

Appendix 1 – Initial flyer for the project

RE Today & NATRE Project for Excellent RE

Working with Culham St Gabriel's

Excellent RE in Primary Schools

Thurrock SACRE, along with RE Today and NATRE are delighted to give Thurrock schools the opportunity to develop their RE provision through a year-long Excellent RE Project. Ten schools with primary age pupils are able to take part in this initiative and places will be given on a first come, first served basis.

RE Today and NATRE, with Culham St Gabriel's, will work in 2016-17 with the group of ten schools to provide a forum for curriculum development and access to 3 ½ days of high quality, practical and inspirational CPD for RE with a focus on supporting RE as a lead subject in school improvement and SMSCD across the school – a current HMI priority.

RE is too often marginal in schools facing curriculum change. However, there is some evidence that the subject can be pivotal in raising aspirations and standards through excellent teaching and learning, and improving opportunities for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSCD). The Excellent RE Project is a sustained CPD project which will ultimately impact on RE across the school and give teachers access to many high quality resources and activities.

This funded project is open to schools where there is a commitment from senior leaders to actively support the staff involved during the project, providing them with opportunities to complete school based tasks and implement new ideas. Up to £180 per day will be paid to each school to go towards the cost of supply cover for their attending teacher(s) during the 3 ½ days.

What will we do?

We will create a core group of 10 Thurrock schools where an enthusiastic RE Subject Leader has the support of senior managers for involvement in the project.

We intend the project will show positive outcomes for many children that include, but are wider than, RE achievement: these wider outcomes can be characterized as to do with SMSCD. This was a new priority for the Inspection Framework from Ofsted in 2012 and has continued to be a priority.

Many teachers, whether new to the profession or established in their teaching careers, have had little or no training in the teaching of RE, and have more concerns about teaching RE than they do of other subjects. In many schools HLTAs and TAs are involved in teaching and, in some cases, managing the subject. This project intends to increase confidence in the teaching of RE in those schools involved.

Working with these schools over 10 months, we will meet at least termly to develop planning and resourcing for better RE and respond to needs, problems and opportunities. RE Today advisers will use their experience and catalogue of resources to enable teachers to develop better RE in the schools with a focus on collaborative working, creative engagement and learning from diversity. Between main meetings, participants will work on RE improvement tasks in school, with frequent contact with advisers.

We will explore with the partner schools the best ways of enabling high-quality RE learning for pupils, and develop numerous examples of better practice in doing this.

What will you need to do?

- Participating schools need to show a commitment to this project over a period of 10 months.
- Allow a participant to attend all 4 of the face-to-face meetings
- Release costs for teachers (3.5 days at up to £180 pd) will be paid by the project as long as teachers attend and complete the school based tasks and related reports
- Support participants to complete the school-based tasks

All training days will be free for schools to attend. The dates are:

- 15 September 2016 (half day);
- 13th October 2016 (full day);
- 27 February 2017 (full day);
- 28 June 2017 (full day).

The project

Starting with a half-day conference in Autumn 2016, three further day-long termly meetings 2016-17 will energise and resource good practice in the ten project schools. Ongoing support (online and face-to-face) will enable improved RE to be securely built into the practice of participant schools.

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We will explore with the partner schools the best ways of enabling RE and SMSC development for pupils, and develop numerous examples of better practice in doing this.

Questions we will explore

- How can we improve teaching and learning in RE and cascade this throughout the school?
- How can we create a manageable method of sharing with children realistic next steps in learning?
- How do we ensure children are making appropriate progress in all aspects of RE?
- How can we organise the curriculum for engaging and effective learning in RE?
- How can improving RE have a wider impact on schools in helping pupils to take up opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
- What thinking and pedagogies can energise teachers in a plural setting to make the most of RE's potential for SMSCD?

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