

## SESSION D

Session	Type	Phase	Speaker(s)	Seminar details
D1	Policy	N/A	Trevor Cooling	<p><b>A Journey with Belief Diversity: Reflections on a Professional Life</b></p> <p>Alongside climate change, probably one of the greatest challenges that the human community faces is living well with its own diversity. But we don't seem to be particularly good at it. Many people believe that one of the central tasks of religious educators is to prepare children for living and working well alongside people who hold very different beliefs and values from their own. The question is how is that best achieved? What does the RE teacher do when confronted with the religion and culture wars that children hear about continuously in the media? Should children be nurtured in the faith or belief of their family background or should they be educated to be autonomous? How should controversial issues be dealt with in the RE classroom? Is it even part of the academic purpose of RE to focus on community cohesion? Can RE ever legitimately be confessional rather than neutral? What does it mean to describe it as "objective, critical and pluralistic" as is the requirement in human rights discourse? How many different religions and beliefs should children encounter? How should professional teachers manage their own personal beliefs in the classroom? And so forth. These questions are what make RE one of the most exciting but demanding subjects on the curriculum.</p> <p>This session will be an academically-oriented, autobiographical reflection on a professional and personal life spent grappling with such questions. On the way, I will focus on the critically important question of what exactly is the knowledge that we are handling in RE. I will explain how encountering the philosophy of science as a natural sciences student revolutionised my understanding of my own evangelical Christian faith and then transformed my thinking on RE. And I will illustrate how the answers we give to these high-level academic questions make a huge difference to the learning experiences we create for our children and the access that we provide for them to powerful knowledge. To avoid navel-gazing, half the session will be devoted to discussion. It's almost guaranteed we won't agree!</p>

