

## Diocese of Lincoln Report for Religious Education

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

### R.E. courses and training events

Two very successful courses took place in the summer term:

On 19<sup>th</sup> May, teachers from around the Diocese met at the Old Palace to participate in training entitled 'The Big Six in R.E. – Breaking the boundary with an enquiry based approach to explore the world's major religions.' Lizzie McWhirter (R.E. Adviser from the Diocese of Coventry) led the course and provided ways to use thinking skills and creative teaching strategies to help children explore the 'big questions' they pose in religious education. Teachers commented that the course provided them with lots of practical ideas for the classroom and they had the confidence to implement these in their classrooms.

On 20<sup>th</sup> June, Lat Blaylock returned to the Diocese to lead another exciting training day for primary and secondary R.E. teachers. This course was entitled 'Creative R.E. in the whole curriculum' and he provided a wealth of ideas and materials for teachers to explore mainly Christianity through a creative and cross-curricular approach. For example, through music, he showed how the story of Zacchaeus (*Luke 19:1-10*) can develop the children's empathy skills. Every teacher formed musical groups to sing chants related to the story! Again, Lat provided an inspiration and fun approach to teaching high quality religious education.

In the first part of the autumn term, three R.E. related courses were held:

On 29<sup>th</sup> September, newly and recently qualified teachers from church schools were invited to a conference to develop their understanding of church schools. The day included a workshop on Godly Play led by Judy Dickin and a workshop on using the Bible creatively in the classroom led by Martyn Payne. The feedback from this course was positive.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011, the Diocesan Board of Education held their annual conference for governors. The conference focussed on developing governors' confidence in supporting schools with their development of high quality collective worship and religious education. The governors engaged in practical workshops led by consultants from *Barnabas in Schools*.

On 4<sup>th</sup> October, Helen Matter (R.E. Adviser from Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich) led a course on the Lord's Prayer. She showed how teachers could teach the prayer through practical and creative approaches in R.E, collective worship and subjects across the curriculum. Teachers who attended the course were provided with a resource disk to

help them implement the ideas in school. During an informal visit to Burgh le Marsh St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary School, I observed a teacher trialling one of the activities related to the Lord's Prayer and the children were very responsive.

### **R.E. News**

The autumn edition of R.E. News has been distributed to all schools and a copy is on the SACRE and Diocesan websites. It provides lots of information about R.E including forthcoming courses and events. SACRE members are very welcome to attend the courses listed and may reserve their place with the Diocesan Events Coordinator, Sandy Willmott.

### **Forthcoming training events**

The following events are planned for the coming months:

- Thurs 17 November 'Body and Soul' – Active learning for relationship education with 9 – 11s (led by Lat Blaylock – Editor of R.E. Today)
- Mon 23 January 2012 'Who comes first?' – R.E. and Olympic Values. A half day interactive course led by Martyn Payne from Barnabas in Schools.

### **Infant Church Schools Festival 2011**

On 13 July 2011, the six Church of England Infant Schools in the Diocese visited Lincoln Cathedral to participate in their own festival. This was a lovely occasion where 270 Year Two children came dressed as animals and during the morning they participated in a range of workshops and an animal safari tour. Workshops included playing Maori sticks and handbells, Godly Play, singing and making animal models. For their guided tour, the children were able to find a variety of animals hiding in the stone and woodwork of the Cathedral. In the afternoon, Father Stephen Hoy led a wonderful act of worship which was a very uplifting and a reflective end to the day.

### **Special Schools Festival 2011**

On 5<sup>th</sup> October, nine local special schools participated in a R.E. day at Lincoln Cathedral. The children participated in a variety of practical workshops similar to those planned at the Infant Day. They had a multi sensory tour around the cathedral and an act of worship in the Chapter House. Mary McGuire (teacher from Lincoln St Christopher's Special School) coordinated the planning for this event and she deserves huge credit for its success.

### **'Leading Teachers' in R.E.**

In the summer term, the '*Leading R.E. teacher*' initiative was launched. Schools have received a database of teachers who have the expertise and willingness to share good practice and support colleagues in the subject. The database will be regularly updated and available for schools to download from the Diocesan and SACRE websites. [www.lincoln.anglican.org](http://www.lincoln.anglican.org) or <http://community.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SACRE>

Support from *'Leading Teachers'* may come in the form of a telephone conversation, sharing documents and resources, face to face meetings or whole staff training. The cost for this service depends on the level of support required. Schools must agree in advance what costs will be incurred by the Leading teacher's school (e.g. travel, photocopying, supply cover) and schools receiving the support will pay the Leading Teacher's school directly. To ensure this initiative is a success, it is important that I closely monitor and evaluate the support being provided and so I have requested that schools complete an evaluation form available from our website and return it to me.

I am aware that the initiative has been well received by schools I have visited. Although it would seem that few leading teachers have been contacted for support to date, I know that some schools are hoping to use the service to develop school partnerships and staff training.

### **Godly Play**

I am delighted that a bid Judy Dickin and I presented to the panel responsible for the Closed Schools General Purpose Reserve Fund was successful. We were very grateful for an award of £1500 to develop Godly Play across the Diocese.

With this funding, we have been able to purchase a fantastic range of resources that can be used by schools delivering Godly Play sessions. The Wilderspin National School Museum in Barton upon Humber will accommodate many of the resources and schools will be able to participate in Godly Play as well as the range of activities already on offer at the museum. Training for volunteers and teachers will be offered to ensure the children get the most from the sessions.

The funding will also enable us to provide portable sets of resources to other venues in the Diocese. Lisle Marsden Church of England Primary School in Grimsby and the Regional House in Edenham have kindly offered to accommodate these resources. Teachers will have the option of using the portable resource sets at these venues or they may borrow them to use in their own school.

To follow up the Godly Play taster days for teachers and volunteers which were held in the spring term, Judy Dickin and I have arranged for Dr Rebecca Nye to lead a three day accreditation course next year. This will enable participants to develop their expertise and provide in house training for their colleagues in school. The course will be advertised later this term.

### **The English Baccalaureate**

It is very disappointing that despite a huge national campaign, the subjects in the English Baccalaureate remain unchanged and religious education will be excluded. I am very grateful to the Chair of Lincolnshire SACRE, Councillor Talbot who exerted huge effort in channelling the views of everyone with a passion for R.E. to influential parliamentary figures. The subject remains a statutory subject and advocates for R.E. are reacting to the

parliamentary decision with a positive determination to promote the subject and the contribution it makes to education and society. An example to illustrate this includes the development of the R.E Quality Mark for Schools.

#### **Association of R.E Advisers, Inspectors and Consultants (ARIEAC)**

I find my membership of AREIAC very valuable. On a termly basis, I meet with R.E. advisers from the Eastern region and discuss national developments in the subject. Not only is it a useful forum to develop my understanding of the subject but it has created opportunities to network with subject specialists and use their expertise for the benefit our schools. For example, I invited Helen Matter (R.E. adviser from Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich) to deliver a training day entitled 'A creative approach to teaching the Lords Prayer). In July, I attended the annual conference in Dorset which was a great opportunity to meet influential national figures such as John Keast, the new Chair of the R.E. Council.

#### **R.E. Cluster meetings**

At the time of writing, I have led six R.E. cluster meetings across the Diocese this term. Two more are planned before Christmas. It usual to see between 12 - 15 teachers at each meeting and they have varying degrees of experience in the subject. Some experienced teachers have shared their good practice with others and this has obviously benefited all especially the new recruits to the profession.

Report by Paul Thompson  
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