

SACRE Meeting on 7 July 2016

Diocesan Matters Update

Understanding Christianity is a new resource from the Church of England Education Office and RE Today. Its key purpose is to support pupils in developing their understanding of Christianity.

The resource sets the bar for the quality of teaching and learning about Christianity in church schools, but is also intended for non-church schools. It shows that in church schools we expect an approach that explores the core concepts of Christianity in a progressive way, engaging with biblical texts and developing religious and theological literacy. This expectation is clearly outlined in the new *Statement of Entitlement* for RE, used by SIAMS inspectors to judge the quality of RE in church schools.

The resource offers a spiral model of investigating eight core Christian concepts that tell the 'big story' of Christianity.

The resource pack includes:

- A teacher's handbook including background information on the concepts to support teacher confidence
- 29 full units of work from FS2 to KS3 based on enquiry questions that help pupils explore the eight concepts in a way that deepens knowledge and understanding throughout the key stages
- Knowledge building blocks and end of phase outcomes to help teachers assess progress and achievement
- Over 150 photocopiable resource sheets
- The 'Big Frieze' illustration by Emma Yarlett giving a visual overview of the 'big story' of Christianity
- Password access to the *Understanding Christianity* website, which contains additional support materials

In order to access the Understanding Christianity resource pack, it is necessary to attend the accredited training. This training will be running throughout the next academic year and will be staggered throughout the year to ensure that the resource has maximum impact in the classroom.

The Church of England Education office has also recently reissued its RE *Statement of Entitlement*, which sets the expectations of RE in church schools and is the document used by SIAMS (Section 48) inspectors to judge the quality and provision of RE in church schools. This document can be accessed here:

https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1384868/re_statement_of_entitlement_ratified_national_society_council_june_16.pdf

I will be working with local church schools to ensure that the RE provided meets this expected entitlement.

I am becoming increasingly aware that the provision of RE in secondary schools and academies across the Diocese of Lincoln is weakening. I have been told about one local authority in which no secondary school or academy will be delivering RE as a discrete curriculum area from September. I have also heard rumours about an academy chain in Lincolnshire that may be contemplating a similar approach; this bears investigation and I would like to collaborate with SACRE in this matter. The Diocesan Board of Education Measure (1991) enables me to ask all schools about their provision for RE and, where the statutory requirements are not being met (particularly in relation to academy funding agreements), I would like to work with SACRE to consider ways in which to remind schools and academies of their obligation to deliver RE. I appreciate that the EBacc and funding crisis have both had an impact on the provision of RE at secondary level and I will spend some time over the next few months considering ways in which Secondaries can be best supported to continue to meet their statutory obligations, particularly where the subject is increasingly being delivered by non-specialists. In the light of the new and far more demanding GCSE syllabus, this is a particularly pressing matter.

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