

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUBJECT LEADERS' NEWSLETTER

For Primary, Secondary & Special Schools
June 2022

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

I do hope that you had a fantastic Spring Bank break and enjoyed the Jubilee celebrations!

I had a few celebrations of my own last month with my 60th birthday on 13th May and our 36th wedding anniversary on the 24th May. (No prizes for guessing where we celebrated - yes Norfolk!! This time in Blakeney, walking, seal watching and over indulging!)

Well this extraordinary RE Newsletter is being written to give you some big news. I will be retiring from the role of RE & Collective Worship Adviser at the end of this term!

It does not seem possible that it is 38 years ago this September that I started my teaching career at Kingswood Junior School in Corby. I moved through the year groups over the years, ending as Key Stage 3 and RE Lead at Boothville Middle School in Northampton. Sadly, neither of these schools exist anymore. Kingswood became a Primary School and, Middle Schools in Northamptonshire were replaced, moving from a three tier to two tier education system in 2004.

I absolutely loved all my years teaching but I knew that I wanted to try and make a greater difference to Religious Education in schools if I could, rather than just by teaching a few classes each year. This led me to apply for the post of RE Adviser with Northamptonshire County Council in 2000. I was successful and there began my Advisory career.

I was so honoured to work alongside the wonderful, late Frances LePla. I had known Frances for a number of years whilst she was teaching at Weston Favell Upper School and I had RE transfer meetings from Boothville with her. I started as the RE Adviser just as Frances was being made the RE Inspector. We shared an office, ran a lot of training together and met a lot of amazing RE teachers. It was such fun!

They were amazing years from 2000 to 2013, where I learnt from the best in Frances and was ever grateful for her support, advice and friendship. I feel so blessed to have known her and still miss her very much.

I also got to meet so many other wonderful RE Advisers from around the country and feel so incredibly lucky that many of them invited me to train for them in their Diocese or local authorities. I travelled the length and breadth of the country, giving Keynote speeches and training fabulous teachers.

Some of the most memorable sessions were in places that I had never visited before in which case I always tried to train on a Friday or a Monday so that I could stay for a weekend. My husband was happy too as he would come along and we had little weekend breaks! Places like Wells, Durham, Stafford, Morecombe, Lincoln, Scarborough, Lancaster and St. Albans were all explored. I also trained for a variety of organisations, such as the Independent Schools RS Association and Osiris and this involved regular visits to London, Leicester and Manchester. A number of times I even trained at Stamford Bridge, the home of Chelsea FC (not on the pitch you understand!!) amusing participants because I had spent time talking to famous footballers about the place but whom I did not recognise!

Whilst with Northamptonshire LA I also worked closely with the Revd Philip Davies, who was my predecessor at the Diocese, and who became a very good friend. There had always been a strong link between the LA and the Diocese and we made sure that this continued, running RE Network Meetings and joint training sessions.

Part of my Advisory role meant also taking on responsibility for Safeguarding. I had to sit on what was then the local 'Area Child Protection Committee' and provide training and updates for my colleagues. This quickly extended into training Governors and Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools. It was then that my passion for Safeguarding was born and has continued alongside RE over the years.

When I started as the LA RE Adviser, there was a huge team of curriculum Advisers and we could offer a lot of support to individual schools. This, of course, changed when the Advisory Team was disbanded by 2010. The future looked bleak but I was fortunate enough to gain a post with the LA as a School Improvement Officer (in addition to the RE role and Safeguarding role). Despite fearing that I would not enjoy this role because of all the data analysis it was fantastic. I was so lucky to be given some remarkable schools to work with and try to support, including my old Secondary School - Wollaston and all its feeder Primary schools. The first visit to Wollaston was a very strange experience as you can imagine!

I developed close relationships with the wonderful staff in all of these schools and am pleased that many of them returned the support when I was made redundant in 2013, asking me back to lead RE or Safeguarding training for them.

I truly believe I was blessed when I was made redundant because not only did so many schools ask me to support them but the LA commissioned me to lead Safeguarding training and to carry out Safeguarding Audits in schools and the University of Northampton contracted me as an Associate Lecturer to lead RE training for undergraduates training to become teachers (their RE Lecturer was leaving!)

