

Online reviews

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BBC: Religion

www.bbc.co.uk/religion

Gateways: [2.10](#), [3.2](#), [4.8](#)

Contents

This section of the BBC website is no longer being updated. At the time of this review, the religion homepage had sixteen major features/sections. Once selected, each feature area will open up to another webpage providing further links and options.

NB. The user may want to be aware that they are navigating from the religion homepage rather than the BBC's homepage, so this will need selecting each time to return to the original selection.

Usefulness and relevance

A major section offered by the BBC website focuses on ethics. This can be selected from the religion homepage or accessed directly at www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/. There are some common features from the religion homepage, but it also offers features like 'Ethics guide' to select an ethical issue of interest (at time of review sixteen issues were offered).

Other potentially useful features for mentors, teachers and pupils on the religion homepage are:

- *Religion finder feature has a drop-down menu of 20 featured religions/beliefs with Atheism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Paganism then subdivided to make the full list featuring 46 named religions or beliefs.*
- *Multifaith calendar feature allows for searches by religion, faith or year and once selected includes twelve featured world faiths and an A-Z feature.*
- *Religion in the news - recent issues hitting the headlines with related web-links*
- *Current religion and ethics programmes and links to BBC iPlayer with the opportunity to download, as programmes often have a time limit for viewing if not downloaded. There is also a link to download and listen to related podcast features e.g. 'Faith in England'*
- *Faith in your area - gives the opportunity to select your county and find articles related to religion and ethics in your region.*
- *Message boards and opportunities to sign in or create a new discussion*
- *Features like Daily service (Christian) and Thought for the day (different faiths) to aid spiritual reflection and worship*

Further detail - An example:

Selecting 'Atheism' from either the Religion finder feature or the menu given under Explore bbc.co.uk/religion leads into a web page giving six options to explore aspects of atheism, alongside a brief summary with a visual. These six areas can be expanded by a further option to give seventeen subsections. The web page also offers six links to other websites and offers the user of the BBC site four other areas of interest outside atheism.

Beatbullying

<http://www.beatbullying.org>

Gateways: [2.2](#), [4.7](#)

The 'Beatbullying' website is a very user friendly site. The charity behind the site aims to engage with children and young people who have been affected by different types of bullying through a series of programmes it offers. It includes some interesting information surrounding the 'Interfaith' programme. This programme aims to celebrate faith differences and diversity. It has been successfully trialled in London Boroughs and encourages young people to identify their common humanity as well preventing incidents of faith based bullying. There is an e-mail link to find out more about the programmes, if required.

This site would be a good site to use for general issues in any school about different types of bullying, not just faith based bullying.

Citizenship Foundation: controversial issues - guidance for schools

www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/page.php?79

Gateways: [1.1](#), [3.1](#)

The section which is relevant to the REsilience project is part of the larger Citizenship website, which it is worth noting also contains other resources that may be useful for teaching RS.

This particular section consists of a general guide to teachers that includes brief summaries of the possible effects on students of conflicts arising in modern life, opportunities for schools to respond and address these, how to avoid "unduly influencing" students, the legitimacy of protest and the teaching of values in schools. It also includes informative summaries of issues that the site has identified as of current concern. At present this list covers GM crops, hunting with hounds, ID cards, whether prison works, the smoking ban and voting age reduction. I assume that this list is updated periodically but was unable to find an obvious place for teachers to post suggestions of issues they would welcome advise/support/guidance on, which it seems to me would be highly beneficial.

The summaries themselves are quite useful from a factual perspective, giving a general introduction, facts and figures, timelines and information about the prominent campaigns on the issue. However, the 'arguments' link, which suggests a setting out of the arguments on all sides of the issue, proved to be a blank page on almost all of the issues (the exceptions which did include arguments were prisons and the voting age reduction). This was disappointing as the facts and figures are relatively easy to find elsewhere, but the arguments take collation and consideration. Compiling a good summary of both sides of a debate is time-consuming work that many teachers do not have time for, so it would have been good to see some here. The two which are available are well-done. There is no indication of whether the others are a work in progress, whether my PC just isn't linking through (unlikely I would think, given that I can access all other links) or whether they were deemed not necessary; the screen is just a blank scrollable page.