D2	Academic	Primary	Stephen Pett & Ellie Hill	<p><b>Excellent RE in Worcestershire: Building a Sustainable Learning Community</b></p> <p>This project aimed to achieve several goals. The primary goal was to prepare RE Subject Leaders to lead sustainable RE Hubs within their own local networks. To this end, we planned 3.5 days of face-to-face sessions over the academic year, building on the experience of ‘Excellent RE’ programmes from RE Today/Culham St Gabriel’s, and based on the research from Robert Coe and the Centre for Education and Monitoring about the most effective forms of CPD (intense, sustained, content-focused, active, supported and evidence-based; Coe, 2013). Programmes that last throughout the school year are shown to be more efficient than disposable one or two-day programmes (Gerard, Varma, Corliss and Linn, 2011). Each session included learning and teaching strategies and new resources, so our delegates were excited and invigorated to trial the methods back in their classrooms.</p> <p>A secondary goal was to develop delegates academic knowledge of pedagogy in RE, their own skills as classroom researchers (e.g. using ‘the picture voice’ and ‘appreciative enquiry’), and a deeper knowledge of relevant, current developments in the RE world (e.g. REforREal by Dinham and Shaw). Teachers undertook to set up and run an initial local network group session, to participate in the annual Worcestershire SACRE primary conference, and then to establish a termly local group meeting.</p> <p>Before, during and between sessions, delegates provided data in response to questionnaires and focus groups. This has been analysed to enable an evaluation of the learning journey and the impact of the project. The outcomes are shared with Worcestershire SACRE, the local heads group and the participants. The findings will be published for wider dissemination.</p> <p>The session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ellie and Stephen will outline the rationale and pattern of the project.</li> <li>• Ellie will share the themes that have arisen from the research questions and the methodologies used. Challenges and surprises will be discussed. Ethical issues will be explored.</li> <li>• Stephen will model some of the learning and teaching strategies used.</li> <li>• We will share examples of the ‘photovoice’ activity (Aurini et al. 2016: p.84)</li> <li>• A summary of the impact of the programme will be shared, highlighting the extent to which teacher changes in pedagogy and leadership occurred.</li> </ul>
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D3	Academics	N/A	Kate Christopher, Janet Orchard & Kathryn Wright	<p><b>Shared space in RE: encounter, conversation and Interaction</b></p> <p>The Shared Space project has involved shared learning and dialogue between social psychologists and RE practitioners to understand the contribution contact theory (see for example, Allport, 1954) might make to RE in promoting better community relations. This workshop aims to show how contact theory can help to foster good community relations, considers the three elements needed (encounter, conversation, interaction) to ensure application of contact theory into practice and presents arguments supporting the importance of theory in developing teaching practice. The research showed that some teachers of RE are following contact theory principles and improving community relations in their classrooms, whether consciously or not. However, many activities meant to promote better community relations in RE do not meet the requirements of contact suggesting that they do not promote community relations as actively or positively as they might, were those principles observed. The researchers found evidence of activities in RE which offer pupils a chance to talk to each other but which are not planned with contact principles in mind, so that the purpose and desired outcome of talk is not established or assessed. Further, if wider institutional support is not in place (the fourth contact principle) efforts made by teachers of RE to promote community relations in isolation are likely to be limited in impact. The aim of promoting community relations needs to be a whole school priority, promoted across the curriculum and resourced adequately and supported by society at large. It cannot and should not be seen as the exclusive responsibility of RE (see Orchard 2015 for further details).</p> <p>Researchers and teachers involved in the Shared Space project suggest that accidental or informal contact between pupils in RE is a first step in allowing positive contact to take place. The findings suggest that teachers regularly embed conversation into their practice but structured interaction along contact theory lines is less common. Therefore it is proposed that if interaction is embedded more consistently then it is likely that conversation will become more effective in contributing to community relations. Some teachers only appear to be bring encounter to the classroom without going further into an exploration of multiple views or areas of disagreement. Contact theory suggests that encounter on its own will not promote better community relations. We propose that for RE to contribute to community relations most effectively all three of these approaches should be developed in the RE classroom.</p> <p>Having examined this theory with participants in the workshop we will exemplify through the use of a toolkit, practical ways in which teachers can apply contact theory in their classroom. We will share</p>
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				resources, strategies and best practice examples to help participants apply the theory back in their own classrooms or academic settings.
D4	Academic	Secondary	Andrew Wright & Elina Wright	<p><b>Critical Religious Education: A Practical Introduction</b></p> <p>Teachers tend to take it for granted that pupils understand what their subject is about, and why it is important to study it. This is not always the case in religious education. Because of this, it is important that pupils begin to develop an understanding of the nature and value of religious education. It is important that pupils own this understanding for themselves; it is not enough for the teacher simply to tell them. A flourishing religious education classroom is one in which the pupils themselves openly debate the nature and value of religious education. In this seminar we will explore ways of enabling pupils to do this. It is divided into four sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is Religious Education?</li> <li>2. The 'Big Questions' (ontological realism)</li> <li>3. Illusion and Truth (epistemic relativism)</li> <li>4. Wisdom and Foolishness (judgmental rationality)</li> </ol>
D5	Practical	Primary	Chris Hudson	<p><b>Crosses, icons and incense: Teaching Christianity as a world faith</b></p> <p>'Crosses, Icons and Incense: Teaching Christianity as a world faith'</p> <p>Introduction: With 2.2 billion members (32.1% of the global population), Christianity is the world's most diverse and popular faith in terms of geographical spread, ethnic range and cultural expression- but how did it grow to become a global cross-cultural community, and how could we use this variety to enhance our RE?</p> <p>Session content: Using key elements of Christian teaching about the Kingdom of God, Bible stories and a range of World Christian examples, delegates will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be updated with current statistics and implications for continuing growth trends in World Christianity, and key features of its history.</li> <li>- be shown practical techniques for introducing Christian diversity in primary RE, to pupils of different ages and abilities.</li> <li>- explore how Christians in other parts of the world express their faith today through worship, prayer and celebrations of special festivals- using a range of music, stories, visuals and artefacts.</li> </ul>

- consider the significance of local expressions of world Christianity in the UK.
- be introduced to further resources, including online videos and lesson support materials.

Objectives: To raise standards in RE by

- 1) Enhancing staff awareness, enabling them to teach about Christianity more fully as a world faith, whose local expressions are parts of a greater movement.
- 2) Showing how pupils can be helped to identify the essential core beliefs of Christianity, by providing a range of alternative examples concerning how these beliefs are understood, lived out in daily life, and celebrated.
- 3) Providing a greater possible range of personal identification points with Christianity, for pupils coming from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs (e.g. different Christian approaches to prayer).

Additional resources: In 2012, we published a teacher's resource book accompanying this training session ('Where in the world?' by Martyn Payne). It was well-reviewed ('Excellent value for money and highly recommended!' REtoday - Spring 2013) and has recently been officially accredited by the National Society as a support for their Understanding Christianity project. We hope to have the updated version of the book available for sale in time for the October 2018 conference, publisher's deadlines permitting.

The Barnabas in Schools website has a large number of free support materials available for download at

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/where-in-the-world-support-material/>

We are currently filming and editing a series of short videos on this theme for use in the classroom and staff training, some of which will be showcased during the session.

Course history: Barnabas in Schools originally devised this training course in 2012, since when it has been delivered many times to a variety of teaching networks from diocesan and local authority schools and academies. It has, however, never been presented at a professional network gathering sponsored by AREIA / AULRE / NASACRE / NATRE, and we would dearly like to remedy that. The course content has now been significantly updated to reflect both global trends and changes in classroom practice.

