

The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants

Supporting and developing leadership in RE and collective worship

Executive News ...

CONFERENCE 2024 - booking for this year's conference are now open

As you are aware, for the first time, this is a joint event between **AREIAC** and **AULRE** (Association of University Lecturers in RE) and takes place at Newman University, Birmingham on Thursday 20th and Friday 21st June 2024.

The conference is hosted, and bookings taken by, Newman University. To book a place please use this link:

[RE Futures? AULRE & AREIAC joint annual conference 2024 | Newman University Online Store](#)

You can book for one or both days and for one or more places. Please note that AREIAC cannot take bookings directly.

If you would normally be teaching in school on the day/s you attend, and school needs to arrange cover for you, AREIAC is offering a bursary of up to £200 to help with the cost of cover. You will still need to book with and pay Newman University but on production of your receipt, AREIAC will arrange for an appropriate reimbursement.

The conference cost includes lunch, refreshments and a conference dinner on the Thursday evening. However, accommodation overnight is not arranged or included in the cost. You may want to try local Premier Inns or Travelodges or other suitable hotels. If you need advice please let us know.

We very much hope you will be able to join us in Birmingham in June. We already have a wide range of workshops and presentations offered and we will be putting a full programme together in the next few weeks.



AREIAC website - accessing the members' resources

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Home About Find an Expert Conference REsources Regional Groups Links

AREIAC is an organisation for specialist educationalists, all qualified teachers, providing advice, challenge, leadership, training and support for multi-faith religious education in schools and colleges.

It is a conduit supporting the trainers / leaders / advisers of RE and the home of expertise for anybody involved in the teaching of RE.

AGM and National Meetings
Butterflies
Controversial Issues
Covid-19
News Archive
Opportunities

EVENTS / NEWS
Having your cake and eating it: and other tasks - [more info.](#)
2023 - [download](#)
page

Thanks to those of you who have already signed up the new format on the website. The generic password has now been discontinued so if you have not then you need to register. You will see the 'log in' button on the top right-hand side of the website - if you click on this you will see where it says, "New to this site? Sign Up!"

This should be a quick and simple process:

1. Click on Sign Up
2. Add an email (please use the email you use for your AREIAC membership)
3. Create a password (we do not store this)
4. Tick the "I'm not a robot box"
5. Click on "Sign Up"

You will then be able to use this email and password access to the restructured pages of the site. If you have any issues please contact Paul **HOPKINS** (webmeister) at web@areaiac.org.uk

Log In

New to this site? [Sign Up](#)

Email

Password

[Forgot password?](#)

Log In

There are lots of great resources on the website but you might want to check out the excellent webinar series - there are currently nine recordings on the site ranging from the REQM to AI and RE (see the article later in the newsletter).



AREIAC Professional Development & Networking Webinars 2024

We are arranging a series of webinars during the year. All are free for AREIAC members*. All events are held on Zoom and a link will be sent out a few days beforehand.

Unless otherwise indicated please book by emailing alastair@penninelearning.com or chair@areiac.org.uk

*non members £15 unless otherwise indicated.

The RE subject report

Date to be advised.

This was expected in December, we are still waiting for the subject report in RE to be published.

When it arrives, we will be arranging a presentation and discussion.

Open House Drop In

Monday 20th May 2024 16:00 - 17:30

Termly 'open zoom' for members to call by with news, explore issues with fellow members, or hear about any latest information on RE. Hosted by **Justine Ball**.



Offers or ideas for other webinars are always welcome and this list will be revised during the year - so if you would like to offer to lead a webinar then please contact alastair@penninelearning.com



G-AI and RE: Friend or Foe?

Since Chat-GPT arrived on the scene about 14 months ago there has been both excitement and panic about this technology everything from this is the saviour of humanity to the beginning of the end - if you've seen the *Matrix* movies you will know what this means!

So, is Generative AI a friend or a foe? The simple answer is potentially both. Governments around the world are struggling at the moment with the

questions that software offers from amazing data-analysis opportunities and the opportunity to do many things much better and quicker than people to the concerns over Deep Fakes, copyright and 'cheating'.