The Guidance for Schools summary is the kind of thing which would be useful for writing policies for dealing with controversial issues as and when they arise. It doesn't really include specific guidance for teachers in the classroom but talks about whole-school opportunities for dealing with issues and the extent to which it is appropriate to impose values.

Overall this resource has useful elements and the potential to be much more useful, but in my estimation the most important section is missing!

EHRC - Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com/

Gateway: [2.11](#)

This is the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the statutory, non-departmental body set up to:

“protect, enforce and promote equality across seven areas – age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.”

Established in 2007 and chaired by Trevor Phillips, the EHRC is the heir to the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission.

The website has very useful resources that could be used by mentors, teachers and young people. A clear section on the legislative framework surrounding discrimination and human rights provides particularly helpful guidance, and a helpline has been set up to provide personal advice and support. There is a section specifically for education and training providers, and colleagues are likely to find this an extremely useful source of information.

There are also interesting sections of the site for young people. For example, ‘Project 1000’ is aimed at engaging teenagers in human rights campaigning and equality work and helps young people to build networks and work locally and nationally to build community cohesion. The Project organises an annual summer camp for teenagers, as well as art projects and debates. Resources for teenagers include posters, briefings on topical issues, leaflets and a section called ‘Young People: know your rights.’

It’s a great site – I showed it to some young people I know, and they are applying to join Project 1000!

Ekklesia

News report [‘One in four children bullied because of religion’](#)

Gateways: [2.2](#), [4.7](#)

This is a very interesting and possibly controversial news item, which links to a report on ‘faith based bullying’.

“One in four children bullied because of religion” is the headline, based upon a report that was produced by the charity ‘Beat Bullying’ www.beatbullying.org. The report found that substantial numbers of children and young people had experienced bullying in relation to their faith or belief, and defined faith based bullying as ‘being taunted, excluded, or abused physically, emotionally or verbally on the grounds of your religious beliefs, affiliation to a given religion, perceived religious identity, or sectarian view by others, including those of other religious groups or belief systems’.

The report also suggests that there is some concern that faith schools fuel segregation on the basis of faith, further arguing that such schools do not encourage religious tolerance but rather support segregation. This report supports the view of those who think it is right to get rid of faith schools. This would be interesting to look at for teachers from faith schools.

This news item is on the website ‘Ekklesia’. Ekklesia is a Christian think tank and its website includes daily news and weekly bulletins about beliefs and values that are related to cultural, religious and political change both in the UK and beyond. The research papers provide valuable and useful material for all who may wish to explore topics that are pertinent to religious education e.g. ‘From Turkey to Gaza: human rights and fundamental freedoms.’ They are suitable for teachers and KS4/5 students.

Families Forum

<http://www.familiesforum.co.uk/index.html>

Gateway: [4.3a](#)

Review 1

Authenticity / Credibility: *The website is managed and run by UK supporters of a wider group of Israeli and Palestinian bereaved families searching for peace. It is supported by influential members of the UK community including Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Sacks [The Chief Rabbi], Juliet Stevenson, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, Dr Amineh Hoti, Huw Irranca-Davies MP, Lord Janner of Braunstone QC and Rabbi Lionel Blue. In a Radio 4 "Thought for the Day" Dr Williams talks about the work of the forum using the following words, "Change, real change, happens when we're ready just to be human – not to use our suffering as another weapon against each other, not to argue about whose sufferings are worse, but just to recognise the same love and the same loss".*

There are Christian, Jewish and Muslim supporters of the group, as well as those who would not profess a religious viewpoint. The main motivation of the members of the groups is an idea of shared humanity leading to a lasting peace in the region. The forum has been awarded the Gandhi award for "seeking to understand the viewpoint of the adversary and seeking common ground on which to base a solution".

The site is paid for by member contributions and has charitable status.

