Middlesex University London   CULHAM ST GABRIEL'S
EXCELLENCE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Building the Future of Primary Religious Education

Toolkit for Primary Religious Education ITT providers

This project, funded by Culham St. Gabriel's Trust, investigates what can be creatively and successfully taught and learned in 12 hours' provision in primary initial teacher training. It is in response to the Commission on Religious Education's recommendations about primary initial teacher training (CORE, 2018).

It has been developed by:

Dr. Kathryn Wright, CEO, Culham St. Gabriel's Trust	**Rhiannon Love, University of Winchester**
Dr. Linda Whitworth, Middlesex University	**Ruth Flanagan, University of Exeter**
Claire Clinton, RE Advisor, London RE Regional Ambassador	**Juliet Lyal, CoRE Commissioner, NATRE Executive and Local Groups Officer**

In addition to activities provided in this Toolkit, ITT providers may wish to use the course or activities from **An Introduction to Religion and Worldviews for Primary Practitioners** as a supplement to their teaching. It is available on line at https://www.reonline.org.uk/professional-development/free-self-study-courses/ and provides a series of tasks for beginner teachers, primary NQTs and primary HTLAs to develop their understanding and teaching of RE.

What does 12 hours of creative and successful provision for RE look like?

Introduction
This **Toolkit** has been written to assist teacher trainers on all ITT routes in preparing beginner teachers to teach Religious Education in primary schools. It is designed to share ideas used by teachers, tutors and advisors working in primary RE so that there are materials available to support beginner teachers' training. The approach is deliberately practical and open-ended so that materials can be added and edited.
In addition to this Toolkit there is the 12 hour **An Introduction to Religion and Worldviews for Primary Practitioners** on-line course for beginner teachers, primary NQTs and primary HTLAs available on RE:ONLINE (https://www.reonline.org.uk/professional-development/free-self-study-courses/). Tutors may wish to combine elements of both courses for their own needs. Links are made at the end of each section.

Context
In September 2018, the Commission on Religious Education published its findings about the current state of RE in schools and made eleven recommendations concerning policy and practice to improve its quality. The report calls for a '**new and richer vision of the subject**' and has been endorsed by the Religious Education Council and the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), among others. The full report can be found at https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Final-Report-of-the-Commission-on-RE.pdf

The Commission's findings concerning the preparation of primary beginner teachers to teach RE indicate that there has been an overall decline in the number of hours provided for RE in ITT programmes, with some beginner teachers reporting that they receive little or no training and limited or no experience of teaching RE during their training. This confirms NATRE findings in 2016 and is despite the legal requirement for RE to be taught to pupils in schools and, therefore, the need to prepare beginner teachers as part of their initial training.

Recommendation 6 states that:
> All Initial Teacher Education (ITE [ITT]) should enable teachers, at primary…level, to teach Religion and Worldviews based on the national entitlement and with the competence to deal with sensitive issues in the classroom, and the teachers' standards should be updated to reflect this. In order to support this, the following should be implemented.

- **There should be a minimum of 12 hours of contact time for Religion and Worldviews for all forms of primary ITE [ITT] including School Direct and other school-based routes.**
- Funding should be allocated for Subject Knowledge Enhancement for primary.

- Two new modules for Religion and Worldviews should be developed for primary ITE [ITT], and also made available as continuing professional development (CPD) modules: one for those with limited experience and one for those with proficiency in the subject who would like to be subject leaders or work beyond their own classrooms. These modules should focus on the delivery of the national programmes of study (CoRE,2018,47).

Although there is very good training by some providers, Recommendation 6 creates an opportunity for all providers of Primary ITT to consider the quality and quantity of their RE. As well as pupils having an entitlement to good RE, beginner teachers also have an entitlement to high-quality preparation to teach this complex subject effectively and appropriately.

The following diagram is a summary of Primary ITT provision for Religious Education reimagined. Material has been divided into 3 categories, so that providers can decide the focus and balance of their provision. Suggestions are made about the time given to each category.

ESSENTIAL: This places an understanding of a rationale for RE at the heart of Primary ITT. This rationale is underpinned by the vision for RE put forward in the Commission on RE report. This forms the essential element of Primary ITT provision. We recommend that 2 hours are spent on this and if nothing else is taught we propose that this aspect is crucial to teacher understanding.

IMPORTANT: Subject knowledge, pedagogy and practice are seen as of equal value. Ideally all of these elements would be focused on through the Primary ITT provision for about 8 hours in total. We are realistic and realise that this is not always possible. We therefore suggest that each ITT provider takes into account their own context and focuses, if necessary, either on pedagogy and practice or subject knowledge as appropriate, or includes some element from each within the time allowed. Some providers helpfully deliver subject knowledge development through a range of different pedagogies.

DESIRABLE Lastly, the outer ring of the circle suggests a range of different possibilities if 12 hours of provision is in place. They provide options which ITT providers can choose from to meet the needs of student teachers in their own contexts. They include spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), visits and visitors, links with inclusive practice, cross-curricular planning and creating safe spaces and dealing with sensitive issues. We also recognise that local contexts have an impact on RE, so we have suggested that a provider could create their own session based on specific local factors e.g. the local agreed syllabus for RE or use of the *Understanding Christianity* resource or a hermeneutical approach to sacred texts.

The remainder of the Toolkit includes the ESSENTIAL, IMPORTANT and DESIRABLE elements of provision. It maps each out in the following terms:

- An outline of suggested content;
- Suggested activities, including links to online resources provided as part of this website. The idea is for the ITT provider to pick **some** of the recommended activities;
- Suggested resources and reading for the ITT provider and student. Two key texts have been used:
  Pett, S. (2015) *Religious Education: The Teacher's Guide,* Birmingham: RE Today Services
  Elton-Chalcraft, S. (ed) (2015) *Teaching Religious Education Creatively*, Abingdon: Routledge.

DESIRABLE: Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

DESIRABLE: RE and the local context

DESIRABLE: Visits and visitors

IMPORTANT: Subject Knowledge

ESSENTIAL A Rationale for Religious Education

'Religion and Worldviews'

IMPORTANT: Pedagogy and Practice

DESIRABLE: Cross-curricular RE

DESIRABLE: Safe spaces & controversial issues

DESIRABLE: RE and inclusion