Two key things to consider are the **practical** and the **ethical**. Practically there are lots of things that G-AI will be able to do and these are developing rapidly. Planning lessons or seminars, writing materials, drawing presentations, doing assessments, writing letters and reports, summarising articles, doing corrections, analysing data are all within the capability of existing applications and software and are developing rapidly. The key aspects of G-AI is that the limits are much more on the operator / user than they are on the outcomes. This model, called prompt engineering, is at the heart of G-AI.

The other core aspect is the ethical. We need to think carefully about what we think is acceptable use of G-AI. In the early days of the internet there were concerns that pupils would "cut and paste" work and submit this as their own. Plagiarism checking software copes with this, but not with contract plagiarism (getting someone else to write your assignments) and G-AI produces unique and new work so is not, technically, plagiarism. However, we are rightly uncomfortable about children submitting such work so we will need to think about how we assess children, about the use of chatbots in pastoral work, about how this might replace teachers, about the impact on learning and what that means.

In the words of the bard, "Oh Brave New World that has such creatures in't" whether G-AI is Ariel or Caliban is to be determined.

The full webinar can be found on the AREIAC website in the Resources section along with some FAQs from the session and answers. If you are interested in more on this area - or know a school that is then please contact Paul HOPKINS (paul@paulhopkins.org.uk)



RE Hubs

<http://www.re-hubs.uk>

If you would like your group to be featured OR to advertise an event in your area go to [Register your Local Group \(re-hubs.uk\)](http://www.re-hubs.uk)



School Speakers

One of RE Hubs aims is to improve connections and interactions between different parts of the RE/RVE/R&W world. We are training up people who would like to support schools bring to life their curriculum through first hand experience of meeting and talking with people from different religions and non-religious worldviews, as well as experts in social sciences, philosophy and theology.

If you are a speaker working with schools and want to be featured on RE Hubs click on the link below to apply for one of the following training dates:

- Tuesday 26 March 2-3:30PM
- Thursday 18 April 9:30-11AM
- Wednesday 15 May 11-12:30PM
- Monday 24 June 10-11:30AM
- Thursday 11 July 3:30-5PM

<https://www.re-hubs.uk/get-involved/register-as-a-school-speaker>

The Lived Worldviews of Tower Hamlets Project



Lived Worldviews of Tower Hamlets- Pagan Traditions - With Linda and Tara

This is a suite of free resources with clips ranging from 10-25 minutes long with people from different worldviews who live or work in Tower Hamlets talking about their beliefs, life stories and how their worldview influences their life in the borough. **Ruth Marx**, AREIAC's secretary, (who created them with

funding from Culham St Gabriel's) would like schools to express interest if they would like to use these in their own setting beyond Tower Hamlets as a pilot before opening them up more widely. If you're interested, please use this form and Ruth will be in touch. <https://forms.gle/fLLD8eh1wBGmVUUj7>

The Religious Education Council (REC)

The REC is a network of schools, teachers, parents and other stakeholders who share a vision of high-quality religious education. Visit the REC website: www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk to access reports, including the 2023 OfSTED Annual Report, resources and advice for teachers and others, information about REQM and ongoing projects.



Updates from Culham St. Gabriel's Trust

If you would like to receive the monthly newsletter from CSGT or add an information or news items please email kate@cstg.org.uk

Professional Development Opportunities from Culham St Gabriel's Trust

Leadership Scholarship Programme 2024

Closes soon: don't miss out!

Are you thinking about the next step in your career? Culham St Gabriel's unique [Leadership Scholarship Programme](#) could be the opportunity you have been looking for.

Closing date for applications: 22nd March 2024

RExChange 2024 - Call for Proposals

Connecting teachers and researchers, this online, FREE conference, is an opportunity not to be missed.

Time and Date: 1pm Friday 18th October- 1pm Saturday 19th October 2024

Where? Online

Booking will open in May 2024

Closing date for proposals: 28th March 2024.

This includes proposals for workshops, papers, or discussions.

Find out more about RExChange and how you can submit a proposal.

[RExChange 2024 - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](http://reonline.org.uk)

E-Learning Courses

Have you tried any of Culham St Gabriel's free online courses? Expand your knowledge, understanding and skills in areas such as research, curriculum, subject knowledge and Religion and Worldviews.

