

SESSION B

Session	Type	Phase	Speaker(s)	Seminar details
B1	Policy	N/A	Ed Pawson	<p>"Objective Critical and Pluralistic RE": the holy grail of religious education?</p> <p>The interim report from the Commission on Religious Education (2017) makes the following recommendation: 'We seek views on whether it is desirable to look to adopt an overall approach to the design of the RE curriculum in every school so that it is sufficiently 'objective, critical and pluralistic' as to render it capable of being compulsory without the right of withdrawal.' (p81/2)</p> <p>This session will explore what is meant by 'critical, objective and pluralistic' religious education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How objective is RE? To what extent does the RE curriculum explore the reality of facts relating to religion and beliefs in Britain/the world today, not influenced by personal or institutional feelings or beliefs? • How critical is RE? To what extent does RE encourage pupils to make skilful judgements in the way they explore truth? • How pluralistic is RE? To what extent does RE help pupils accept the validity of diverse ideas, beliefs, practices and traditions? <p>What does this sort of RE look like and what expressions of the subject would fall outside this definition. What is the significance of these defining features? Who says? What is the human rights law that underpins this statement? Are these features achievable and would it be desirable for every school to adopt such an approach to RE? How does this relate to the status of RE as a compulsory subject and the parent's right of withdrawal?</p> <p>The report makes it clear that this is not only about the curriculum content, but also the way the subject is delivered. What implications does this have for the way we develop RE curricula, in the context of SACREs, ASCs, DfE, national entitlement statements and syllabi? What are the expectations for how RE is taught, led and managed in schools? How would this apply to schools of a religious character?</p> <p>This session will provide practical, classroom examples of RE topics to exemplify each of these features.</p>
B2a	Academic	N/A	Kevin O'Grady	<p>Transforming RE through research</p>

				<p>The session will introduce our research strategy at Culham St Gabriel's , whilst also encouraging participants to engage with and contribute to the strategy, including practical ways to do so. The research strategy is based on the view that the use of research has the potential to transform RE, but only given the engagement of RE professionals (e.g. teachers, academics, advisers and policy makers). The first part of our strategy is the website Research for RE, the second is a series of projects we are planning to fund, researching areas including religious literacy, the use of religious texts, RE and disadvantage, teachers and research, curriculum development in RE, RE and Science and the use of new technologies in RE.</p> <p>Transforming is a big word, so the question mark is well placed in the session's title. However, we are ambitious for the impact of the research strategy in building knowledge to support RE in the future, providing an enhanced professional basis for teachers and bringing teacher, academic and policy parts of the RE community into closer conversation. It will only work through the engagement of these members, another vital question, and therefore the session will include practical information on how to engage with and contribute to both strands, plus plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion.</p>
B2b	Practical	Secondary	Dawn Cox	<p>Using research to support effective learning</p> <p>This session will look at some the main strategies that have been identified in research that seem to support long term learning. The barriers to learning will be presented and then countered with research that may help resolve these issues.</p> <p>It will focus specifically on the use of testing, interleaving, assessment without marks/grades and how they can be used to support learning in RE at both key stage 3 and Key stage 4.</p> <p>For each area there will be suggested, tried and tested classroom techniques but also a chance for delegates to share what they currently do. Delegates will leave with a handful of ideas for using research in their own classroom to support their students.</p> <p>References to the original research will be available on relevant slides. Recommendations for further reading will also be included.</p>
B3	Academic	Secondary	Richard Kueh	<p>The Problem of Pedagogy: Substantive, Disciplinary and Knowledge in RE</p>

This session will explore the challenges posed by RE's preoccupation with pedagogy for a knowledge-based RE curriculum rationale. It will be argued that, in order to advance discussions about knowledge in RE, the 'substantive' and the 'disciplinary' need to be addressed by the RE community in a sophisticated way. The session will present this thesis and explore ways in which different curriculum designs in RE have either failed to deal with the issue sufficiently or have risen to the challenge of delineating the substantive and the disciplinary.

Common arguments about the nature, rationale and purpose of Religious Education have focussed on the function of the subject in terms of the way it supports students' well-rounded understanding of the world, often phrased in terms of community cohesion, social capital, tolerance, respect, mutual understanding, 'skills' of critical reflection and the elimination of misconceptions. To support this, often the wide variety of 'substantive' knowledge (i.e. the content) of the subject is used illustratively.

