE level. She is an active member of AREIAC, NATRE, her local SACRE and her local interfaith network. As a trainer and

independent consultant, she worked as a mentor for the REC *REsilience* project and is an assessor for the RE Quality Mark scheme (REQM).

Sue Wilson spent nearly thirty years in teaching before becoming a consultant and adviser for RE. For twenty six of those years she was a head of religious education, and latterly an assistant head for twelve years as a member of a senior leadership team. In her advisory role Sue has supported a range of both community and denominational schools, whether in special measures or preparing for OFSTED, providing CPD, acting as a QCA KS3 regional subject adviser or *REsilience* mentor. Sue is an assessor for the REQM, a member of NATRE, AREIAC and the National College for School Leadership.

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Update on funding for the Review

Our provisional budget for the Review estimated that the final cost of the process would be just under £110,000. A number of organisations have made generous contributions to the cost of the Review and we are very close to reaching that target. We continue to seek funds to help us to disseminate the final Review document to local groups, including SACREs and teachers during the autumn term of 2013 and to begin the task of developing exemplification materials to accompany the curriculum guidelines. This will be particularly important when it comes to assessing pupils’ progress in RE, something on which the new National Curriculum framework we are seeking to parallel currently gives very little practical support.

Please help us by considering making a donation whether large, medium or small!

RE Review glossary

Specialist writer: one or two people appointed by a competitive application process to draft and prepare for publication specific sections of the RE Review, reflecting the recommendations of the two task groups and the Steering Group.

Steering Group: A group with representatives of key stakeholders across the whole RE Community which oversees the overall management of the RE Review, advises the project manager and the REC Board

REC Board: elected officers and co-opted Trustees of the REC ultimately responsible for the RE Review, who hold everyone employed on the RE Review, including the project manager, to account

Reference Group: includes representatives of a very wide range of people directly interested in the future of RE, including faith community groups as well as RE professionals who act as a sounding board for suggested actions on the RE Review.



The REC now has a Facebook Page which will to help you keep up to date with the RE Review and other REC matters in between newsletters.

<http://www.facebook.com/religiouseducationcouncil>

For those who use Twitter, follow the REC on Twitter: @RECouncil. For specific information about the RE Review, we will be using the hashtag #REReview.



Whatever your medium, you can keep in touch with and contribute to the Review.