



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich

## Notes from the RE Network meeting #1 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Venue: Zoom, 4-5pm

**Present:** Representatives and/or subject leaders from 35 schools within the diocese, including 5 community schools/academies.

Gemma welcomed and thanked all for a fantastic turn out at our first zoom event.

1. Gemma explained the purpose of today's meeting: to network with each other, to look at the diocesan website's RE resources and talk about small school challenges.
2. Gemma shared the **latest Ofsted RE subject review**:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-publishes-research-review-on-religious-education> This is something all SLs need to be aware of. Gemma will share highlights on next DARE bulletin.
3. Gemma shared the **C of E Suffolk website** and available resources found here:  
<https://www.cofesuffolk.org/schools/school-leaders/religious-education/re-resources/> These include padlets for RE subject leaders and a popular padlet for virtual visits to places of worship.
4. The **Emmanuel Facebook** page: <https://www.facebook.com/EPSuffolkRE> great for seeing photos of children's work
5. **Upcoming training** – including assessment in RE and the annual subject leader training dates here:  
<https://www.cofesuffolk.org/schools/school-leaders/training-opportunities/>
6. Gemma shared some **new assessment materials** to enable teachers to make WTS, EXS, GDS judgements for the end of each unit. These are currently draft and available for the summer term only but are available for people to trial.
7. **Free Emmanuel Project webinars** one each half term after school over the next year on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These are being offered to schools who have purchased the resource outside of the diocese as part of their training package. These webinars are a basic introduction, and do not replace the New to RE training offer. However they may be useful for staff who want a short introduction to the resource including governors. Please email [Jacqui.studd@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:Jacqui.studd@cofesuffolk.org) for dates and booking details.
8. 15mins **discussion** in break out groups about the challenges of small school RE teaching, including the challenge of EYFS and Y1, rolling plans and mixed age classes. Some of the thoughts shared are below but many more were discussed in groups and this is an area we will return to perhaps with a smaller group made up of leaders from small schools:
  - In mixed age classes children have different starting points so you can't take make assumptions about what each child knows. There is a lot of gap filling and recap.
  - The EP units give teachers flexibility and are easy to adapt to mixed age teaching.
  - The skill of the teacher is in how to differentiate the learning. Rather than thinking about each year group the children are in, it is easier to think about them being at different attainment levels in RE and planning a higher, middle lower activity.
  - Sometimes children do have to repeat content, this is hard to avoid.
  - It is really difficult when you have YR/Y1 and the reception children do not have the whole year to learn the basics through the EYFS units. Y1 units are challenging where they do not have an understanding of God and then start learning about Judaism or Islam. Sometimes pupil numbers and other factors mean EYFS can be taught separately, sometimes this isn't possible.

9. There was a clear consensus that RE was still being given the **expected curriculum time** across all the schools this term post lockdown. A few schools have enriched RE with a spirited arts week (see NATRE website here: <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2021>). Some schools are running RE days to catch up on missed units.
10. Some schools are collecting **RE evidence** through videos. One school is using seesaw to capture evidence.
11. Discussion for 8 mins in break out groups on what is **working well/areas to improve** some of which were then captured in the chat and listed below:

<b>WWW</b>	<b>EBI</b>
Links with our church Scrapbooking Really proud of our RE books Staff confidence with RE Teacher enjoying teaching RE RE being well taught Children enjoying RE lessons RE curriculum The solo taxonomy hexagons for assessment RE literacy week each term which has a positive impact on writing We are using Seesaw to record verbal explanations of concepts if this can't be written down Increased confidence with teaching EP The knowledge organisers An Easter stations of the cross prayer trail outside. It was really lovely and shook up the way we normally do prayer stations (inside in the warm and dry!)	Making units engaging Improve assessment – seven people agreed with this All staff having RE training How can I use reflective areas with covid? How we evidence learning in books scrapbooks Prayer space opportunities and spiritual development Need to improve evidence recording and catching up on missed units Pupil perception surveys

Thanks to all who attended. Meeting closed at 5pm with the opportunity to stay behind and ask any questions/seek advice.

#### **Other thoughts:**

- With a large group, break out groups to have a specific question to discuss with an opportunity to feedback in the chat so answers can be shared with all.
- Lots of us are still looking at improving assessment – come to training if at all possible this term, although it will still run next year.
- Scrapbooks and ways of recording pupil work and evidence base is coming up in conversation a lot and schools are at different points with this. This subject would make a great network meeting to share what we are doing and why.
- Perhaps each future network could begin looking at a small part of the Ofsted RE Review

**Next meeting: We will discuss small schools again, hopefully with different people! I will circulate an agenda before hand:**

**June 29<sup>th</sup> 4pm** <https://zoom.us/j/95578618329?pwd=K0ozR1R1VWZlREJNdTBYSzdnbmhnUT09>