D6	Practical	N/A	Luke Donnellan	<p><b>Understanding Humanism: putting the non-religious into religious education</b></p> <p>Humanism appears on an ever-increasing number of locally agreed syllabuses and exam specifications. However, many teachers declare difficulties with their understanding of this non-religious worldview. We have therefore seen a significant increase in demand for support with subject knowledge and practical ideas for teaching about humanism in the classroom.</p> <p>Head of Education at Humanists UK, Luke Donnellan, will offer an introduction to humanist beliefs, values, and goals, and some of the questions they give rise to. This will include a humanist approach to knowledge, meaning, ethics, and society, and the humanist understanding of human beings that underlies these. It will focus, in particular, on suggested ways to present humanism: not just as a collection of negative beliefs, but as a set of positive decisions about how best to live. This aid to subject knowledge will be supported by a selection of practical ideas for teaching about humanism in the classroom. It will be of significant value to secondary RE teachers and primary teachers at upper Key Stage 2.</p> <p>The session will include a particular focus on the ‘one life’ humanists believe we have. What are the consequences of this central belief for humanists on the way they live their lives? Must humanists be afraid of death? Does the absence of an afterlife make life more urgent, more valuable, more meaningful? If death is the end, can anything of us live on, and do we need to pay attention to what we might leave behind? We’ll look at how different humanists have answered these questions, including Epicurus, David Hume, and Bertrand Russell, and explore how the humanist approach to life and death is revealed in the nature of modern humanist funerals. Several classroom resources on the subject matter will be offered up for discussion.</p> <p>Time will be made for further questions from delegates at the end of the session.</p> <p>Including humanism in RE supports students’ understanding of what it means to live a non-religious life as well as enables them to recognise the contribution humanist thinking has made to UK society and culture. It supports the SMSC development of young people and aligns with the need to teach about Fundamental British Values.</p>
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D7	Practical	N/A	Sushma Sahajpal	<p><b>Dharmic Literacy: Empowering knowledge of eastern Religions for contemporary RE</b></p> <p>The Dharmic traditions, particularly Hindu Dharma, are less well understood in the wider RE Community, as has been raised by the recent Commission for RE report. As a result teachers report low confidence and even confusion with the subject material, even when given resources. At the same time many RE teachers are not clear as to the purpose or need to teach about any Religion, and even less, how and why to teach the non-Abrahamic ones.</p> <p>This session therefore, aims to take about 25 minutes to give a resource-rich, contemporarily contextualised taster of Dharmic conceptual knowledge. It will unpack key vocabulary, how it applies across the Dharmic traditions and offer practical ideas and resources for both primary and secondary. It will also look at the global and indigenous context for being skilled in Dharmic literacy.</p> <p>Given the diversity of audience, the next 20 minutes will interactively play with purpose and pedagogical tools from a Dharmic perspective. Along the lines of ‘If the Buddha (as the best known Dharmic teacher!) was an RE Teacher...’ One of the things I want to bring out in this session is the applicability of such tools to teaching all faiths and none, so hope to do some group work around whatever worldviews the delegates choose to look at.</p>
D8	Practical	N/A	Lisa Shames & Frances Jeens	<p><b>Please touch: object based learning</b></p> <p>Explore object based learning using critical thinking techniques designed to enhance the quality of RE through objects used in daily life. This workshop will give RE professionals participatory skills to take back to the classroom to use with Key Stages 1 – 4.</p> <p>The group will be split into key stages. One group for Key Stage 1, one group for Key Stage 2, and one group for Key Stages 3 and 4. Each group will focus on a single object used in Jewish daily life. Participants will get a chance to touch the objects and take a closer look using different critical thinking techniques designed to enhance interaction with unfamiliar objects and spark curiosity for further discussion. These techniques can be used in the classroom with objects and images as a springboard for discussion and are a useful way to introduce Judaism and other religions to students in a participatory and multi-sensory way.</p>