Far from being without work I was soon nearly full time again! Then, Philip left his post with the Diocese and the post of RE & Collective Worship Adviser came about. Unfortunately, I could not apply for the initial post as it was for 3 days a week and I was too booked up! However, not wanting to lose contact with the Diocese I applied and offered one day a week from 2014. And so, that brings us to current times.

Despite working just one day a week, I have loved working with my Diocesan Team family, and will always be grateful to them for their love and support through the last eight years. The latter years have included some difficult times for me and I know that it is their help and support that have seen me through.

I want to end with a massive thank you to the most important people without whom I would not be here...

All you wonderful RE Leads and Headteachers out there. The best part of my job throughout the last 22 years has, undoubtedly, been working with you. It stopped me from missing the pupils which was a huge issue for me.

Whether in your school, a training venue or via Zoom (!) you make it all worthwhile. Many of you I have known now for a number of years (some of you I even taught!) and I will really miss you. Thank you so much for your kindness, support and hard work to make a difference with Religious Education.

It is the right time for me to be retiring from my role now, I need to spend more time with family and friends and get more rest! (Something I am not good at!!)

It is not the end though...!

As I pass the RE & Collective Worship Adviser role on to my dear friend and colleague, Jane Lewis, admirably supported by colleagues from RE Today, I am still going to be part of the Diocesan family.

I am going to have a small "Safeguarding in Schools" role from September. This will mean devising the Safeguarding Training Programme and leading a few New and Refresher DSL training sessions through the year.

I will also remain representing the Diocese on the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (Learning and Development Committee) so that I can update the Director with local information.

So, who knows, I may see you during the next academic year. I certainly hope I will be seeing a lot of you on 28th June at Hayfield Cross for the last RE Course that I will be organising! BOOK NOW!!

I am keeping my Diocesan e-mail address so you will be able to keep in touch.

I wish you all a safe, happy and healthy term and a fabulous summer holiday. You certainly deserve it after the testing couple of years that you have faced.

Kindest wishes,
Lesley

Lesley Pollard

RE and Collective Worship Adviser - Diocese of Peterborough

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CPD Opportunities

Dates for your Diary		
Course	Date and Time	Venue
<p>"Focus on Non-Religious World Views"</p> <p>Led by Lat Blaylock (For RE Subject Leads and Teachers of RE at KS1, KS2 and KS3)</p>	<p>Tuesday 7th June 2022 9.00am - 12noon</p>	<p>Via Zoom</p>
<p>"Getting the Balance Right in RE"</p> <p>Led by Gillian Georgiou With Lesley Pollard (For RE Subject Leads and Teachers of RE at KS1, KS2 and KS3)</p>	<p>Tuesday 28th June 2022 9.30am - 3.30pm</p>	<p>Hayfield Cross CE Primary School Hayfield Crescent, Kettering, NN15 5FJ</p>

For further details, costs and bookings please go to the website:

<http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/news-and-events/events?tags=school>

or contact Alex on 01604 887060 or e-mailing: education@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Resources

Islamic Artefacts

Take a look at this great resource for anyone seeking Islamic Artefacts/artworks to use in lessons.

Bayt Al Fann is Arabic for 'Art House'. It is a global home for artists, creatives and communities to collaborate, connect and co-create the future of Islamic art and culture. It is artist led and receives no public funding.

Bayt Al Fann is a house for everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim to explore the past and future of Islamic art together. Go to:

<https://www.baytalfann.com/>

Religion, Collections and Heritage Group

The Religion, Collections and Heritage Group aims to make museums, galleries and heritage collections of religious art and other material more accessible, not least to educational groups and RE teachers.

This exciting new group starts with a blog and online seminars and scoping studies on collections and museum training needs.

Go to:

<https://religioncollections.wordpress.com>

Story Tent

Story Tent offers easily accessible online teaching materials to support KS2 pupils to learn more about religions and worldviews through story. They have created 'Story Bank' which contains stories from different religions and worldviews.

