

# The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants

*Supporting and developing leadership in RE and collective worship*

## From the Co-chairs...

Dear RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants,

We hope you managed to have a wonderful start to the new academic year and that you and your families are well. We look forward to working closely with you over the next year in all that you do to advise and help others in the RE world and in particular we are really looking forward to meeting with you either in person on line during the year.



This edition of AREIAC News contains:

- Diary dates
- Update from Professor Trevor Cooling about Implementing the Commission on RE's Worldview approach in RE
- Update from Culham St Gabriel's Trust
- RE Young Ambassador's Report
- Update on Holocaust Memorial Day
- **Article:** Exploring the Lived Experience of Families from 8 worldviews
- **Article:** AREIAC ©VAT in RE 2020: Adding Value to the RE Curriculum
- **Article:** Relationships, Sex and Health Education: Any Business of SACREs?

Please keep in touch with us through emails, the website, coming to the webinars and book club and contributing to further newsletters. The next edition of AREIAC News is due to go out in March 2022, so if you have any articles or information that you would like included, please let us have this by the February half term.

Best wishes

*J Diamond-Conway J Ball*

Julia and Justine

## Dates for your diary



**Webinar:** Teaching Adults:

**Justine Ball and Claire Clinton** - 15 Nov, 6-7.15 pm



**Conference:** AREIAC conference: 4-5 July 2022.

**Save the date!**



**Book Club:** Book club will meet on 4 November 6-7pm

Making every RE lesson count: Six principles to support religious education teaching”

By Louise **Hutton** and Dawn **Cox**

## Implementing the Commission on RE's Worldview Approach in RE

*Professor Trevor Cooling - Emeritus Professor Christ Church Canterbury University*



There are two projects to report on:

### 1. Religion and worldviews in the classroom: clarifying key concepts

This project is due to finish this academic year. Its purpose is to develop understanding of the implications of the Commission on RE's recommendation that RE in schools should be framed by a worldview approach. To date, this project has:

- Published an extensive academic literature review on the worldview idea (<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/rec-discussion-papers-on-worldviews/>).
- Run a series of consultations with 13 leading academics and then published four discussion papers prepared by Amira Tharani. (<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/rec-discussion-papers-on-worldviews/>).
- Run an extended online listening and conversation programme with REC members which ranged from large meetings to bespoke consultations
- Developed a bibliography of key literature at two levels a) professional and b) academic.
- Developed a series of FAQs at a) general public and b) professional level.
- Launched the revised REthinkRE website ([www.rethinkre.org](http://www.rethinkre.org)) to embrace a religion and worldviews approach.
- Published an academic article in the *British Journal of Educational Studies* challenging an inaccurate treatment of the Commission (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00071005.2021.1954142>)
- Developed an animation to highlight the focus on lived religion in the approach (to be launched at the SRGM).
- We are considering commissioning a second piece of video material, on “ways of knowing” but no final decision has been made yet



## 2. Religion and Worldviews in the classroom: syllabus building: principles, tools and exemplification.

This project is due to finish in 2024; we are about six months in. Its purpose is to support syllabus developers and curriculum writers working in a variety of different contexts in implementing the worldview approach to RE in the schools that they serve. There will be three outputs: 1) A handbook built around a more developed National Statement of Entitlement (NSE), 2) three exemplar frameworks to illustrate what the worldview approach may look like using three different approaches to RE and 3) exemplification of classroom work for each of the three frameworks. The REC is working in partnership with REToday Services in delivering this project, which is being led by Stephen Pett.

To date we have:

- Consulted with a range of key influencers within the RE world.
- Set up and held the first meeting of the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) for the project. The second full-day meeting of the group is on October 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Drafted a revised NSE.
- Drafted an outline of contents for the handbook.

Future plans include:

Information sharing with REC members at the SRGM on November 16<sup>th</sup>.

### The 2021 / 22 Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

The 2021-2022 Wallchart and the eCalendar are now available from Shap more details at:

[www.shapworkingparty.org.uk](http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk)

The best and most reliable calendar and essential addition to any RE department, staffroom or advisors or consultants office. Sample copies (21/22 calendar) available for AREIAC members contact:

[admin@shapworkingparty.org.uk](mailto:admin@shapworkingparty.org.uk)

quoting: **AREIAC SAMPLE**

## Updates from the Culham St. Gabriel's Trust

*Kate Christopher - Core Director*



Lots going on for the team at Culham St Gabriel's

**The Leadership Programme** has launched for its second year.

This is a tailored programme to bring teachers into positions of regional and national leadership in the religion and worldviews community, inspired by AREIAC's REvitalise programme. If this is something teachers in your area would be interested in, read about the current mentees here: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/leadership/leadership-programme/there>. New places open in January 2022 so there is plenty of time to think about applying next year.