Whilst such instrumental outcomes are arguably important, the recent turn in the educational world towards a focus on knowledge raises foundational curriculum questions about the knowledge-basis of the subject. Yet it also demands of the RE subject community a more sophisticated conversation about the disciplinary status of the subject, i.e. what sort of disciplines sit behind the subject and the way in which that disciplinary architecture relates to the substantive content. Certainly, the bar of expectation in terms of the type of self-examination required of RE curriculum thinkers has risen by virtue of the nature of the knowledge debate.

Controversially, it will be argued that traditional discourse about RE pedagogy has variously compounded the problem: in some cases, pedagogical discourse has blurred the distinction between the substantive and the disciplinary; in other cases, pedagogical discourse has been a limp attempt at articulating the disciplinary.

The session will look at recent examples of RE curriculum theory and RE curriculum design. In doing so, it will analyse them in terms of the substantive and the disciplinary and offer practical insights for those developing the RE curriculum in schools.

Perhaps most importantly, this session will attempt to articulate a positive and intellectually sound vision for RE curriculum thinking in a knowledge-based educational climate, which, importantly, looks to the disciplinary traditions which sit behind RE's exciting and stimulating substantive content, rather

				<p>than artificially fabricating a quasi-disciplinary construct for the subject that only those on the interior of the RE community can understand.</p>
B4a	Practical	Secondary	Hannah Malcolm	<p>Bridging the great divide: Exploring Science and Faith in RE</p> <p>The session will present the findings of a national survey of almost 1,800 upper secondary school students conducted by the God and the Big Bang project (GATBB) in collaboration with LASAR (Learning About Science and Religion) at the University of Reading. This survey explores the views of 16-18 year olds across the country on a range of topics related to science and religion. Two papers reporting the results of this survey before and after a 'God and the Big Bang' school workshop are currently under review for publishing.</p> <p>After looking at what these results might indicate about the difficulties RE teachers face when discussing this subject, we will explore the role of the dialogue between science and faith in the KS3 and KS4 RE syllabus. This will include a group discussion of each 'linking' point in the syllabus, examining practical ways these topics could be approached not only in the RE classroom but also in collaboration with other teaching staff. These practical suggestions will draw on GATBB's experience conducting workshops with thousands of students around the country, feedback received from GATBB teacher training events, and the GATBB secondary school resource book published by RE Today.</p> <p>The aims of the session are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To discuss why it is that students seem to lack the epistemic insight to interpret the different forms of knowledge presented in science and religion 2. To provide practical, encouraging solutions to the challenges of engaging students in this topic <p>The hope is that attendees will feel excited about the opportunity to discuss these topics in the classroom. They will feel better equipped to engage students of faith who are suspicious of science, as well as engaging students who believe that science has made religion (and therefore religious education) redundant.</p>
B4b	Practical	Secondary	Jo Pearce	<p>RE, science and the need for epistemic literacy</p> <p>Our study considers students' perceptions of science and religion through an intervention of Science and RE lessons with a variety of contexts that highlighted the question of the relationship(s) between</p>

			<p>science and religion. In light of findings that indicated students’ misconceptions of epistemic distinctions between science and religion, we propose a framework that can inform the design of enquiry-based approaches to epistemology in RE.</p> <p>There already exists a large knowledge base about teaching and learning related to the origins, diversity and history of life on Earth. We know less about teaching and learning related to wider aspects of topics pertinent to science and religion. In our research with 41 students in six secondary schools in and around London, we looked at wider issues of student perceptions of science and religion. Our study involved an intervention of six lessons in Science and six in Religious Education (RE). Issues of philosophy, including ethics, were raised in Science. The RE lessons dealt with a variety of contexts that highlighted the question of the relationship(s) between science and religion. In both pre- and post-intervention interviews, we found many instances where students used language that conveyed a misconception of the epistemic distinctions between science and religion. Students referred to “truth”, “theory” and “facts” interchangeably when discussing scientific and religious knowledge.</p> <p>Stolberg (2007) posits that attitudes in relation to both science and religion can be either “epistemic”, and relate to morals and values, or “pragmatic” in their problem-solving capacity. We argue that RE needs to attend to epistemic literacy if we are both to avoid epistemological misconceptions and to develop insights into the specific knowledge forms presented in RE. Rather than declarative methods, Stolberg’s framework can inform the design of enquiry-based approaches to epistemology. Such an approach would allow connections and distinctions to be made between an intuitive grasp of epistemic attitudes and correlating categories in language and knowledge systems.</p> <p>Stolberg, T. L. (2007). The Religion-scientific Frameworks of Pre-service Primary Teachers: An analysis of their influence on their teaching of science. <i>International Journal of Science Education</i>, 29(7), 909–930.</p>
B4c	Policy	Secondary	<p>Berry Billingsley & Mehdi Nassaji</p> <p>RE and the wider curriculum</p> <p>In an age of increasingly humanlike machines, advances in medical technologies and ever more examples of engagement with artificial intelligence, school education has a critical role in helping students to develop their positions on what it means to be human.</p>

