

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
DATE OF MEETING:	21 June 2011
SUBJECT:	Religious Education Report – An Update from the Diocese of Lincoln
REPORT on behalf of:	Diocesan Director of Education
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IS THE REPORT EXEMPT?	No
IS THE REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY: The report provides an update on the developments and forthcoming events in Religious Education.

DISCUSSION: To complement the work of the Local Authority R.E. Adviser, the Diocesan Deputy Director of Education ensures that a range of developmental activities take place to improve the quality of Religious Education in community schools as well as Church schools throughout the Diocese of Lincoln.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted and any comments made be included as necessary.

APPENDICES:-
Appendix 1 – Action Plan for the Leading R.E. Teacher Support Network

BACKGROUND PAPERS: The following background papers, as defined in the Local Government Act 1972, were relied upon in writing this report.

PAPER TYPE	TITLE	DATE	ACCESSIBILITY
Religious Education Report – Diocese Update		May 2011	The Diocesan Education Centre, Lincoln

A number of initiatives and events have taken place in religious education during the spring term of 2011.

R.E. Cluster meetings

During the spring term, a series of cluster meetings were held in a number of schools across the Diocese. Attendance was very good overall although it varied according to the region. About 20 R.E. teachers attended each of the meetings held in Spalding and Lincoln whereas there were only a select few whom attended the meetings in Belton, North Lincolnshire and Gainsborough. Feedback has indicated that these meetings are useful regardless of the delegates' knowledge and experience of the subject. Teachers, teaching assistants, specialists, non-specialists, experienced and new subject leaders have commented that the meetings provide a valuable opportunity for networking, sharing good practice and resources and learning about new initiatives and developments in the subject. The meeting at Kirkby La Thorpe created a 'spin-off' session at Sutterton Fourfields Church of England Primary School at the delegates' request to further explore assessment and tracking in R.E. Wendy Harrison (Lincolnshire LA Adviser joined us for this meeting.) The next cluster meetings are all planned for the autumn term.

R.E. News

The third edition of R.E. News has been distributed to all schools, Bishop's Visitors. It provides lots of information about R.E including forthcoming courses and events. The newsletter also includes a flavour of how schools across the Diocese have engaged in 'Celebrating R.E.'

R.E. courses and training events

Two very successful courses took place last term:

On 11th March, about 50 delegates participated in '**Assessment for Learning in R.E.**' led by Lat Blaylock (Editor of R.E. Today). Lat demonstrated a wide variety of practical and realistic approaches to assessing R.E. across four key stages. (Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3) With reference to our Locally Agreed Syllabus, he emphasised the importance of planning creative activities that will appeal to children of different abilities, asking the right questions, setting appropriate challenge and measuring outcomes according to clear success criteria. He provided a wealth of ideas and materials on paper and electronically for teachers to develop assessment in R.E.

Over the course of two days, 1st and 2nd April, about 40 delegates attended the '**Godly Play Taster Day**' led by Dr Rebecca Nye. Dr Nye, who was responsible for introducing Godly Play to the UK, provided an inspirational insight into the power of this creative approach to religious education. She showed how the Godly Play resources can facilitate complex thinking, motivate enquiry, generate questions and develop a better understanding of the wonderful stories in the Bible. As a follow up to this training, it is hoped that we can book Dr Nye to lead an advanced course with accreditation for experienced practitioners.

In addition to these day courses, Chris Hudson (Barnabas in Schools) led a 'Creative R.E.' workshop for Heads and Chairs at their annual conference. He showed how creativity and practical approaches can enhance the teaching and learning in the subject through a range of resources.

Forthcoming training events

In addition to the R.E. cluster meetings, the following events are planned for the coming months:

Thursday 19 th May	The Big Six in R.E. (led by Lizzie McWhirter, R.E. Adviser Coventry Diocese)
Monday 20 th June	Creative R.E. in the Whole Curriculum (Lat Blaylock – R.E. Today)
Tuesday 4 th October	The Lord's Prayer – a thematic approach to RE (led by Helen Matter, R.E. Adviser of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese)
Thurs 10 th November	SACRE Conference (Details to be confirmed)
Thurs 17 th November	Body and Soul – Active learning for relationships education (Lat Blaylock – R.E. Today)

More details of these courses are on the SACRE website and if members of SACRE would like to attend any of these courses, please contact the Diocese Events Organiser, Sandy Willmott, sandy.willmott@lincoln.anglican.org

Leading Teachers in R.E.

On 15th February 2011, a meeting for Leading Teachers in R.E. was organised to consider the formation of a new support network for schools. Seventeen teachers have agreed to offer their support. Their contact details and specialisms have been made available on a database which has been distributed to all schools and can be accessed on the SACRE website. Collectively, the teachers have a wide range of expertise in areas of religious education, Godly Play and collective worship. They are located in different areas of the Diocese and they are happy to support within a variety of contexts including face to face support at a one-to-one level or whole school and distant support via e-mail and telephone. Where costs are incurred for providing support, funding agreements will be made between the Leading Teacher's school and the receiving school prior to support. The leading R.E. teachers have devised an action plan and agreed targets up to July 2012. The key targets are as follows:

- To promote the Leading Teacher Support Network to schools
- To be able to respond to individual CPD requests for support in a timely manner
- To provide regional CPD opportunities for clusters of schools
- To provide an electronic resource library

(A copy of the action plan is attached).