**RE:Online is proud to celebrate Black History Month** with practical teaching resources around Muhammad Ali. Muhammad Ali was world-class athlete, an antiracist activist, a conscientious objector and a devoted Muslim. In weaving all these aspects of his identity together and considering the political and cultural contexts he navigated, the resources are an excellent example of worldviews thinking in the classroom.

Read Kate's blog here: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/2021/10/04/boxing-activism-and-nation-of-islam-the-amazing-life-of-muhammad-ali/>

Access the resources here: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/resources/islam-as-a-worldview-muhammad-ali/>

The **In Conversation series** where current thinkers in and around religion and worldviews education continues this Autumn. We are looking forward to hearing from Ruth Peacock, director of the Religion Media Centre on 3rd November. Book here: <https://www.cstg.org.uk/activities/events/in-conversation/>

You can hear a fascinating discussion between CEO Kathryn Wright and Dr Sarah Harvey exploring new findings about the public perception of the value and importance of an education in religion and worldviews: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/research/in-conversation/>. All previous In Conversation events are made available for you to catch up.

If teachers in your region need CPD, why not try **Culham St Gabriel's FREE self-study online courses**. These are online, free to access and designed for teachers in all school types.

These courses cover various aspects of teaching, including subject knowledge, focussing on the Primary phase, community cohesion and the value of dialogue. Course director Kate Christopher is holding a webinar introducing the courses, how to sign up and what they offer. The webinar is free and all are welcome.

Sign up on Eventbrite here: [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introducing-culham-st-gabriels-free-self-study-courses-registration-187714096917?utm\\_source=eb\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=claim\\_tickets\\_1&utm\\_term=claim\\_tickets\\_listing\\_title](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introducing-culham-st-gabriels-free-self-study-courses-registration-187714096917?utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=claim_tickets_1&utm_term=claim_tickets_listing_title)

## RE Young Ambassadors report to August 31st, 2021

*Sue Holmes, AREIAC North-East, Education Consultant*



Five RE advisers are working with schools within 8 SACRE areas in both Primary and Secondary phases:

- Barnet together with Haringey
- Hull together with East Riding
- Hampshire
- Buckinghamshire together with Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire

Some schools are in areas of social deprivation and some in high-achieving areas; some were chosen for their recognised quality of RE and some require improvement.

During the Spring and Summer Terms 2021, groups of RE Young Ambassadors (YAs) were selected. They discussed **Can we create RE Champions?** and how they might use the REC’s RE Policy Unit (REPU) campaign themes to help improve the public perception of RE and present key messages to the key audiences of pupils/headteachers/governors/parents:

***We want high quality education in Religion and Worldviews for all pupils in all schools, taught by well qualified and trained teachers (REPU central aim)***

### Medium level

• We want:

**Government**

• to fund a **National Plan for RE** to ensure it is **properly resourced and taught** by professionally trained teachers, and to enact a **statement of entitlement** to a high-quality education in Religion and Worldviews for all pupils.

**Headteachers and Governors**

• to make the teaching of RE a **celebrated part of the curriculum**, to ensure that **pupils make progress in RE** and to regularly monitor the quality of the provision in RE.

**Parents**

• to **understand and value the role of RE** in their children’s learning and preparation for adult life, and **champion the subject** in their school.

***The YAs asked initial questions such as:***

- Why is RE important and what makes 'good' RE?
- What is our experience of RE teachers?
- What do we appreciate about our teachers' expertise?
- What can the best teachers of RE do, that others cannot?
- What impact will good RE have on us (personally, socially, spiritually, morally)?
- How would the outcome of our education be different if there was no RE taught in school?

***In response, they then considered whether they could:***

- Generate material that could illustrate these messages through the eyes of young people
- Produce some key messages/ slogans/ posters/ video clips
- Produce recorded assemblies/messages to politicians or letters to newspapers/govt.
- Do anything else that would make significant impact.

**What has been done to date: the generic benefits for all YAs so far:**

- Shared their enthusiasm and interest for RE
- Gained confidence, skills and leadership experience
- Raised the profile of RE in school
- Provided opportunities to celebrate and share their learning in RE
- Aired personal views and perspectives in communicating successfully to a range of adults who support RE, from Senior Management to SACRE members
- Met and debated with other young people about why RE matters
- Built up relevant experience for secondary school, college, UCAS or job applications.