In this session we explain why it is important that policy makers pay more attention to the role of RE and RE teachers in addressing Big Questions in the wider curriculum. Although addressing Big Questions is part of the RE curriculum, this cannot happen without a fruitful collaboration between all the curriculum (and other) areas in schools. This is due to the multidisciplinary nature of Big Questions and the argument that teachers in schools are collectively responsible for ensuring that children's curiosity in Big Questions is nurtured as they progress through their years in school.

We draw on research to highlight a portfolio of conundrums (such as 'the purpose of life') where teenagers frequently suppose that their own and/or others' beliefs are in conflict with a scientific worldview. We have also noted a number of barriers in schools that prevent students and teachers from addressing these conundrums holistically. Because of the ways that education works in practice, students learn about scholarship and knowledge via a compartmentalised system of individual curriculum boxes and students' experiences of epistemic learning are distorted and constrained by a host of pedagogical and organisational pressures – including the timetable, curriculum and examination. In secondary schools, there is rarely if ever any collaborative planning and teaching between teachers in different subjects. This can mean that compartmentalisation becomes entrenched – whereby associated pedagogical practices have become habits and now dictate students' and teachers' expectations about what should happen in the classroom.

We make the case that addressing Big Questions in RE lessons is one side of an archway – or bridge – and that the arch is completed via teaching that takes place in other school subjects and particularly in science teaching. We argue that RE plays a vital role in sustaining and championing its side of the arch and in drawing attention to the whole.

Epistemic insight refers broadly to the attitudes and understandings that are associated with thinking and working like a scholar. Someone with a good level of epistemic insight has a deep understanding of how knowledge works not only within individual subjects but also across them. As such we recognise the value of specialist disciplines and boundaries around subjects but look for ways to bridge compartments to avoid dismissing multidisciplinary aspects of Big Questions.

These are questions such as 'Why does the universe exist' 'Can robots achieve personhood?', and 'What does science say if anything about our capacity for moral responsibility and the existence of the soul' Teaching epistemic insight includes building students' appreciation of the preferred questions,

				<p>methods and norms of thought of key disciplines and also of the power, relevance and limitations of different disciplines in relation to complex questions.</p> <p>Finally we will introduce a range of pedagogical ideas and tools that can be used by RE teachers in collaboration with other school teachers to bridge between the boundaries and address Big Questions in schools.</p>
B5	Practical	Primary	Adam Roberston	<p>Unlocking text and ritual</p> <p>This session utilises a range of approaches to help teachers unlock religious texts – focussing on the pedagogy that all children can practise hermeneutics – and recognise that religious texts do not have simple meanings, and that there are many possible interpretations.</p>
B6a	Subject Knowledge	N/A	Caroline Weir	<p>Growing Global Citizens</p> <p>This session will cover what good (and not so good) global citizenship education might look like, using practical examples of approaches that could be used in the classroom. It will look at the rationale behind good global citizenship education in RE and at how it can be outworked with children and young people across the whole age range.</p> <p>Clearly, respecting the dignity of those in the majority world that we are learning about in lessons is key and this session will explore how to do this. It will also reflect upon how to avoid inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes about those living in majority world countries so that we do not, sometimes unknowingly, undo some of our hard work with the young people. The importance of seeing ourselves as global citizens who enter into mutually beneficial relationships will also be considered; tackling the idea that we in the UK are not simply benefactors but have much to learn and receive from those we may view simply as beneficiaries.</p> <p>The session will consider faith responses to issues of poverty and injustice but also encourage young people to critique these and consider whether some practical responses may be more appropriate than others. Space will be given over to considering whether it is possible for some responses to do more harm than good and to thinking about how to help young people to evaluate these responses and come to their own informed conclusions. It will also explore how we as RE professionals must hold</p>