[Check out the full range.](#)

ITE Recruitment Campaign

An education in religion and worldviews plays a vital role in educating the next generation. It is an essential part of supporting pupils to navigate our diverse society and changing world.

Culham St Gabriel's has created a set of social media 'cards' to promote recruitment of new teachers. [Download and share through your channels.](#)

Training Bursary Boosts Recruitment

You will be interested to hear that the restoration of the training bursary for Secondary RE has boosted numbers of applicants by a third.

[Check out the figures and report.](#)

New from RE:ONLINE

Resource of the Month

Have you heard about the RE Hubs, a network of regional training, friendship and support? Resource of the Month for March is the RE Hubs website: a one-stop shop where busy teachers can find up-to-date CPD and networking opportunities.

[Check out all the RE Hubs website has to offer.](#)

Blogs

A Worldviews Journey: insights from a Farmington Scholar

[Read how Sophie Smith, Head of RE, was empowered and inspired](#) through her Farmington Scholarship and working on a national curriculum resource for Religion and Worldviews.

Managing the Unmanageable

[Read how new teacher Oli managed a Masters while teaching](#), and the huge benefits it brought him and his students.

Research - 'After Religious Education'

David Lewin, Senior Lecturer at Strathclyde University, together with a team of teachers and academics with a wide range of experience and expertise, has explored this question in this innovative project.

[Read, watch and listen](#)

Opportunities for Teachers

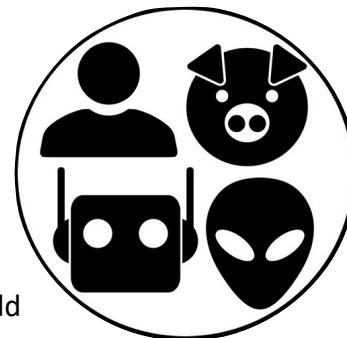
Controversial Topics

'Together' is a coalition of organisations who have collated resources to support teachers in tackling controversial topics in the classroom - [Find out More](#)

Exploring the Sentientism Worldview

"Evidence, reason and compassion for all sentient beings"

Part of the excitement of modern RE comes from exploring non-religious worldviews with children. That exploration is timely as around half of UK people now say they have a non-religious worldview. One increasingly popular contemporary example, based on some very old ideas, is [Sentientism](#). You may have seen it mentioned in [this new RE Today resource](#).



Like many other worldviews Sentientism looks to help us with the big questions like "what's real?", "who matters?" and "how can we make a better world?" Sentientism suggests we start answering those questions with a commitment to "evidence, reason and compassion for all sentient beings". Sentience is the capacity to feel or to have experiences like pain or happiness so sentient beings are, so far, human and non-human animals.

Sentientism's "compassion for all sentient beings" has much in common with religious concepts like ahimsa and compassionate stewardship - while its "evidence and reason" shares the naturalistic epistemology of Humanism. For a fast-growing number of people Sentientism also motivates their Ethical Veganism ([see VINEs great resources here](#)), now recognised in UK and EU Equalities Law as a cogent philosophical belief and a protected characteristic.

While Sentientism is a fairly new word, coined in 1975, its ideas are very old - maybe even pre-human! Within human thought, naturalistic epistemology and sentience-focused ethics have deep roots in many regions and cultures. These themes can be found in African, Asian and ancient Greek thinking, for example. Some thinkers even combined these themes into something very much like an ancient form of sentientism. One example is the blind Arab philosopher poet [Al-Ma'arri](#) who lived over a thousand years ago. He used a naturalistic approach to challenge religious thinking and wrote about the ethics of veganism long before the word "vegan" was invented. If we want to push things even further back, long before humanity evolved, non-human animals used forms of "evidence and reasoning" to understand their environments and survive. They also felt compassion at least for their own young and often for group members. That may have been the start of a basic sort of morality that us human animals have since built on. Of course, quadrillions of non-human sentient animals still do these things today too.

Sentientism seems be of particular interest to young people as it resonates with their concerns about the environment, their care for non-human animals, the development of artificial intelligence (could AI be sentient?) and the risks of misinformation, disinformation, conspiracism and exclusionary ethics.