**Successes - specific achievements of YAs in particular schools:**

- Four Y6 boys volunteered as YAs and they recruited three Y6 girls, together representing a cross-section of religious and non-religious worldviews
- The YAs explored RE learning across their school through book trawls and displays
- They made a video about their role to present in (virtual) school assemblies
- They encouraged all year groups to participate in the *Spirited Arts* competition and helped select the best entries to submit to NATRE
- They wrote and shared poems about the importance of religions and personal worldviews
- Current YAs handed over their responsibilities to the next Year 6 for 2021-2
- They promoted the WIRE Award programme
- YAs discussed *How can we improve RE/ RE post-pandemic?* with pupils from other schools
- They found a new Youth Voice slot on SACRE

The project continues in the same schools from September 2021, with some new YAs getting involved.

### Hopes and aspirations for the YAs in the next academic year 2021-2:

- To contribute virtually to the launch of the new locally agreed syllabus in October
- To meet other YAs at a local Buddhist centre for a shared Autumn away-day / celebration
- To continue as YAs after transitioning to Secondary school - they really enjoyed their YA role and hope to spread the good practice to involve RE departments at partner Secondary schools
- To contribute RE news to local and national media / websites
- To present to Local Authority leaders
- To report further to the RE Council and NASACRE
- To report to the DfE
- To lobby MPs (including potentially, in Westminster Debates)
- To present through social media (e.g. in support of RE teacher recruitment, GCSE and A-level options material, etc.)

### Note re. methodology

Teachers facilitating the YAs made reference to the 'Shared Space' toolkit:

"If we want young people to be able to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief, then we need them to be able to interact meaningfully with others. Using contact theory supports this interaction by considering how we group pupils, how we arrange our classrooms and how we enable pupils to engage in dialogue in order to help reduce prejudice. Using contact theory alongside other strategies, which promote community relations and encountering others, can potentially transform attitudes and deepen our understanding of the world we live in."

### RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

AREIAC member Paul Hopkins is currently engaged in research and development work on the use of 360 image and video in Religious Education, see film on how to make a 360 degree tour of your place of worship - <http://mmiweb.org.uk/360visits.mp4>. If you are interested in developing these kinds of idea then please contact Paul at [paul@paulhopkins.org.uk](mailto:paul@paulhopkins.org.uk).



## Holocaust Memorial Day in schools

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is on 27 January, and there are lots of free resources online to help teachers lead assemblies, activities or lessons with students. New this year are lesson plans about the Kindertransport and a flexible set of worksheets called ‘Days to remember’, which give an introduction to different genocides through one day, one person and one artefact.



You can find all the school materials at [www.hmd.org.uk/schools](http://www.hmd.org.uk/schools).

Marking HMD helps your students to learn about the Holocaust, Nazi persecution of other groups, more recent genocides and contemporary issues. They will increase their knowledge, empathy and desire to take part in social action. This is especially important at a time when hate crime, extremist views, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate are on the rise.

Contact the **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust** Education Officer today for help and support and to get started: [education@hmd.org.uk](mailto:education@hmd.org.uk)

## Exploring the Lived Experience of Families from Eight Worldviews

*Gill Vaisey, Religion and Worldviews Independent Adviser*



The culmination of this three year project, working with eight wonderful families each of a different worldview, could not be more timely.



The introduction of the new EYFS Framework for England, (September 2021) strengthens the place of religious education through the explicit reference to ‘religious communities’ within the ELG – People, Culture and Community.

The September 2020 Development Matters document reiterates the importance of enabling children to understand and appreciate the significance of religion and worldviews within our society.

The Commission on RE Report (2018) states that “in an increasingly diverse society, understanding religious and non-religious worldviews has never been more essential than it is now.”

Alongside the new curriculum for Wales (2022) revised legislation provides for all pupils from the age of 3 years to be legally entitled to education in religion, values and ethics.

This is all great news for the education of our children and supporting them to live in an ever increasing diverse and plural world.

So, the Books at Press publication - a set of beautifully produced hardback books for learners of all ages, is an essential resource to support understanding of the diversity of religion and worldviews. Each book focusses on a five year old child within the family and includes simple text and full page photographs to illustrate aspects of the child’s and family’s everyday life.