Although it is still early days, one notable success of this initiative in March was when a Leading Teacher from Humberston C.E. Primary School delivered some staff training with me on collective worship at Grasby All Saints Church of England Primary School. The school commented that it valued the perspective from a practising teacher who had developed strategies for involving children in collective worship.

Godly Play

In addition to the training opportunities in Godly Play, Judy Dickin and I have been investigating the possibility of establishing local Godly Play centres. We have visited three potential venues in each of the three local authorities including Lisle Marsden C.E. Primary School in Grimsby, the Wilderspin National Museum School in Barton upon Humber and the Regional House in Edenham. Our plan is to focus on one venue to begin with, possibly the Wilderspin School and develop their room as a sacred space with Godly Play resources for local schools and community groups to use. Portable set of resources which can be used by different schools could be located at the other venues subject to funding.

The English Baccalaureate

I recognise that Lincolnshire SACRE have been very active in supporting the national campaign to include R.E. in the English Baccalaureate. On behalf of the Diocesan Education Board, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, to emphasise the importance of R.E. and the necessity to include it in the E.B. I was also asked to express the Diocese's viewpoint on the subject for an article published by the Lincolnshire Echo. The response I received from the Department for Education repeated their policy line but as I write I understand the national campaign gathers pace day by day.

Celebrating R.E.

As we demonstrate the importance of R.E. during our E.B. campaign, it has been very timely for schools across England and Wales to promote and celebrate their achievements in religious education. Although the SACRE central event was cancelled due to few schools being unable to attend, many schools celebrated R.E. with their local communities. Last term, the Diocesan Education Team and the Lincolnshire Local Authority Adviser, Wendy Harrison were invited to many schools across the Diocese to see lots of exciting R.E. projects in action. On behalf of SACRE and the Diocese, I submitted a photograph page showing a selection of the school's work to the national event organisers and this will appear in an online album on the 'Celebrating R.E.' website at the end of May. *R.E. News* also provides a flavour of the work seen and the next edition of 'Crosslinks' will publish a special feature with lots of photographs of this R.E. work from different schools across our Diocese.

Multi Faith Experiences

Earlier in the spring term, the Team Parish of Louth organised a fantastic range of multi-faith activities for local primary schools on the theme of 'Weddings' at the Trinity Centre in Louth. The children worked in inter school groups and enjoyed cookery, crafts, story, dance and drama from different religions including Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Christianity.

On a similar note, David Clements, Wendy Harrison and I have met to discuss plans for the Lincolnshire SACRE multi faith conference on 10th November 2011. Delegates will have the opportunity to participate in a range of practical workshops led by visiting speakers of different religions.

On 5th May, I was invited to Bracebridge St John's Primary School to observe Swathi Sreenivasan deliver a range of workshops with the children. The children really enjoyed the practical and creative activities such as making diva pots, rangoli patterns and handling artefacts. Swathi offered a fun and engaging approach for developing the children's understanding of Hinduism and the traditions of Indian culture.

400th anniversary of King James Bible

After a huge amount of work collating children's verses and art work from nearly 100 schools, David Clements has liaised with Cathedral Library staff, the printers and binder to produce a wonderful leather bound Children's version of the King James Bible. It will be on display during the church school festival, the bi-centenary rededication service on 2nd July and in the Cathedral library for many years to come. Every school that contributed to the Bible will receive an A4 copy of the bible and if SACRE members would like to purchase a copy, please let David Clements know.

11 ways to celebrate in 2011

To encourage and help schools celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible and the 200th anniversary of the National Society, I have produced an ideas booklet for schools. It contains different ways in which school can mark these two special events in a fun and educational way. A copy of this booklet can be found on the SACRE website and has been distributed to all schools and Bishop's Visitors.

Creative Bible Days in Schools

I am working closely with Simon Dean (CTAL facilitator) on a project to provide every school in the Diocese with a Creative Bible day. The plan is for Martyn Payne (Barnabas in Schools) to train a group of volunteers in delivering creative and practical activities related to the bible. These activities will be piloted in a number of schools and then rolled out across the Diocese if successful. At this stage, we are in the process of recruiting suitably experienced volunteers. I will update SACRE members on this project in the future.

More than Gold

I am also working with Simon Dean in promoting the 'More than Gold' initiative to schools. A website has been set up to help schools and churches plan joint events and local festivals linked to the Olympics. The theme of the Olympics is an excellent opportunity for schools to extend their global awareness and links. Resources on the website include materials for collective worship and after school clubs.

St Edith's Church

I have worked closely with Pauline Organ, the church warden of St Edith's Church, Coates-by-Stow and Will Harrison (Head of Communications) to produce promotional materials to develop links with the church and schools in the area. Pauline is very keen to lead activities for schools in the church and so these materials have been distributed to all schools.

Special Schools' R.E. day in Lincoln Cathedral

Following the success of last year's event, it has been decided to hold another Special Schools' Day in the Cathedral on 5th October 2011. I have been working closely with Mary McGuire from Lincoln St Christopher's and Richard Curtis (School's Officer at the Cathedral) to plan a multi-sensory R.E. day for the children.

Report by Paul Thompson
Diocesan Deputy Director of Education
20 May 2011