An additional attraction of teaching the Sentientism worldview is that its commitment to "evidence and reason" can be a gateway into the wider worlds of philosophy and science. Even younger children engage richly in questions like "how can we work out what's true?" and "who should we

care about?". Older children also enjoy exploring the sometimes radical implications of this simple, pluralistic philosophy of life.

If you think the Sentientism worldview might be interesting to the schools, teachers or SACREs you work with I would be very happy to help as a volunteer in any way I can – whether through joining a meeting, providing resources or by answering any questions you might have. I'm also registered with RE Hubs as a nationwide [school speaker for Sentientism](#) so I can help run classes, workshops or deliver assemblies. Please do get in touch if I can help - and regardless, I'd love to hear your and your children's thoughts on the Sentientism worldview.

Jamie **Woodhouse** (jamiewoodhouse@hotmail.com, hello@sentientism.info)

#REchatUK

To join in, follow us on Twitter (X) at [NATREupdate](#) and use the hashtag #REchatUK in your tweets.



April 2024 (TBC) - Freedom of Religion and Belief

#REchatUK is hosted by the NATRE Executives and takes place on the first Monday of each month from 8 pm until 9 pm on Twitter (X). <https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/rechatuk>

Solutions not Sides

<https://solutionsnotsides.co.uk/>

Solutions not Sides continue their work to tackle Antisemitism, Islamophobia and polarisation around the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the UK. Their first workshop tours have been in London and Bradford

and the organisation is already seeing how their work is impacting students and providing them with skills such as critical thinking and conflict resolution. They will be hosting further tours with Palestinian and Israeli speakers joining the workshops in person. The dates of these tours are the following weeks:

London 12 – 17 May, Luton 1 – 5 July, London 8 – 12 July

There is limited availability on all of the tours so schools should book early for their students. If none of the above dates are suitable there is the possibility of booking a hybrid workshop outside of the tour weeks.

Contact: Tasha Davies, Programmes Coordinator, Solutions Not sides

Tel: +44 (0)207 074 4357

Email: tasha@solutionsnotsides.co.uk



The RE Podcast

The first dedicated RE podcast for students and teachers in bite-size weekly episodes

Series 11 episodes started broadcasting in January:

- E1** The Sermon on the Mount – Part 1
- E2** The One About The Sermon on the Mount – 2
- E3** The One About The Sermon on the Mount - 3
- E4** The One About the REQM
- E5** The One About Quakerism
- E6** The One About The Vedas
- E7** The One with Lat Blaylock
- E8** The One About NATRE
- E9** The One About The National Content Standard for England

Available on Spotify or wherever you access your podcasts



Ramadan 2024

In 2024 Ramadan will run between sunset on the 10th March to the 10th April.

Fasting this year in London is approx. 4.15am – 6.30pm



New Resource from REMatters - <https://rematters.co.uk/>

Challenging Religious Stereotypes

Are you aware of religious or non-religious worldview stereotyping operating in your school and affecting your classroom? Do you have units of work that supports the challenging of these stereotypes?

The 'Challenging Religious and Worldview Stereotypes' toolkit is a resource to support schools with practical strategies and ideas of how to deal with the topic of stereotyping and provides reflections and ideas for how to overcome it. Containing easy to use classroom resources and specially created films on which to base your teaching within RE, PSHE or Citizenship lessons or in tutor time. It is the culmination of work carried out by Student RE Matters - a group of young people interested in moral and religious issues from different backgrounds and cultures who get together each half term from different secondary schools in the London Borough of Newham.

The toolkit contains a range of assembly and classroom activities for you to use within your school, giving you the freedom to choose activities that are suitable for your context. Everything that you need - resources, PowerPoint slides and films can be accessed via the link below and the links in the toolkit. Best of all due to generous funding all the resources are free!

What do Students say about their experience of this project?



"Everyone has struggles and different experiences of stereotypes. We can challenge stereotypes and break what others think about your religion."

"I've learned to be more respectful as a person and stopped stereotyping people based on their religion."



"RE Matters has helped me to become more respectful, as I learned about more cultures in an engaging and fun way."

If you would like more information about RE Matters please get in touch either via our [website](#), or by [email](#)

The toolkit can be [downloaded](#); we have also created a selection of short films that could be used in assemblies and in the classroom which you can find in the resource.