Families reflecting Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, the Bábá’í faith, Islam and humanism are featured and reflect some lesser known traditions and expression of beliefs



*“It is fantastic to have a whole series of books about children from families with such a wide range of faiths and worldviews specifically aimed at children in Early Years. The range includes worldviews that are less well-resourced and this makes this series particularly valuable not just for Early Years but for Key Stage 1 as well.”*



**Catriona Card EYFS Practitioner Lead and RE Subject Leader, Berkeley Primary School, Scunthorpe**

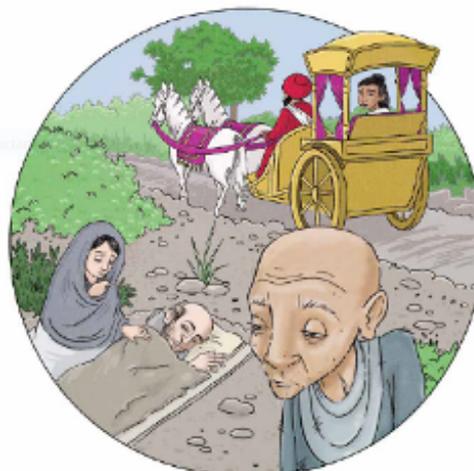
*“The books are set out in a user friendly way, not too much text on each page when sharing with the children and questions to help them engage with the vocabulary and concepts covered. I really like the way that subject specific vocabulary, such as names of key figures and festivals is introduced in the text. This supports teachers in using the vocabulary in context.”*

A beautifully illustrated 'story', within each book, provides the context for understanding the family's beliefs and practices.



The prince was a happy boy, living in a beautiful palace and surrounded by everything he could wish for. He loved all the animals and birds that lived in the palace grounds.

8



When Siddhartha grew up and left the palace, he realised that other people's lives are not always so happy. Often people feel sad and troubled and he wanted to help them find happiness.

9

*"The stories are very simply written to explain hard concepts to the children and these can be used for discussion, role play, re-telling, puppet work etc. The inclusion of a story from each faith also helps to further the understanding of the beliefs. These books are a great resource for the Early Years classroom. They are very clearly written and illustrated in ways that will appeal to very young children for example starting with the child and what they like to do. The books describe the ideas and beliefs of the children in clear and easy to understand words. The photos as illustrations, are a lovely way to show visually the children's beliefs in action"*



**Sally Giovanelli, EYFS Practitioner Lead, RE and Art Subject Leader, Danegrove School, E Barnet**

Parents/carers/students/teachers' notes are included at the back of the book to give sufficient information to delve deeper, as required, for learners of different ages and abilities. *"The supporting information for teachers at the end of the book is comprehensive."* (Catriona Card)

Another key feature is the summary of each worldview written from the perspective of a five-year-old and verified by the parents. This, alongside a colour coded timeline of key figures makes a wonderfully informative double page spread.



*Through face to face encounters with children from different religions, the books are a high quality resource that ensure teachers have accurate knowledge of different faiths. Through these books, your class will be exploring and encountering different faith values, feelings and ways of living in an age-appropriate way. The books would engage children of any primary age in learning about the ideas, teachings, stories and practices."*

**Naomi Emison, EYFS Practitioner Lead, Reception teacher and RE Subject Leader at Mickle Trafford Village School, Chester**

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to be involved in the lives of these wonderful families, all of whom have embraced the project wholeheartedly. Each family has fully committed to ensuring that we have accurately reflected the reality of their particular expression of their beliefs. This is an exciting opportunity to acknowledge the diversity that exists within religious and non-religious traditions. These are real people with real lives. We have been welcomed into their homes and communities with amazing hospitality and kindness. Each family has shown a real willingness and enthusiasm to openly share aspects of their personal lives, to enable others to learn about their practices, values and beliefs. We have spent many hours talking, walking, laughing, learning, drinking, eating, playing, and sometimes praying with family members, and such is the reality of life, there has even been a few inevitable tears along the way!

*"Because of the themes in these books such as belonging, helping, kindness etc., they can be used in lots of different ways in the classroom. They can be used to stimulate discussions about these ideas via photos and text. They can be used to introduce different themes to the class such as kindness and then followed up with a variety of practical activities in the classroom. They encourage lots of comparisons between the children's lives and ideas. The books are a great addition to the Early Year's RE book collection and also are a great resource for KS1 as well"*



**Sally Giovanelli**

This new series is a fresh and much needed resource for teaching religion and worldviews. It has been produced specifically with 3 – 7 year olds in mind but is suitable for older learners also.

A wealth of support material is available free of charge to enable practitioners to make the most of the opportunities to utilise these resources fully, alongside the [EYFS curriculum for England](#) and the new [RVE curriculum for Wales](#).