Each story comes with a set of questions that can be used in teaching, and a video where pupils can see a person from that religion or worldview reading the story.

These materials are designed to be used flexibly to meet the different demands of diverse school contexts, for example school assemblies, guided reading and themed days.

Find out more at:

<http://www.storytent.concordant.online/index.php>

Jewish Museum, London

The recently launched 'Inclusive Judaism Image Library', allows you to download photos from Britain's vibrantly diverse Jewish community directly to your classrooms. By downloading images for FREE, you can feel confident that you are teaching a representative, inclusive and authentic Judaism in your classrooms. All images have curriculum links to Jewish festivals, Life cycle events and Synagogue worship for Primary and Secondary schools, representing the UK's vibrantly diverse Jewish community. You can sign up for their newsletter too which will keep you informed about resources and events.

Go to:

<https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/jewish-museum-online/>

Westminster Abbey Teaching Resources

Discover Westminster Abbey's growing catalogue of free Religious Education resources for KS1 through to post-16. Image banks, videos, activity sheets and full presentations will be your guide to understand more about Christian beliefs, festivals and practices using the nation's church as a case study. Complete with learning objectives or links to exam specifications, all resources are ready to use or can act as inspiration for your own lesson planning.

NATRE News

The top three NATRE news items that you may find of interest can be found on the NATRE website, together with lots of other RE news:

<https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/>

1. ['Once in a career' opportunity for RE leaders and teachers to help shape the future of the subject](#), the Religious Education Council (REC) is calling on the country's most talented leaders in RE to participate in an influential project to help shape the future of RE in England and Wales.
2. [Parliamentary talks over the future of religious education in schools sees call for a National Plan](#), Parliamentary talks over the future of religious education in schools sees call for a National Plan.
3. [Failure to meet statutory requirements on RE will be taken into consideration in the Ofsted 'quality of education' judgement](#), NATRE has noted an increase in OFSTED reporting on the lack of RE in schools.

Sharing Good Practice

This term the 'Good Practice' write up comes to us from Finedon Mulso CE Junior School. Thank you to Peter Grindrod, Diocesan School Consultant, for drawing our attention to the great work there and a big thank you to RE & Collective Worship Lead, Chloe Friell, for sharing her new school approach to in-class reflective worship.

"This year, a weekly in-class reflection was introduced at Finedon Mulso CE Junior School. Led by each class teacher, the sessions aim to promote children's spiritual development by helping them to think about, and so feel connected to, things bigger than themselves.

Each worship is built around a key question. The focus of the reflection is introduced to the class and, throughout the worship, children are given time to discuss, reflect upon and share their own personal responses before recording in the class reflection book. While outcomes are suggested, individualism is encouraged: the books belong to each class and mirror the children's thoughts rather than a pre-determined vision of what the 'correct' answer might be.

The reflection question selected is often tied to key events in the Gregorian calendar or liturgical calendar. The school's Christian values, British Values and diverse figures from history have also influenced worship sessions. Questions posed so far include:

- **Remembrance Day:** Christians believe God created all living things. How might God feel about war?
- **Christmas:** Which Christmas traditions may be most important to Christians?
- **Generosity:** Besides money, what else can we give to ourselves, each other and the world?
- **British Values:** Why do we need to listen to people who are different from us?
- **Archbishop Desmond Tutu:** What 'little bit of good' can you do where we are?

Each worship closes with a child-led prayer. Reflecting upon the session's question, children are asked to discuss ideas which could be included before a member of the class volunteers to lead the class in an invitational prayer.

This is an example of the termly framework I give to teachers.

Forgiveness

- Discuss the meaning of forgiveness: choosing to stop being angry or upset with someone for something that person has done.
- St. Paul - who spread the teachings of Jesus - wrote a letter to the Church at Colossae. In the letter, he wrote: 'Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive others' (Colossians 3:13).
- Discuss the words of St. Paul. What might God forgive people for? Why is forgiveness important for ourselves, each other and the world?