				<p>in tension the need not to shy away from the harsh realities of the world that we live in and the belief that the way things are at present can be changed.</p> <p>Ultimately, we as RE professionals seek to encourage children and young people to believe that change is possible and the way the world is now is not the way it must stay. We seek to tackle injustice, to challenge prejudice, to speak out against hate and inequality. In RE classrooms across the country, we use the examples of people of faith who stood up for what they believed in to inspire students about the difference that one person can make. So then, what better place than the RE classroom to grow the next generation of global citizens? We have both the privilege and responsibility to grow the children and young people in our classrooms into global citizens with a deep sense of our common humanity and our shared world, who have the confidence to raise their voices to challenge the structures that contribute towards the inequitable world that we live in.</p>
B6b	Practical	Primary	Naomi Anstice	<p>Global Thinking in RE</p> <p>This session will be looking at the key themes and skills of Global Learning and how quality opportunities can be found for embedding these through the RE curriculum. We will look at research on pedagogy for the development of global skills and practical suggestions for unlocking the themes in your teaching. I will be drawing on both my experiences as a leader of a Global Learning Expert Centre and research from my Farmington's. In doing so I am also able to promote the great opportunity which a Farmington's has been. I also work with three schools on International partnerships in Sri Lanka, India and Ghana and will be able to demonstrate the relevance and diversity of international partnerships, setting up international RE curriculum partnerships. Whilst many colleagues are keen to support Global Learning, it is seen as something additional to fit in, more successful Global Learners are ones who can access the skills required throughout the curriculum and contribute to the Life in Modern Britain agenda.</p>
B7	Subject Knowledge	N/A	Debbie Tibbey	<p>Do Baha'is Eat Rabbits? Essential Information about a 'Minority' Faith</p> <p>Although the Bahá'í Faith is recognised as an independent world religion by the United Nations, is represented by an All Party Parliamentary group in the Houses of Parliament and has members on the REC, general awareness and knowledge about this religion is low. As for other religious groups with</p>

fewer adherents in the UK, Jains and Zoroastrians for example, it is concerning that their contributions to our religious and cultural wealth may be overlooked.

In keeping with NCFRE guidelines on the requirement for pupils to 'extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews', this session will help teachers with little or no prior knowledge, to introduce another aspect of humanity's rich religious heritage.

This session is inspired by a list of questions given to a Bahá'í visitor to a Year 6 class in a primary school. 'Do Bahá'ís eat rabbits?' seemed a most unusual question but is nonetheless a valid one, of evident importance to that particular child, and one which may open up a whole range of practical and ethical discussions.

Other questions reflected on the children's knowledge of Christianity and Islam, ('What is the meaning of Heaven, Hell and Satan?' 'Do you pray 5 times a day?') building on what they already knew and what they expected to be relevant, to more general information gathering – 'What is the hardest law that you find difficult to follow?', 'How do you worship?' and 'Why is it called Bahá'í?' This session will provide answers to the most common questions children want to explore, and share what Bahá'ís would see as essential knowledge about their faith.

We will explore the main Bahá'í beliefs; the significance of a key Baha'i figure, 'Abdu'l-Bahá; what influence being a Bahá'í has on individual lives and what implications – if any- being the child of a Bahá'í family has for a young person in a British school. This will be a practical, hands-on session with activities designed to share knowledge whilst challenging understanding and provoking deeper thinking. Tailored to KS2 and lower KS3, we will show how inclusion of the Bahá'í Faith in RE fits in with the current non-statutory guidance, and what contribution it could give to SMSC and PSHCE. Participants will leave with a richer understanding of Bahá'í beliefs and way of life, will know where to access accurate and up-to-date information and should feel equipped to include the study of the Bahá'í Faith in their RE planning.

[For reference: Bahá'ís may eat rabbit, so long as it is not found as carrion, though many Bahá'ís choose to be vegetarian, and I don't think anyone would eat someone's pet! There are no restricted foods, apart from alcohol which is expressly forbidden.]