For further details visit [www.booksatpress.co.uk](http://www.booksatpress.co.uk) or contact [gill@booksatpress.co.uk](mailto:gill@booksatpress.co.uk)

## AREIAC ©VAT in RE 2020: Adding Value to the RE Curriculum

*Jan McGuire, AREIAC Executive Secretary, Independent RE & SMSC Adviser, School Adviser to Barnet & Haringey LAs & SACREs*



**VAT:** Value added teaching (Pedagogy): Vocabulary Artefacts & Texts

As RE Advisers, immersed in the religious education curriculum, we often have issues, ideas and solutions buzzing around inside our heads. If only we had the chance to get them onto paper!

In 2019 such an opportunity arose: partly as a result of tenacity - a sheer grit to try to solve a problem that was bugging me, and a result of interest and support from teachers that could see the benefit of the idea, the proposal was committed to paper and submitted to Westhill/NASACRE

- How can we help to upskill teachers of RE in a high challenge, low threat way?
- How can we upskill them at the same time as helping them to build their curriculum?

Teachers of RE are often non-specialists, often lacking in RE confidence and have huge workloads and little time to personally upskill and develop meaningful changes to the RE curriculum in school. The ©VAT in RE 2020 idea was to try to provide a structure for teachers that was straight forward, low threat, but provided a process that enabled them to grow and provide them with the confidence to teach high quality RE. The ©VAT in RE pedagogy three step process was born. The idea could also be applied in theory to any agreed Syllabus framework, scheme of work or lesson schema or planning document.

The ©VAT in RE pedagogy premise was shared, it was live! Then COVID 19 arrived.

It is perhaps an overused although very apt phrase: 'We are working through unprecedented times.' That is certainly the case when embarking on a schools-based action research style project bang in the middle of a worldwide pandemic. The project did survive. This is partly due to the wonderful teachers that saw value in a process that was designed to upskill them as specialist and non-specialist RE teachers, as well as enjoying a pedagogical rationale that engaged the children in a meaningful way in the classroom.

The project commenced, gathered momentum and is now coming to a stage that we can share the steps we took and our findings to date.



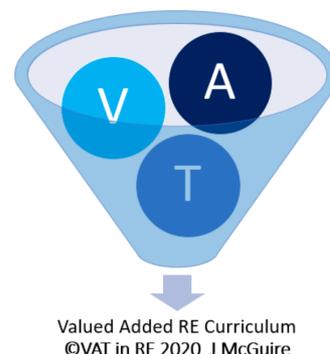
## The ©VAT in RE project

VAT aimed to:

- Increase the confidence of teachers, both non-specialist and specialist teachers of RE (in a high challenge but non-threatening way)
- The technique was easily mastered and could be quickly applied practically
- The pedagogy used was based on well-founded EEF research, on the EEF Tool data base: suggesting high return and progress for children: this was well received, and gave us confidence to continue

The ©VAT in RE project was coined by Jan McGuire. Teachers were asked to ensure that the 'Golden Threads' of learning (from their personal Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Barnet) were broken down sequentially throughout the curriculum experienced by the pupils as they progressed through the school. Each lesson would always have a focus on:

1. Vocabulary
2. Artefacts and
3. Texts



**Jan McGuire** wanted to trial the hypotheses that to help busy practising teachers to build the skills and knowledge in RE, that would have a positive impact on the pupil's knowledge and experience in the classroom, that building these three aspects into the lesson was a manageable and impactful process. An easy approach. Simple to remember. Straight forward to build into lesson planning. Quick to share with colleagues. A clear three-step focus.

As the teachers build in ©VAT in RE into their planning and delivery they are themselves becoming more knowledgeable of the subject area of Religious Education and more confident in delivering the area to the class/ pupils. Each teacher was encouraged to share the methodology back in their schools. They were asked to discuss the ©VAT in RE at each stage of the lesson planning process, choosing vocabulary, artefacts and texts that their team of teachers thought would build sequential learning. They were provided with an exemplar template to share with colleagues, with the purpose of encouraging them to add the ©VAT in RE process to their school planning document.