British Values: Mutual Respect & Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

- Share British Values PPT.
- Why do we need to listen to people who are different from us?
As a class, generate a list of different things we can learn from others.

Key Figure: Mother Teresa

- Share PPT to introduce Mother Teresa.
- Which Christian values did Mother Teresa show during her lifetime?
- Discuss key quote (including the meaning of peace): 'Peace begins with a smile'. How could a smile bring peace to the world?

1st March - St. David's Day

- 1st March is Saint David's Day. St. David is the patron saint of Wales. What is a Saint? Explain to children that, in religion, a Saint is a person who has lived a holy life and is therefore granted a place in heaven. In Catholicism, a branch of Christianity, Mother Teresa is considered a Saint.
- A patron saint is a saint who is linked to a particular place.
- St. David's last words to his followers were shared during a sermon he made: 'Be joyful, keep the faith and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do'.
How did Saint David want Christians to live?

8th March - International Women's Day

- Share International Women's Day PPT
- Introduce reflection question: Why should men and women have equal rights?
Discuss importance of gender equality as a class.

17th March – St. Patrick's Day

- Who was the patron Saint of Wales? Recap the definitions of Saint and Patron Saint.
- Introduce St. Patrick as the Patron Saint of Ireland. St. Patrick is traditionally associated with the shamrock plant which he used to explain the Holy Trinity. What is the Holy Trinity? *The Christian belief that God is three in one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- Over 1000 years ago, St. Patrick believed that everyone should hear the gospels - the messages shared by Jesus throughout his life. Why do people still choose to listen to Jesus' teachings today?

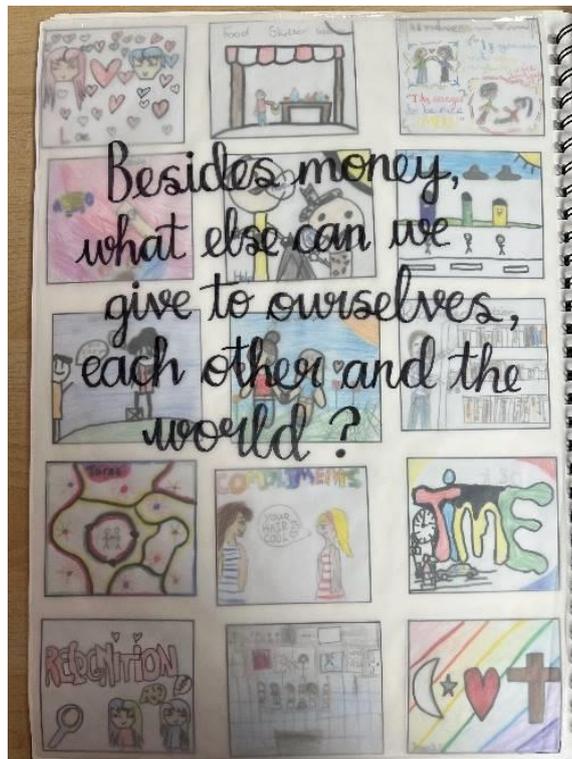
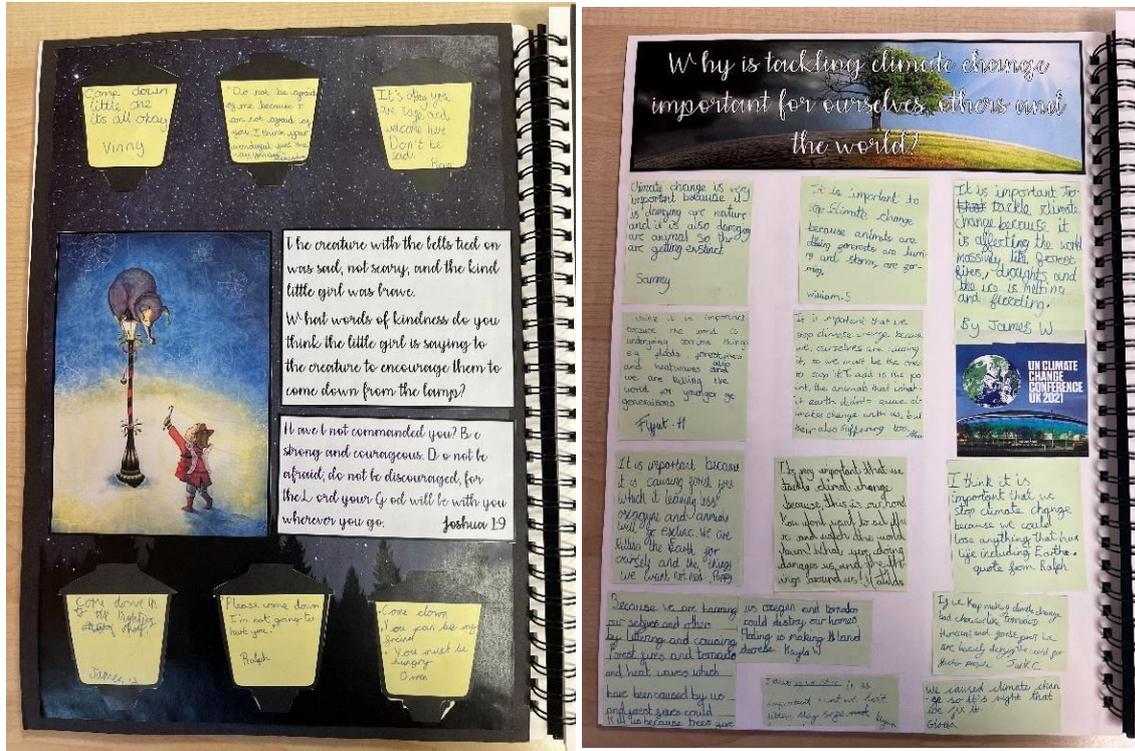
During pupil voice, children expressed the positive impact of this approach to reflective class worship:

