

A big step up for your RE in a single day

At RE Today, we believe we have a great way of lifting a whole school's ambition and achievement in RE through whole-school professional development, often through clusters of school, multi-academy trusts and other networks of schools. RE subject leaders often take a day of training themselves and wish their colleagues could access it as well. Our adviser team means this can happen.

Here are four examples of recent cases where standards – academic, creative and spiritual – have been raised across a school by well-planned INSET. Could your school host a cluster day for all staff to improve RE? It can be very good value if a crowd of 50 or 100 teachers are all involved together.

Derby City: Community school, 100 teachers, better RE

Hardwick Primary school in Derby, serves a large Muslim pupil population in a religiously mixed community. The school wanted to help teachers with their subject knowledge: many were feeling short of confidence in teaching Islam, and Christianity, with their new Derby City syllabus. Subject leader Rani Sandhu wanted to give teachers confidence to improve active learning and thinking in RE, so she worked with an RE Today adviser, invited four other local schools and put together a teacher day program for early September, hoping to kickstart RE for the year to come. She comments 'it was really good to see teachers and TAs for all our local schools getting inspired and full of ideas for RE.' Rani reported that a term later the impact was high: teachers had improved links to SMSC, had a good understanding of the new RE syllabus and assessment system, enjoyed having an engaging speaker who related to the school audience really well and were pursuing good collaborative work with other schools.

North Cumbria: Academies at it together for better RE

An RE Today adviser worked with a Multi-Academy Trust in north Cumbria to promote teachers' understanding and practice in relation to RE, British Values, SMSCD and assessment. Subject leaders from 20 schools spent 2 separate days working together with dozens of practical ideas to inspire and energise them. The outcomes included a clearer understanding of how RE can support cross curricular work and spiritual and moral development in local schools of different types.

Brighton: A Diocesan Deanery Day for 90 teachers

Brighton Head Teacher Carmel Hughes wanted her teachers to work with colleagues from other local Catholic schools, so with an RE adviser she planned a whole-day event just before a half-term holiday. It was hosted by the local secondary school, and was attended by 90 teachers from 10 different primary schools. Economies of scale kept the cost per school low, and the planned program addressed issues about making RE more thoughtful, more spiritual and more creative in its learning methods. Lunch together was great, but the program was rated excellent by over 90 per cent of the teachers, who felt they had gained great confidence and inspiration from the event. Afterwards, Carmel commented: 'It was a wonderful day and I am so pleased at last that teachers got to participate in RE INSET that energised them all. As headteachers, we are privileged to be able to attend such inspirational days and now our staff have too!'

Shrewsbury and Warrington: RE creativity conferences for everybody

RE adviser Ann Welsh wanted to inspire her teachers with new ideas for creativity and active learning in RE, so planned four day conferences in the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury, spaced through the year. They were for subject leaders, then for teachers of 4–7s, 7–9s and 9–11s. Over 500 attended in all, across the 4 day conferences, with head teachers pleased to send staff on very specific RE training, full of ideas. Three members of the RE today advisory team, who work in a lot of diocesan settings, put together a specialist program relating to each year group from the Catholic Curriculum directory schemes. Ann's assessment was that high impact was achieved: 'These huge RE events boosted moral as well as confidence. It generates a fantastic buzz when schools respond in such good numbers. A carefully planned day of rich resources. Feedback has been very positive overall. This was great fun and went down really well.'



Time for your school to book some RE INSET?

- Do you need all staff to be more confident and secure in their RE work?
- Could you host a group of schools for a clustered training day (primary or secondary)?
- Would your head and governors value top-quality inspirational teaching and learning training?



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Contact the RE Today adviser team for details – don't delay, as we usually book up 6–12 months in advance.

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