<p>J McGuire 18.01.2021 Barnet AS</p>	<p>VAT Exemplar 1 KS1</p>	<p><b><u>Leading a Good Life: Leaders and Teachers: Beliefs and Believing</u></b>                  Many religions and non-religious communities strive to live according to what they understand as a good life. Their members share an understanding as to the sort of characteristics and behaviours a good person will seek to achieve, as well as dealing with what is, or is not, acceptable moral behaviour. People have different ideas about how and why we should lead a good life. The ideal may be presented in the lives and character of religious founders, and non-religious exemplars, <u>leaders</u> and teachers. There may be considerable agreement across different religions and non-religious worldviews on some matters, and considerable differences on others. Also, there are often major disagreements over the interpretation and application of moral principles between members of the same religion or worldview.</p>
<p>V</p>	<p>Implementation Vocabulary: Tier 3</p>	<p><b>Vocabulary:</b>                  ‘Special’ people/ role models/ Leaders/ Religious Leaders/ Founders (special and holy- linked to ‘god’ status)                  Jesus Christ/ Muhammad / Buddha                  Interpretation                  ** create a knowledge or vocabulary list: find definitions and encourage the use of the terms in discussion and writing tasks.</p>
<p>A</p>	<p>Implementation Artefacts</p>	<p><b>Artefacts (Resources)</b>                  1. Photograph/ Painting/Image of Buddha: Siddhartha                  2. Human Artefact: could ask someone from local faith community to tell a story or read from a sacred text</p>
<p>T</p>	<p>Implementation Texts/ Narrative/ Story</p>	<p><b>Tell Me A Story:</b>                  Most religions / worldviews introduce children to stories from the lives of their exemplary people as examples of the qualities and characteristics they might try to achieve. They also teach about specific actions that are right and wrong and about good and bad attitudes.                  1. Parents sometimes tell their children stories about people who they believe set a good example of how to behave                  2. most people in religious traditions tell children stories about people who set a good example to follow because they live out their religion's understanding of right and wrong (these can differ within a religion/ worldview)</p>

Teachers are encouraged to work collaboratively on their planning, choosing the VAT content together. This helps to build confidence and enables the sharing of good practise and ideas. The vocabulary, artefacts and text examples are built into every lesson, and each lesson plan has the three key areas clearly stated. As the lesson is built, incorporating the ©VAT in RE, the lesson becomes increasingly deep and rich in content, design and intent, with a clear focus. Teachers may need to research into the meaning of artefacts, and they may need to find a good story to include. They will need to decide on the three tier words to focus on and think about how this vocabulary will help the learning to be ‘sticky’ and feed into the sequential learning journey of the child. The active planning process helps to up-skill the teachers. The **process** is the learning journey for the teachers. It is a practical process, one that they need to complete to equip them with well-prepared lessons. It is a process that develops confidence. It is learning by osmosis!

**Why Vocabulary, Artefacts and Texts?**

To put it bluntly, you have to start somewhere. As a teacher today we do not lack materials, resources, exemplars and ideas, pedagogy, curriculum theory and opportunities to learn. We have access to all of these. This in many cases is the root of the problem. Where can we start? What can we trust as an authentic or reliable source? We can feel paralysed by the sheer vastness of the undertaking.

I use the mantra: ‘*light up the room one bulb at a time*’ as I believe that it is better to focus on one thing and do it well than trying to attempt to have a little bit of everything; ‘Pic & mix’ approach to pedagogy and practice and finding that you quickly become over-whelmed by the sheer enormity of the undertaking.

Light up the room...  
one bulb at a time  
Mantra 1



©VAT in RE by Jen McGuire

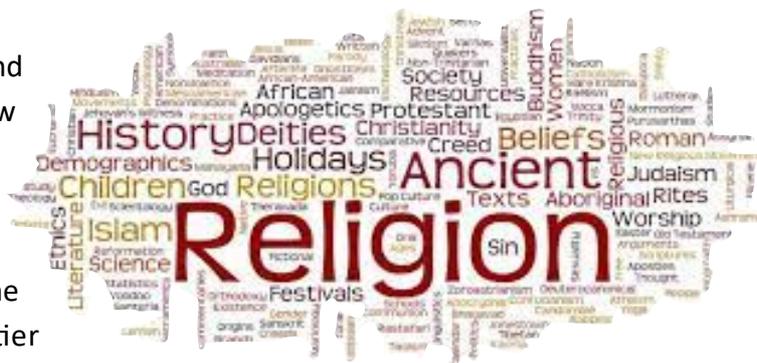
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Beginning with the findings of research and data led pedagogy and practise, means that the bulb you are choosing to switch on first should work. The ©VAT in RE process looked to the EEF toolkit as a starting point, as well as referring to Ofsted documents and national reports on RE. We have ended up with three light bulbs: Vocabulary, artefacts and texts. Three clear things to focus on.