- **Tyreese (Y6):** 'I think the reflection book is critical because it helps us to learn more about the world and what is happening. It stops us from forgetting important values and reminds us how to act'.
- **Alexandra (Y6):** 'I enjoy using the reflection book because it helps me to express my feelings for events and people who may be less fortunate. The reflection book allows us to look at both our thoughts and other people's and to learn from them'.
- **Orlando (Y4):** 'I like reflection sessions because I love group work, and it is nice to share our ideas with everyone. The topics that we have discussed so far are interesting because there are no right or wrong answers'.
- **Cleo (Y3):** 'Reflection is good because we get a chance to hear everyone's opinions on questions that we would not normally think to discuss with each other'.
- **Oscar (Y3):** 'Reflection helps us learn new things and gives us a chance as we get older to think about our values and how we can apply it to our lives. Working as a group gives us a chance to talk with other children and gain their thoughts on specific ideas'.

Moving forward, we will continue to complete one class-based worship per week to build upon the success of this approach".

Thank you very much Chloe and the pupils of Finedon Mulso. Enjoy your reflective class worship sessions.

Some images from the reflection books



Christians believe God created all living things. How might He feel about war? What would God think about Remembrance Day?

I think that God would be upset because lives were lost and things happened unfortunately.

God would be sad because we are killing each other and that God has created the world.

God would be very disappointed because he made humans to be kind and good people but we are killing other people and being unkind.

God would be happy because remembering people who died.

God would be disappointed because he made the world to be a good place but we are killing each other.

I think that God would be upset about war because he made the world to be a good place but some people disagree.

I think God will feel disappointed because it destroyed nature and humans were killing each other.

God might feel guilty because he has created everyone so that they can enjoy life but because of war, there is suffering physically and emotionally.

I think he will be disappointed about war because he created it and the people he made are destroying it.

God would be disappointed because he made the world to be a good place but we are killing each other. He would be sad because the world will be ruined by war.

What little bit of good can you do where we are?

to the trust fund to donating money

What is charity like? I think it's good (think our love for each other is good). Come from the heart, your neighbor can see when their is love.

Pralfeh

Do your little bit of good where you are; its those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.

- Desmond Tutu

AZ QUOTES