				<p>Our expert educators, trained in Visible Thinking techniques, will guide participants to learn how to age differentiate the thinking methods to bring RE to life within the classroom. The thinking techniques will help teachers be able to engage students through object based enquiry. The Key Stage 1 group will focus on the kippah (traditional headwear). The Key Stage 2 group will focus on the mezuzah (symbol of a Jewish home). The Key Stage 3 &amp; 4 group will focus on tefillin (prayer boxes traditionally worn by men). These objects have been selected in line with the National Curriculum according to each Key Stage.</p>
D9	Practical	Secondary	Gerry Cohen	<p><b>Practical promises: people, place &amp; protection: GCSE Judaism</b></p> <p>From Edexcel GCSE Spec B Judaism: “The significance and importance of the various beliefs, issues and practices to Jews today should be explored”. In view of Religious Education’s necessary emphasis on textual understanding the session will begin by considering opportunities to use virtual or physical artefacts as practical memory aids, and examples of pedagogical approaches specific to Judaism. This will inform teachers as well as give them greater confidence in teaching the subject to exam level.</p> <p>As an example I use the introduction of a Shofar into the classroom. This ancient musical instrument is also a method of warning and a mode of drawing together a people into a united assembly for worship. It is linked to Abraham’s narrative through the substitution in Genesis 22 of a ram caught in the thorn bush by its horn, and to the Mosaic covenant when used as a sound to gather the People together at Sinai in order to hear the Words from the Almighty. It is used in modern times during the Holiest Days from Rosh HaShanah to Yom Kippur to encourage a change in attitude towards G d and one another and in other Festivals as an expression of joy. Students need to engage with artefacts and narrative and their relation to Jewish life, society and worship; the session will include examples of exam-style question and response.</p> <p>Many RE practitioners have requested subject materials regarding the Covenants. We will consider how post-Holocaust Jewish people might treat the 3-fold unilateral promise of the Abrahamic Covenant – (Genesis 12: People, Place, Protection) - compared to the bilateral agreement of the later Mosaic Covenant, (Exodus 24: “All these Words which the Lord has commanded we will do”). This section of the session links to “the application of beliefs and teachings to the lives of modern believers including the study of places and forms of worship”</p> <p>In considering such a topic we include the question of whether or not artificial intelligence systems such as Alexa or Siri should be used to do things for Jewish practitioners on Shabbat.</p>

				<p>Judaism teaches that G d decided to call Abram out from his people and follow the One true G d. Here the Almighty initiates the Covenant, while in the later event at Sinai a code of conduct is provided and agreed upon, ratified through blood sacrifice and a covenantal meal (Exodus 24). Comparisons of these Covenants are necessary for GCSE students to see how responsibility is conferred, as well as considering those parts of Torah which can no longer be followed such as sacrifice. Integral to the post-Exodus narrative is the Presence or Shekinah of G d, a topic about which pupils and some teachers may well have limited knowledge or understanding. The session will provide some background to this as well as examples of classroom material and approaches.</p> <p>I will include PowerPoint &amp; guidance notes, links to external information, and practical worked examples. There will be a Q&amp;A and I will encourage further discussion through email and other online means.</p>
<b>D10a</b>	Practical	Secondary	Bob Bowie	<p><b>Arise Sir Hermeneut! Analysing Bible texts more deeply</b></p> <p>This session draws on the work I with teachers, about their experiences of using texts in secondary RE teaching and also the development work in how to equip teachers with more confidence to evade and avoid the pitfalls of the use of scripture in classrooms, well evidenced in research literature and examination reports.</p> <p>It aims to provide content led illustrations of why hermeneutics matters for RE. For instance examples might include these: An Analysis of what Christians believe about hell and punishment is deepened by a sense of what the word ‘eternal’ might mean in biblical contexts; To understand why Evangelicals differ in their teachings on homosexuality it helps to know the context for Paul’s comments about sex. It will also suggest the kinds of activities that might encourage students to adopt a more interpretative approach to their studies of religion.</p> <p>The session implicitly argues that RE should be developing pupils as ‘hermeneuts’ not just ‘knowers of religious facts’ and suggests that RE is a hermeneutical training ground not just for sacred texts but all texts, in an age where social media can fragment and fracture society with severe consequences.</p>
<b>10b</b>	Practical	Secondary	Mike Otter	<p><b>Teaching Genesis 1-3 with confidence and creativity</b></p>

In the Christianity units of the current GCSE specifications, Genesis 1-3 is a compulsory text for pupils to study. This session would focus on equipping delegates to teach these key passages in a greater level of depth and detail, reflecting the increased demands of the revised GCSE specifications, and would provide ideas and sample resources for doing so in an engaging and student-friendly way.

The session would identify which of the themes of the passages relate to the GCSE specifications, and how they relate to them. Here, we will be thinking more widely than just about beliefs about creation and also making links to other areas, such as beliefs about the nature of God.

The main focus of the session would be on some specific sections of the passages, using insights from textual studies and contextual information to provide 'mini-case-studies'. Each of these would be supported by thoughts on how to relate it the requirements of the specification, and practical ideas for classroom implementation.

Around this core, we would briefly survey the diversity of belief about the origins/authorship of the passages, and identify some common questions and misconceptions about passages which are apparently familiar but which contain overlooked detail.

There would also be time for some questions.

While the session would be pitched at GCSE level, the content would also be relevant and useful for KS3 RS.

Written summaries of the main points of the session will be provided.