Content: *The website is a support website for a group of more than 500 families who have lost close family members to the violence between Israel and Palestine over the period of the conflict. The main website for the forum is <http://www.theparentscircle.com/>*

This main group runs a series of events in both Israel and Palestine to support the families who have lost members to the conflict with the core belief that it is only in accepting our shared humanity that there is a possibility of peace. Activities by the main group include: meetings in schools, bi-national youth seminars, internet reconciliation programmes, reconciliation workshops, a peace chat-line, a bilingual (Arabic/Hebrew) radio programme, a TV drama series based on the lives of the members of the forum, summer camps for children, women's groups, a photo project and art projects.

The UK site offers news on the work of the forum, a series of cartoons about the conflict as part of an international awareness exercise you can see both the cartoons and also [a film about the cartoons](#).

The UK support group also organised reconciliation and support meetings which the site documents and seeks support for those involved in this work in the form of supportive comments and lobbies for action in religious, political and secular circles.

The site contains an archive dating back to 2005 of the activities of the UK friends and the work they have carried out. The archive of responses and cartoons is very powerful and shows the passion and futility which are felt by this group at the ongoing conflict.

On the parent site there is a very moving section of personal stories which could be of use in the classroom, as personal narrative is very powerful.

Getting around the site: This is not a huge site and navigation is via a series of top menus which are self-explanatory, and which work well. There is not a search engine of the site and there are links to some support materials and to the main site for the Forum which can be found at: <http://www.theparentscircle.com>.

Review 2

This website declares itself as impartial and pro-peace and has been granted a Gandhi Award for its contribution to understanding the adversary's point of view and finding common ground on which to

base a solution. Although its main focus is the Israel and Palestine conflict, many of the resources could be used to stimulate discussion of the impact of extremist actions and strategies for peace-making.

The website clearly shows the human cost of conflict. There are testimonies from Palestinian and Israeli family members, which reflect the commonality of human tragedy and desires to engage in peace-making activities. Forum members share their grief but also create a dialogue between the two communities.

Although, generally, the website would be more suitable for teachers and older students there are a range of resources which could be used in Key Stage Three classrooms. The cartoons would be a particularly effective resource in stimulating class discussions or Philosophy for Children Activities. They would also relate to the content of many of the new GCSE specifications. The two poems on the website are particularly thought-provoking and could be used in a variety of texts throughout the curriculum and collective worship.

Throughout the website there are references to a range of supporting resources including personal accounts on YouTube. The reference to the range of events held in the United Kingdom would help raise students' awareness of how global conflicts can have local impacts.

FODIP - Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine

www.fodip.org.uk

Gateway: [4.3a](#)

'FODIP' is the website of the Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine. The aim of FODIP is to "seek to promote and facilitate dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims in the UK on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." In this respect, the site does exactly what it sets out to do, as it contains a number of documents and reports from various interest groups and individuals on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. It endeavours to be totally unbiased – and so includes not only reports from organisations such as the Methodist Church, but also the disclaimers to these documents. The reader has to make up their own mind. For teachers, this means that you have to trawl through a lot of detailed material (the historical background to the situation is explained in some depth in the Methodist document for example) in order to get to what is relevant for use in the secondary classroom. Some official documents are far more useful than others. E.g. 'Concordis' contains a very useful bullet point list of key events, whilst the 'Letters to Pope Benedict' is really an advertisement for the book itself. A number of articles also seem to assume that the reader is up to date with the broadsheet news of Middle Eastern politics, including the latest 'incident'. The situation is nothing if not complex, and the high standard of the articles does ensure that the reader gets a rounded picture of the current situation.

The homepage of this website is clear and easily navigable, but is not for those in a hurry! It is scrupulously non-political, and so includes everything – editing would inevitably entail bias as to what is relevant and what is not. It is a useful site for teachers to engage with in order to study the issue. It is not something to dip into. It does mean that the reader has to consider all sides of the debate, and read more than just one article. My suggestion? Read the Gateway 4.3a historical background section before embarking on this site!