[Teaching and Learning Toolkit | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

## Vocabulary

Children love unpacking big words and feeling 'clever'. They enjoy adding a new 'big word' to their word bank. The VAT process encourages teachers and pupils to explore new three tier vocabulary as a class and within the context of the curriculum. Three tier



vocabulary refers to words that are used specifically in RE: animism, Mosque, mediation, prayer, Theist, Deist, transcendence, Trinity, agape, ahimsa, Veda, Zoroastrianism. For every concept and theme there are many three tier words that can be explored. Each word chosen can be said aloud, the meaning unpacked: etymology, it can be practised and applied in discussion and writing. This provides the opportunity for deep learning. The vocabulary explored will be strategically placed within the context of the sequential learning process. Each concept can be revealed more fully through the understanding of the vocabulary explored. It will also provide the pupils with a word bank: a toolkit: equipping them to answer questions with words that show their understanding of the religions and worldview topics, themes, or concepts. It creates building blocks for learning. The vocabulary is 'sticky', they remember new words, and this enables them to grow their word bank, and with support and practise they can begin to transfer these new words into RE and in the broader curriculum and in general conversation in their wider lives.

### Resource Links

[www.Warwick.ac.uk](http://www.Warwick.ac.uk) - glossary of religious terms

[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk) - subject specific vocabulary- the study of religions

[www.reonline.org.uk](http://www.reonline.org.uk) - RE Definitions app

[www.vocabulary.com](http://www.vocabulary.com) - world religions glossary section

[www.shapcalendar.org.uk](http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk) - Glossary of religious terms

## Artefacts

Artefacts have always been used as a central way to bring the religious education lesson alive. Artefacts allow religion and worldviews to be examined at a deep level within the classroom. The use of artefacts encourages inquiry, questioning, examination, exploration, discussion about symbolism and deep meaning, critical thinking, awe and wonder. Artefacts can provide pupils with a focus, a context and a conduit to deeper understanding. By presenting a visual focus, an artistic exemplar or person with an authentic story to tell, into the classroom, the teacher helps to bring the concept or idea alive with the children.

Artefacts within the ©VAT in RE projects, whether they are objects, art, places and buildings people that can bring religion and their stories, accounts and belief and practise. It is also ©VAT in RE process encourages pupils, to develop their

Carefully chosen questions the pupils to unpack feelings and beliefs linked to interest. Access to well-chosen richness to the learning.

may need to be taught additionally to support the VAT approach. However, some RE teachers and children have a natural ability to create excellent questions.



project refer to rich array of religious and worldview or living 'human artefacts' world views alive through answers about their faith important to note that the teachers, alongside their questioning skills.

provide opportunities for symbolism, meaning, the item or person of artefacts provide a layer of Questioning as a technique

## Resource Links

[www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/british-museum-objects](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/british-museum-objects) *find religious objects*

<https://www.generation2generation.org.uk> *Judaism speakers and virtual clips*

[www.reonline.org.uk](http://www.reonline.org.uk) *links to virtual tours of places of worship*

## Texts

Texts helps to bring depth and richness to the lesson. Religion and worldviews story telling is embedded as a central practice throughout the world. Children and adults alike love the comforting, nurturing, reassuring experience of a beautiful story. A single story can be read aloud to a very young child, a teenager, an adult or an elderly person with dementia, each person will enter into the experience gaining aspects of enjoyment, wonder and meaning. This means that texts can be very levelling and inclusive if selected with care and presented

appropriately to the audience. Other texts may be chosen for one audience only, for a specific reason, a singular key stage, to open a particular window into a new world or a complex concept. Texts are flexible, varied and provide a rich array of possibilities.

Reading is like thinking, like praying, like talking to a friend, like expressing your ideas, like listening to other people's ideas, like listening to music, like looking at the view, like taking a walk on the beach.

*Roberto Bolaño*

Texts of course can be so much broader than stories. There is a rich library to access. Newspaper articles, online blogs and podcasts, online animated film stories with sub-titles to read along with, poems, religious or sacred texts, fiction and non-fiction, historical narrative, diary entries from individuals, picture books and so on. How fortunate we are to have so much interesting, culturally rich writing waiting for us to pick it up, read, analyse, discuss and explore.

We may sometimes need help to feel secure in the writing we are choosing to share with children. We can seek library recommendations and support from our RE community, colleagues, parents, SACRE's and religious bodies. I have pulled together some library suggestions, however, we know that every year new wonderful texts are flying onto the bookshelves. Some texts come and go in terms of favour. Texts should be viewed through the lens of history and bias. Sometimes a text may remain on our list as an old comfortable favourite, or a trusted text to refer to, and sometimes we may choose a new vibrant text to add to our library. The list I'm sharing in ©VAT in RE Toolkit can never be complete in any sense, it is certainly only a small representation of the texts that you may choose to use as part of the ©VAT in RE process.



The RE teacher will be aware of the value of reading and literacy. RE, with its broad lens, whether philosophical, ethical, theological, anthropological, sociological, hermeneutical or multi-dimensional is an ideal base from where the teacher and children can explore text and its possible meaning or interpretations. The text can be enjoyed simply as a beautiful story that opens a window through which a new topic can be viewed and explored. Equally the text can be read, discussed, annotated and used as the start of a question and answer session. Text can be used as the starting point of deep questioning, analysis and reflection.