B8	Subject Knowledge	Secondary	Jaymie Pauvaday & Angela Wright	<p>Unpacking Buddhist Philosophy through Critical Realism</p> <p>This session aims to provide a practical and interactive demonstration of how a critical realist pedagogy might help unpack some difficult concepts in Buddhist thought.</p> <p>The session will aim to introduce a critical realist pedagogy by giving teachers a brief overview of the underpinning philosophical principles of critical realism, providing insight into how this underpins a specific understanding of the aims and nature of RE and finally discussing what critical realism offers in developing rich, engaging and challenging RE. It will also make teachers aware that CRE requires teachers to create an environment wherein students can purposefully, and in an informed manner, look at difficult theological and philosophical concepts, and begin to decipher their nature and empower them to discuss the validity of claims made by different faith groups.</p> <p>The session will aim to be practical and interactive, empowering teachers to have a greater understanding of a CRE pedagogy and giving them the opportunity to consider how they might interpret and implement subject matter within it. The practical and Interactive element here is intended to provide demonstration of how this may be applied to Buddhist Philosophy.</p> <p>The session will provide some subject knowledge in Buddhist philosophy, with a focus on the Three Marks of Existence. This focus will provide the specific material for teachers to consider, in order to explore the nature of these truth claims within Buddhism. In this section, the concepts of Dukkha, Annica and Anatta will be discussed, and some exemplification provided for tasks, which could be used in the classroom.</p> <p>Teachers will be invited to share together how they might design a CRE series of lessons to teach the Three Marks of Existence. They will be asked to consider how they might go about developing appropriate and challenging questions and activities to enable pupils to develop a high level of religious literacy in relation to the content.</p> <p>In summary we are hoping to provide teachers with an introduction to a critical realist pedagogy, to show how it might be applied, to demonstrate one particular application by unpacking the Three Marks of Existence and to invite teachers to consider how they might design a series of lessons which speaks to their own students and allows them to consider the validity of the truth claims made.</p>
----	-------------------	-----------	---------------------------------	--

B9a	Subject Knowledge	Secondary	Waqar Ahmad Ahmedi	<p>Whose Islam is it anyway?</p> <p>This session aims to fulfil a growing demand to understand diversity within Islam, as required in the new specifications. In particular, it explores the background to the formation of certain sects and denominations, similarities and differences between them, and considers why the place of some groups in the ummah is often questioned. The session will also ask and respond to important questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What it means to be a Muslim? -Who should have succeeded the Prophet Muhammad? -Will Sunnis and Shi'as ever unite? -Who speaks for Islam today? <p>The session will also provide practical lesson ideas and strategies.</p>
B9b	Subject Knowledge	N/A	Bill Moore, Celia Jenkins & Umit Cetin	<p>Powerful knowledge and identity. Case Study: Alevism in RE</p> <p>We introduce a model of how partnership between a faith community, a local university, SACRE and local schools, with active participation from Alevi pupils at a primary and a secondary school to develop a curriculum in RE, helped to address issues concerning the negative identity faced by the Alevi community and their young people.</p>
B10	Subject Knowledge	Secondary	Martyn John Smith	<p>Deep knowledge for powerful practice in teaching GCSE Christianity</p> <p>This interactive presentation focuses on key macro-issues to be applied across the whole Christian Beliefs, Teachings and Practices GCSE specification.</p> <p>Via PowerPoint, discussion and practical examples Martyn will facilitate teacher-engagement and understanding of advanced, but fully accessible and applicable, extracurricular resources and concepts to enhance both teacher pedagogy and student interaction and enjoyment.</p> <p>In a fast-moving presentation, he will provide a practical and immersive step-by-step guide to various issues, including biblical interpretation, denominational perspectives and cultural context. These will open doors to deeper engagement and understanding of every section of the specification – for practitioner and student. This will result in hugely increased confidence for the course and the final exams.</p> <p>The session therefore represents a means by which teachers, in just one hour, can understand and then use new methods that will immediately and demonstrably impact their lessons on the Monday</p>

				<p>after the conference. These techniques have proved incredibly successful across Martyn's career, leading to superlative exam results, Ofsted praise and pupil-uptake for GCSE and A-level RS.</p>
--	--	--	--	--