Global dimension

<http://www.globaldimension.org.uk>

Gateway [1.1](#)

This website is managed by an educational charity, the DEA, a coalition of the major development NGOs and Development Education Centres. The website provides a guide to books, films, posters and web-resources which support and promote global learning.

This link accesses the Religious Education/Religious Studies section.

At first sight, the 114 RE/RS titles listed feel somewhat overwhelming and impossible to navigate. Thankfully, there is an advanced search function which allows you to narrow the fields by Subject, Topic, Age Range, Price Range and Keyword/Title. Topics include a wide range of subjects relevant to Religious Education and some particularly relevant to REsilience. Although there are no resources specifically listed under 'violent extremism', there are sections on: Community, Conflict, Diversity and Inclusion, Identity, Discrimination and Racism.

Resources are all selected by educators and many have already been tested in the classroom. The content of each resource is described but it is not possible to preview all materials and therefore not always easy to assess how they relate to the RE curriculum. Some excellent resources can be downloaded free though eg. from http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/lib_res_pdf/0153.pdf.

Government Equalities Office and EHRC

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-equalities-office>

Gateway: [2.13](#)

The GEO is responsible for equalities legislation and policy in the UK and works in the following key areas:

- *Equality Act 2010*
- *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality*
- *National Equality Framework for Business*
- *Representation in public life*
- *Violence against women*
- *Women and work*
- *Women Councillor's Taskforce*

The website focuses on the recent Equality Act 2010, which comes into force in October 2010. Information on implementing the law, reports and progress for all areas under this heading is being added to this site. The Equality Act builds on previous equality and discrimination legislation but making it less cluttered, more consistent and therefore more readily accessed by individuals and organisations and consequently more likely to achieve its aims - to protect the rights of individuals, to advance equality of opportunity for all and to promote a fair and more equal society. The Equality Act in full, in easy read format and explanatory notes can be downloaded [here](#).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has provided guidance of how The Equality Act will affect different areas of life: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/equality-act-2010>

The EHRC website offers advice and guidance on all areas related to equality and diversity with frequent updates on current issues, including legal cases. This is a good site to look at in conjunction with the GEO website.

Usefulness and relevance: These two sites provide a guide to the law on equality and its implementation and so need to be viewed in conjunction with each other. Additions are currently being made to in connection with the new legislation.

Humanists UK: handling controversial issues in the classroom

<http://humanismforschools.org.uk/guidance/handling-controversial-issues-in-the-classroom/>

Gateway: [1.1](#)

Review 1

This is a basic and useful resource that concentrates on topics concerned with the origins of the universe and the evolution of life on Earth, advances in genetics and medicine and environmental issue. However, the sound guidance it gives could be usefully read by all teachers, especially those who have not considered this area much before. The advice is based on the assumption that teachers are committed to a respect for truth and evidence, and to developing their pupils' critical thinking and analytical skills and want to discriminate between fact or well-established theories (matters for which there is good evidence, matters on which there is a scientific consensus) on the one hand, and stories or opinion (or matters of personal belief) on the other. Accepting fallibilism, the page goes on to discuss various perspectives that can be taken in a measured and thoughtful manner. Parts of this could be very usefully used in a departmental discussion where members of the department have differing views concerning how to deal with controversial views and could help a head of department with one set of views understand better those with a more rationalist set of assumptions. The page also has a useful set of links for further reading, including to <http://teachingaboutreligion.org/>, an interesting US based resource.

Review 2

Content: This article on the Humanist website contains sections on:

- The Teacher's dilemma which it sees as "discriminating between fact....and stories or opinion (or matters of personal belief)"
- Ground rules and guidance
- Further reading

Usefulness: This is a rather wordy (4 pages) statement.

The Teacher's dilemma tells teachers that they are "committed to respecting diversity and dealing with pupils' beliefs tactfully" which one would assume all teachers, especially those who teach RE, already know. The section on ground rules again states what will be obvious to most teachers - "students should learn to listen politely"; it advises on the careful use of language and gives a very lengthy definition of scientific method. It recognises differences of opinion within and between religions and, almost reluctantly, recognises that "myths, legends and stories can be very beautiful and pleasing and may even tell us something about ourselves and our emotions..." An underestimate of the scriptures of the worlds' major faiths and why they have lasted for thousands of years!

The further reading section and links lists a number of sites which justify the teaching of evolution and creation science.

Relevance: The article does give an insight into the views of Humanists on controversial issues. However, side advertisements like 'Protests against the Pope', phrases such as "deluding" when referring to belief and "answers to creationist nonsense", betray a contradictory undercurrent of intolerance towards religious belief.

Investigating al-Qaeda

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/world/2001/war_on_terror/default.stm

Gateway: [4.2](#)

This special 'in depth' report on the BBC website provides a fairly comprehensive selection of newscasts published by the British broadcaster, focusing on the international activity of al Qaeda from 1988 to the present. The homepage gives access to a variety of useful sections such as:

Background, Timeline and Who's Who, which outline the origin, development and leadership of this 'international terrorist network'

An analysis of the Roots of Jihad summarises the development of the ideology of Osama Bin Laden and modern jihadis. This not only clarifies the religious reasons why some Muslim militant groups believe they must take up arms against the 'infidel West', but also gives a sense of the social and political context of these beliefs.

For me, the website presents a good overview and reminder of headline news about al-Qaeda. It seems to highlight the events of 9/11, and tends to an American focus on the subsequent 'War on Terror'. I am surprised that information about the London bombings or the radicalisation of young Muslims, particularly in Britain, isn't featured more prominently and am also disappointed that there isn't more comment from an Islamic perspective.

Media Smarts

<http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/digital-issues/online-hate> and

<http://mediasmarts.ca/online-hate/deconstructing-online-hate>

Gateway: [2.13](#)

Review 1

Media Awareness Net (MNet) is a non-profit making organisation based in Canada. The website's aim is to provide tools and information for both adults and young people to help them have a greater understanding of the media and the influence it has on people's lives. It offers both web based resources and digital literacy programs.

The site is aimed primarily at a Canadian audience and offers a range of articles, and downloadable lesson plans, resources and activities.

The hate section of the site focuses on hate mostly in terms of neo-Nazism, white supremacist organisations and Holocaust denial or Holocaust revisionism. Nevertheless, in the section 'Deconstructing Hate Sites', it gives some useful pointers on the ways in which hate sites capitalise on people's fears and how subtle techniques are used to exploit such fears, for example by manipulating images, symbols and words. A 'hate propaganda' handout shows the home pages of six websites and students are asked to analyse and identify the various ways in which various propaganda techniques are used to draw the reader in. Although all these sites are based in North America, they would still make a good starting point for enabling students to become more critically skilled in analysing websites they visit.

In addition to 'Online hate' other sections of the site, in particular 'Media violence' and 'Media stereotyping' would also be worth exploring.

Although not all materials and resources would work in a UK setting, many could easily be adapted. As

there does not seem to be a UK equivalent of this website, for teachers whose knowledge and understanding of the subtleties of the Internet are limited, this site will prove to be a useful resource.

Review 2

This site is run by a Canadian non-profit organisation that aims to promote “media and digital literacy.” Whilst many of their examples and references are American and Canadian this is still a useful resource that could help a teacher clarify her/his thinking through giving effective definitions, clearly defining the debate concerning free speech and internet-based hate, the law, how to protect young people etc. It has a particularly good section identifying how hate sites recruit young people and this could be effectively used with materials from [INFORM](#) to help students protect themselves from such invidious recruitment techniques. The section on deconstructing hate sites could also be used effectively in an awareness rising exercise through a Critical Thinking course. The section on what to do about hate on the www is US/Canadian based but is still pertinent and wise. As well as the section of the site referenced by Gateway 2.13 the site has a very useful section “for parents” <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/index.cfm> which a department who wished to work with parents / carers could use very effectively to raise parental / carer awareness and parents / carers working with young people.

Oxfam: handling sensitive and controversial issues

https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues?cid=rdt_tools-and-guides-controversial-issues

Gateways: [1.1](#), [2.6/2.9](#), [3.1](#)

Review 1

Content: This site provides an easily downloadable 16-page document on Teaching Controversial Issues. The booklet sets out to:

- offer strategies to help teachers introduce and manage controversial issues in their teaching
- bring Education for Global Citizenship into the classroom
- offer practical classroom activities for use with all ages across the curriculum.

Written in 2006, the booklet explains the benefits of Education for Global Citizenship (E4GC), what controversial issues are and why they should be taught, how controversial issues should be handled and a variety of different approaches.

Usefulness: The emphasis is on Global Citizenship. The practical classroom activities focus on globalisation and social justice. This is a resource for Citizenship Education not RE. As an introduction and for a teacher with limited experience, this site is useful. The practical classroom activities for Peace and Conflict resolution at KS1 have limited use and the National Strategy SEAL site offers much better resources on this topic called, ‘Getting on and Falling out’ http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/66363?uc%20=%20force_uj

The most useful part of the site is detailed information on using the Community of Enquiry approach (Philosophy for Children P4C) to tackle controversial issues, which every teacher should try! The links on the left hand side of the page are useful, providing an A-Z of over a hundred pertinent websites. <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/gc/links/>

Relevance: There has been fast change in education in the last few years, so the educational rationale given for the importance of E4GC is now slightly dated. Thinking Skills have been replaced by PLTS, the new secondary curriculum would inform the ‘key elements’, ICT and uses of interactive white boards

would supersede the use of 'photographs' and cutting and pasting activities. However, the download is an easy read and definitely worth finding out about the community of enquiry approach.

Review 2

This excellent website contains a downloadable resource which offers excellent advice and support on teaching controversial issues in the classroom. The download is one of the "Global Citizenship Guides" produced by Oxfam and is available free of charge. The resource includes a definition of controversial issues and why it is important to teach them in schools. It then provides some guidelines on setting ground rules for discussions which allow all participants to feel valued and secure. The guide also presents a variety of different positions that could be taken by a teacher during a discussion ranging from completely unbiased to acting as an advocate for a particular viewpoint. The advantages, disadvantages and dangers of these different approaches are fully discussed along with times when each of them might be particularly appropriate.

The bulk of the resource is devoted to suggested activities which could facilitate discussion on controversial issues among pupils of different ages, from Early Years to KS4, although the majority of examples given deal with secondary education. Three of the given examples for secondary pupils include the education of girls in Kenya, sustainable development and globalisation. Other activities are not subject specific but address the methodologies that could be employed including the use of photographs to stimulate discussion.

A major advantage of this resource is that it gives detailed information on how to run a Community of Enquiry, along with information on P4C (Philosophy for Children) and the results it has achieved within schools. This is an excellent way of facilitating successful discussion on very sensitive and difficult issues and a simple guide to teachers unfamiliar with the concept, which is invaluable.

This resource would be of great use to a teacher who had expressed a worry about facilitating discussion on controversial issues. It is concise, informative and helpful. It gives clear information on Communities of Enquiry as well as other ways of introducing discussion work and it is easy to use. It can be read quickly, and its suggestions applied easily and effectively to classroom practice. There is also a useful section on further resources and reading. I would recommend this highly.

Quakers in Britain: same sex relationships

<http://www.quaker.org.uk>

Gateway: [4.6](#)

I chose this website for review because, of all the Christian denominations, it is only the Quakers who have unambiguously supported the view that same sex relationships (it is called marriage in their documents) are valid and equal to heterosexual relationships.

There is a great deal of useful material on this website. To access it, you need to put in the words "same sex relationships" into the top right search box and press "go" and several summaries of a number of papers then come up. At the time of this review, there were 315 items relating to the issue of same sex relationships, and the most recent appear at the beginning. You can then choose whichever you think might help.

I found the first result a very useful document summarising Quaker understanding of marriage and relationships, In the second search result – "we are but witnesses..." the full text of the document so-named (after a quotation from George Fox) can be retrieved as a pdf document. Here the theological reasoning for accepting same sex marriages is made clear; nowhere does it refer to marriage as being a relationship which can allow for the birth and care of children. By removing procreation from the equation, marriage can be seen as equally applicable to same sex couples as to heterosexual ones. This may be seen by some denominations and individuals as a weakness in the Quaker argument. However, it could also be argued that historically, marriage services in, say, the Church of England were devised as a way of controlling the people, rather than being based on theological

teachings! This is where I think a balanced view of this issue can best be centred. Perhaps the future view and definition of marriage needs to exclude any reference to procreation and child rearing.

In the document QLRC Same sex responses survey, there are some signs of disquiet about the Society's position; on page 4, in the Barnstaple group unease was expressed because "the word marriage had a very specific meaning bound up with the procreation and the raising of children".

The survey gives very useful material which could be used in the classroom for discussion and for teasing out hidden "unease" and prejudice about this topic.

I think the Quaker website is a very good one to use. I would also like to look at what the Hindu view is and would suggest that people do visit the other websites to get a wide range of views and statements.

REOnline - subject knowledge

<http://www.reonline.org.uk/knowning/what-re/>

Gateway: [2.10](#)

Subject Knowledge is a huge resource, part of the REonline family of websites, developed and managed by Culham St Gabriel's Trust. This fact alone is a cast-iron guarantee that the information it carries is authoritative and accurate. But it is much more than that.

The website's home page describes its context, aims and target audience. It is set within the non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education (NSfRE). It is therefore readily accessible by teachers of all phases, as well as trainee teachers. However, the wealth of information will be of undoubted benefit to anyone with an interest in world religions.

The content addresses twenty-four units or themes within each of nine religions and humanism: two hundred and forty pages in total. The religions are the six principal faiths, plus Bahá'í, Jainism and Zoroastrianism. The units are very comprehensive, embracing the key concepts of the secondary curriculum programmes of study. Each of them covers the same ground so that it is possible to 'read across' from one faith to another. In addition, each page contains links to other websites for further reading. Since they are recommended by Culham St Gabriel's Trust, you can be sure that each of the links carries reliable data.

[Places of Worship](#) is another member of the REonline family. It, too, is an enormous resource containing a plethora of information about places of worship, together with references to the NSfRE and suggestions for learning activities for students. The site attempts to encourage teachers to take students to visit places of worship locally, and provides general facts about them and details of specific sites via a search facility. At the same time, it enables virtual visits through some very high-quality videos. There are tours of three Christian places of worship from different denominations, and one of each of the other principal religions. Each video explores the significance of worship through the experiences of believers in their places of worship. There are links to the NSfRE, and suggestions for learning foci.

I cannot recommend these two websites highly enough for teachers and trainees who wish to enrich their subject knowledge and that of their students.

(See also REonline's [Place of Worship section](#) which provides advice, information and ideas regarding visits to places of worship.)

SAPERE - Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education

www.sapere.org.uk

Gateways: [2.6/2.9](#), [3.1](#)

SAPERE is an educational charity promoting philosophical enquiry with children and communities throughout the UK. It believes philosophy can be used to improve teaching and learning for the benefit of all. It is widely known as P4C. It has a paid membership offering monthly documents, networking and other benefits.

It offers school-based inset and three courses graded 1-3. Level 1 offers a basic qualification in P4C i.e. an approach to teaching and learning which enhances pupils' social, emotional and behavioural development as well as raising academic achievement.

Of particular interest to REsilience is that level 1 offers participants practical ways of developing good thinking, questioning and communication skills as well as helping them understand the theory and practice of being a good facilitator/manager of learning dialogue (essential for dealing with contentious issues).

P4C claims it can make a strong contribution to Every Child Matters, the development of respect and self-esteem, as well as the building of community education. Its sample findings suggest that, over a 6-month period, pupils doubled their occurrences of supporting views with reasons and teachers doubled their use of open-ended questions.

The website offers resources, but only paid-up members may gain access. It has links to support programmes and a number of sites to do with critical thinking and philosophy in schools.

<http://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/>

The Linking Network

<http://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/>

Gateways: [2.11](#), [3.1](#), [3.3](#)

Formally called the Schools Linking Network, this website's aim is to 'facilitate links between schools in England to help children and young people explore their identity, celebrate diversity and develop dialogue.' At the moment, schools or local authorities need to be registered to access the resource area. However, the website is being re-designed and will be re-launched in September with 'open resources' and a particular focus on strategies for teaching controversial issues which will dovetail well with the REsilience programme. When this is done I will re-write this review to cover these updates.

There are case studies of projects where schools have linked together to explore ways of developing community cohesion. Each case study has a brief description of the project and in some cases a video describing some aspects of the work done. Most of the case studies described fall more into citizenship than religious education; however, for many young people an exploration of their identity, culture or heritage will obviously include aspects of faith and belief. One area of particular interest is the work that they have done in organising and running a [Model United Nations in Bradford](#). In the most recent MUN the focus was the situation in Gaza and the West Bank (Palestine).

At the moment, the website would be a useful place to direct teachers, especially those in schools which are in mono-cultural situations so that they can develop links with schools with a very different demographic. When it has been re-developed in September I anticipate that there will be resources which will be useful to all without having to set up a school link.

The Community Security Trust

www.thecst.org.uk

Gateways: [4.3a](#), [4.4](#)

The CST (Community Security Trust) website is a very comprehensive one, providing guidance on physical security, training and advice for the protection of British Jews and a facility to report anti-Semitic incidents. It is a registered charity with offices in London and Manchester. The website design is straightforward and easy to navigate; however, it contains some lengthy documents and would be time consuming for most RE teachers to trawl through, but provides useful reading for us as mentors. There is an up to date blog and useful working links to many relevant articles.

The 'Police Officer's Guide to Judaism' is concise and could be useful for a non-specialist RE teacher, although without the practical policing issues! Such a guide written specifically for non-specialist teachers, which could be printed off as a reference, could offer an introductory insight into some of the customs, laws and traditions of the Jewish community.

'A student's Guide to Anti-Semitism on Campus' is detailed and informative. It contains a useful history of anti-Semitism, with background information about conspiracy theories, such as 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' and the denial of the Holocaust.

Although much makes for a depressing catalogue of incidents and attacks, it should be noted that British attitudes to Jews are generally positive (according to the Trust's 2008 poll). I think the most important aspect for us to take from this website is the need to distinguish actions and statements that are anti-Semitic from those which are anti-Israel, being aware that drawing out these distinctions is one of the most difficult areas of CST's work when recording and analysing hate crime and this also is an aspect of controversy that we may need to try to understand and convey.

Three Faiths Forum

<http://www.3ff.org.uk/>

Gateways [1.1](#), [2.6/2.9](#), [2.7/2.8](#), [3.1](#), [4.2](#), [4.3a](#)

The Three Faiths Forum aims to encourage dialogue and confront prejudice through building enduring relationships between people of different faiths, cultures and communities in the UK and the Middle East. It does not promote religion but recognises the significance of the shared history, traditions and values of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. 3FF provides advice, support and opportunities for those interested in interfaith dialogue and activities.

The website provides highly relevant information and advice aimed at widening horizons, confronting prejudice and encouraging harmony. The Resources pages offer practical advice on organising speaking events, and talking about conflict in the classroom. This includes detailed practical advice on facilitating positive encounters between students and members of different faiths or beliefs. 3FF provides educational resources to enable teachers and students to approach diverse faiths and ways of life confidently, facing up to contentious issues, and guidance about how to talk about sensitive issues respectfully whilst encouraging students to question.

Other sections of the website giving information about events and ways of engaging local communities in dialogue may be of help to schools looking to involve parents and local partners.