There is a growing body of research evidence that supports the assertion that language, literacy and reading texts provide us with the [building blocks](#) not just for academic success, but for growth and development, awe and wonder, fulfilling careers and rewarding lives.

### **Resource Links**

[EEF Blog: What makes effective literacy teaching? | News | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

[Home - Little Box of Books](#) bespoke text service for building a diverse library: black, Asian or minority ethnic origins

<https://www.readingrockets.org> good summary on collating a good library. Also details about the difficulty of keeping an up to date library.

<https://literacytrust.org.uk> National Literacy Trust: research into literacy: links to useful resources

[The British Library - The British Library \(bl.uk\)](#) Diversity and belonging thematic links to texts

Tell me a Story by Maurice Lynch (BFSS National RE Centre ISBN 1 872012 13 2: now out of print): inspirational list of texts and stories for RE and one of my personal starting points on this long journey.

<https://jamesholt.com> Storytelling in Religious Education, University of Chester

<https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk> Refers to CLPE research

<https://clpe.org.uk> Literacy research and suggestions, books and teaching sequences.

Going forward, my hope is that the ©VAT in RE approach will be adopted by teachers and the RE community as an accessible way to build better lessons that by default help them to upskill as RE teachers. By teaching RE lessons enriched by vocabulary, artefacts and texts I hope that children will develop a deep appreciation of the concepts and ideas within religion and worldviews. It would be wonderful to see more children choosing, and asking schools to offer, opportunities to study religion and world views because they find this curriculum area to be engaging and fascinating. We may eventually gain some additional passionate RE teachers, leaders and advisers and AREIAC members.

The ©VAT in RE education approach could be applied to many curriculum areas. I believe it works particularly well when applied to RE. The ©VAT in RE methodology can be incorporated into any current planning materials, and lesson templates. It purely provides a clear focus, that enables a high challenge and low threat technique to unpack concepts and explore new ideas in a rich and deep way. Why not give it a go. Let me know how you get on. ©VAT in RE Toolkit is available from: [janmcguire@btinternet.com](mailto:janmcguire@btinternet.com)

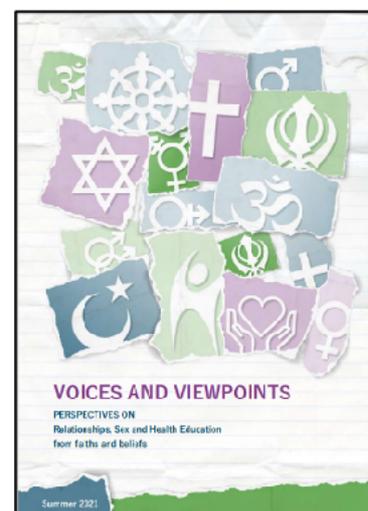
The ©VAT education project (©VAT in RE) was founded by Jan McGuire in response to data led concerns arounds the up-skilling of specialist and non-specialist RE in the community. The pedagogical methodology is designed to support teachers to improve their knowledge of the curriculum, provide a structure for teaching in a high challenge and low threatening way. The aim is to support the upskilling of teachers, to build confidence and self-esteem in teachers. Ultimately the aim is to have the highest quality RE being taught in the classroom. Re that is loved by the children and the teachers alike. ©VAT education project (©VAT in RE) was shaped by and trialled in Barnet as part of the Westhill NASACRE Barnet SACRE commissioned work to support teachers of RE. The pedagogy is due to be trialled further in a EYFS project funded by Culham St Gabriel's Trust 'The ©VAT of Belonging and Believing 2021-2022.

The Ofsted Review of May 2021 is aligned to the ©VAT in RE 2020 (Jan McGuire) approach.

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## Relationships, Sex and Health Education – any business of SACREs

Since September 2020 schools have been required to follow statutory guidance on teaching Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in English schools. Standing Advisory Councils on RE in West Yorkshire point schools and parents to the national and local guidance provided. However, recognising the links between RSHE and beliefs, the SACREs felt it was important to provide some background information to inform, support and enlighten teachers and others concerned with the delivery of RSHE. The resulting document 'Voices and Viewpoints' aims to offer a range of perspectives from people of faith about the specific areas covered in the RSHE curriculum, to support teachers with background information, to reassure parents that faith perspectives are recognised and to signpost appropriate sources of guidance.



[Voices and Viewpoints can be downloaded here.](#)