

Spinnaker Training Day

Tuesday 7 January 2025 - Christ Church, Chislehurst

Verse for the Term - Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. (Psalm 105:1)

1) Welcome to:

- Stacey Burman - RE advisor for Bromley/SACRE advisor/RE Hubs
- Omar Taha - SACRE advisor - Muslim representative
- Joseph - Joining Bromley team

2) Reflection - Glenis

Based on Timothy Dudley Smith's – Lord for the Years

3) Effective RE Teaching - syllabus changes and focus on interfaith dialogue

Stacey Burman (RE advisor for Bromley/SACRE advisor/RE Hubs)

sfburman@gmail.com

3.1) RE Hubs overview

<https://www.re-hubs.uk>

- Voluntarily national online directory linking places of interest and speakers with schools, by region.
- Aim to have more religious speakers and liaisons in schools as this has fallen off post-Covid.
- There is a need for speakers who understand the distinction between education and evangelising. On-line training is included as required.

Action - all to review website and ideally register and encourage own churches to register as speakers/places of interest

3.2 'Beyond the Tickbox' initial discussion/basic understanding

- **Which schools must teach RE?** – All
- **What is the minimum requirement?** – No minimum requirement and guidance vary by SACRE but usually 5%/36 hours.
- Assemblies/Collective Worship do not count as Religious education
- Regular frequent teaching will fix learned material more effectively than infrequent teaching – to fix learning in the synapses within the brain, the ideal frequency is several times a week/every 48 hours^

3.3 Ofsted concepts:

- 'To ensure pupils are well prepared to engage in a multi-religious and multi-secular society.'
- 'Pupils are presented with over-simplistic assertions about religious traditions, which are often based on visible entities, such as places of worship'

3.4 3x Types of knowledge:

- **Substantive** – facts and information (quantifiable)
- **Ways of knowing** – how do we do it... present info/engage/where does info come from given that each person's version of faith differs
 - What is the individual response?
 - What is the Big Idea?' Big concepts – death and/resurrection reincarnation etc.
 - E.g. - have to understand what worship is before can meaningfully understand worship and the place of worship
- **Personal knowledge** – personal worldview – own personal response connecting with what we already know - "I believe this as a Christian"

3.4 Problems with existing teaching methods

- An assembly is one person's input only but there are many layers of listening and layers of involvement (beyond the superficial 'visual'). The goal is to add meaningfulness to every interaction.
- Mentioning a specific supreme being or prophet– some involved/some not
- What are the alternatives – e.g. prayer to God rather than Jesus – use of universal wording that will be applicable to all, including minorities such as humanists and pagans?
- Sporadic teaching days are not highly regarded as they do not reinforce learning (*they do, however, introduce Christian messages that children may not otherwise hear*).
- Religious teaching is often superficial or generic, grouping concepts together with insufficient depth on individual religions and the distinction between them (*Q – but how does this align with the requirement to discuss life's bigger issues which are applicable to all faiths?*)

3.5 Updated concepts

- Change of focus – education of future generations with emphasis on bigger questions about life
- 'Brave space' for honest discussion with uncomfortable words and disagreement acceptable. This differs from a 'safe space' which may be too constraining or focus on avoiding causing offence
- Issues with lack of resilience in schools possible due to fear of failure. Resilience is under-pinned by esteem and self-value. Teaching should aim to develop self-esteem to encourage participation in brave spaces.

3.6 Flower model teaching session structure

- Providing an opportunity for children to engage with collective worship and wider issues and engage/involve with prayer if appropriate to them.
- For each unit of enquiry we should be:
 - Identifying the key concepts which are rooted in the Big Meaningful Questions we wish pupils to explore (centre segment)

- Selecting appropriate responses from both a dharma and Abrahamic religious perspective, as well as non-religious response (petals)
- Considering the personal knowledge pupils could be using (stem)
- Suggesting the ways of knowing and interacting with the (stem and petals)

3.7 Use of appropriate wording

- Change of emphasis on wording - Not “Christians believe” as this indicates representing the entire Christian faith but “as a Christian, I believe” indicating a personal approach
- Emphasise personal approach - “This is what it says in the Bible and this is how I understand it?”
- ‘Tolerate’ indicates passivity. Active words include embrace/interact positively/involve.

3.8 Questions for further consideration

- What does meaningful interaction look like?
- Can Christian assemblies be further developed for use in a wider RE context?
- What does the teacher require and how can it be improved?
- What does the personal response add to the experience that an Internet search can’t?
- What are the big questions[^] and how can they be incorporated into generic worship– e.g.:
 - Who am I?
 - Why do I live this way?
 - Is this it?
 - How do I live my beliefs?
 - Where do we get our values from, why are some values more important than others?
 - Does time and place alter these perceptions?
- Who decides what is good RE? What is the difference between Christian teaching and teaching social skills?
- When does teaching on bigger questions become teaching on Philosophy rather than Religious Education?
- The UK Law * on collective worship requires a daily act of worship for all pupils. This is prescribed as ‘wholly or mainly Christian’ e.g. a focus on Christian values and should be a time of reflection with others to consider and reflect on bigger issues/a supreme entity. How can we future-proof our own teaching and resources to accommodate future changes requiring multi-faith acts of worship?

[^] Further reading:

‘Big questions’ - Ann Taves

<https://www.religion.ucsb.edu/people/faculty/ann-taves/>

Improving teaching methods – Geoff Petty

<https://geoffpetty.com/>

* See Attachment 1

Attachment 1

UK Government Circular number 1/94 - Religious Education and Collective Worship

Summary of contents

All maintained schools must provide religious education and daily collective worship for all registered pupils and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Local agreed RE syllabuses for county schools and equivalent grant-maintained schools must in future reflect the fact that religious traditions in the country are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of other principal religions. Syllabuses must be periodically reviewed.

Collective worship in county schools and equivalent grant-maintained schools must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

The parental right of withdrawal from RE and collective worship and the safeguards for teachers are unchanged.

Local bodies advise on RE and collective worship and recommend new RE syllabuses. They represent faith groups, teachers, the LEA and grant-maintained schools.

Information and inspection requirements apply to RE and collective worship.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7cd8f740f0b6629523c2b7/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf