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Briefing Paper 17 for partners and team members (area 1)

April 2016

LTLRE Briefing Papers are published twice a year (usually in November and March) and they provide updates for steering group members, Project Leaders of RE and partner organisations such as Standing Advisory Councils for RE and schools.

What is Learn, Teach, Lead RE? A summary for new partners

LTLRE is a programme of continuing professional development in Religious Education across the south-west peninsular of England. It is a grassroots movement, and as common interests and good practice have been established, the programme has attracted further funding from four educational charities.¹

The overall aim of *Learn, Teach, Lead RE* (LTLRE – area 1) is to identify and address unmet needs of RE (Religious Education) teachers in Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay. The programme achieves this, as internal and external evaluation reports have demonstrated, through the leadership of local teachers (Project Leaders of RE – PLREs) in eight local hubs across the region.

PLREs (also known as hub leaders) work closely with members of LTLRE's steering group to provide continuing professional development for all teachers of RE in maintained schools. There is an emphasis in the programme on the needs of newly-qualified or early RE career teachers, and on the needs of teachers, and teaching assistants, with other specialisms and responsibilities.

¹ LTLRE was launched in October 2012 through funding from St Luke's College Educational Foundation <http://www.st-lukes-foundation.org.uk/> It has received additional grants from Foundation, including a major award of £87,000 in July 2015 to support the programme's development between 2015 and 2017. The Jerusalem Trust has sponsored similar LTLRE programmes in the south and western areas of England (areas 2 and 3).

Progress against 2015-16 objectives

Years 4 and 5 of the programme in the SW Peninsula are governed by the following objectives agreed through the grant from St Luke's College Foundation:

- to consolidate the working practice, pedagogy and partnership philosophy of the project in order to secure its future
- *through* securing the capacity for most of the 'inner' local hubs (and other elements of the programme) to become self-supporting by 2017-18
- *by*
 - a) obtaining an agreed level of continuation funding from St Luke's Foundation for up to three years (*achieved*);
 - b) adjusting the Director, Lead and PLRE roles suit the new aim of consolidating the project's practice and its legacy (*underway*);
 - c) extending the membership of the steering group to include senior leaders from Teaching School Alliances (*underway*);
 - d) reinforcing the culture of teacher-led networking and conferencing in RE across the south-west (*underway*);
 - e) meeting national expectations for RE CPD and subject development by establishing the project as a regional training hub with accredited CPD programmes (*underway*).

The steering group has been reviewing progress against these during the year. The extension of steering group membership (c) and the reinforcement of teacher-led CPD (d) have already been noted through past evaluation reports and through annual conference evaluations. The increased involvement of teaching school partners has enabled us to appoint more PLREs (hub leaders) and to extend the range of meeting venues and events. There are now established partnerships between teaching school alliances and LTLRE in Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay. Objective e) on the accreditation of the CPD programmes will be a focus for 2017-18. This year, PLREs have been able to use some CPD funding to enrol on the *Teach:RE* distance learning course to enhance subject knowledge and understanding either for themselves, for a teacher in their own school, or for a member of the hub.

Hub Leaders (PLREs) and hub meetings

Twelve of the original sixteen project leaders for RE (PLREs) are still leading their hubs. We have appointed three more colleagues in the North Devon, Tavistock and South Devon areas to provide primary hub leadership. **We are still looking for some secondary colleagues to join the programme.** Details of how to apply are on the LTLRE website. Where there are temporary gaps in hub leadership, PLRE colleagues from other areas, and members of the steering group, support the hub.

Supported by steering group members, and by the equivalent of two days training each year, PLREs lead the hub groups in developing effective RE across the south-west region. We

have referred again in our training and at the annual conference to the 'RE Quality Mark' and have encouraged schools to participate in this scheme where appropriate and feasible <http://www.reqm.org/>. Other training topics will include (or have included) assessment in RE 'beyond levels', the legal requirements for RE and collective worship, preparation for new GCSEs and A level specifications, information about secular worldviews and their relationship with RE, and *Understanding Christianity*.

Hubs continue to be linked to the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) <http://www.natre.org.uk/>. The content of hub meetings is governed partly by the dissemination of training provided at the conference and on PLRE days, but local agenda items are also included. Full details of meetings in local areas can be found on the website.

We hope that by the end of 2017 the majority of hubs will become self-funding, but we are still keeping this under close review. To do this, partners would need to meet the cost of PLRE attendance at training sessions (and the annual conference), provide venues and funds to invite visiting speakers where appropriate.

Annual conference 2016

The next conference will take place on the 20th and 21st October at the St Mellion Resort, Callington near Saltash. The working title is '*Making RE Work – Values, Depth and Enquiry*'. One of our keynote speakers will be Helen Matter (Diocese of Ipswich and St Edmundsbury) who has also advised on the new *Understanding Christianity* project and who will talk to delegates about translating religious concepts into effective classroom planning. Professor Grace Davie (University of Exeter and Chair of the St Luke's College Foundation) will also address the conference on the background context of religion in Britain today. The programme will offer a range of workshops and seminars to allow the full range of delegates to enhance their subject knowledge of religions and worldviews, to join LTLRE projects, or to take further steps in their subject leadership. Those colleagues who are completely new to RE will find plenty of opportunities at the conference to boost their confidence, and their professional understanding of the subject.

This conference will take place at a point when national developments in RE will include the launch of new examination syllabuses for secondary schools, and reports from an All Party Parliamentary Group on 'Religious Literacy'. The RE Council of England and Wales is also embarking on a commission enquiry into RE policy, legislation and practice in the context of an increased programme for schools to become academies, and a changing role for SACREs and local authorities. The Church of England's Education team (National Society) will also have launched the programme of curriculum planning for *Understanding Christianity*. This will be available to all schools.

A conference flier and booking form will be circulated to schools in early May.
We are likely to be oversubscribed so an early response is advised.

Future developments and partnerships

LTLRE relies on the goodwill and expertise of the steering group and its partners, as well as the on the professional commitment and enthusiasm of our hub leaders. We are grateful for the substantial funding from St Luke's College Foundation in area 1, and from the Jerusalem Trust, and St Matthias Trust, in areas 2 and 3.

In March 2016, the LTLRE team was invited to submit an application to Culham St Gabriel's Trust for funds to 'Transform Primary RE' in similar CPD programmes through grants to the north of England. Our bid was taken forward as one of the last two to be considered by the Trustees, and a grant of £166,000 was awarded at the end of April. Some of this grant (to be agreed) will help to secure research and development work in area 1 during 2017-18. We are delighted with this award, with the confidence this demonstrates in the LTLRE model of CPD and its quality, and with the feedback from the Trustees. We are looking forward to helping teachers and other colleagues in the north of England as they set up their new LTLRE programmes.

How to contact us

Next year, briefing papers to area 1 partners will take a different form. This development is to be agreed through SW LTLRE's steering group at the next meeting on June 10th.

We always welcome suggestions for the development of the programme from our partners. These should be directed to Linda Rudge (lrudge@waitrose.com) or Tatiana Wilson (tatiana.wilson@exeter.anglican.org) for area 1.

A full list of steering group members and details of hub leaders in each of the nine hubs are provided on the website: www.ltlre.org