

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

AGENDA

**Meeting to be held at the Sandhill Centre (Shackleton Room) on
Tuesday 14th November, 2017 at 4.30 pm**

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1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Nominations to join the SACRE Membership	
3. Election of a Chairman and Vice Chairman	
4. Minutes of Previous meeting held on 20th June, 2017 (Copy attached)	1
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6. Update on position of LA Support Officer to the Group	
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9. SACRE Members as an active resource	
10. Annual Report	
11. Date and Time of next meeting – Thursday 22 nd March, 2018 at 4.30pm	

ELAINE WAUGH,
Head of Law and Governance.
Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND.

27th October 2017

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE 2017 AT 4.30 PM

VENUE: SANDHILL CENTRE

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor Farthing – Chair

Councillor Hunt

Councillor Leadbitter

Councillor Marshall

Councillor Williams

Church of England

Mrs W. Lundgren

Teachers' Associations

Ms N Fountain

Co-opted

Ms F Bridle

In Attendance

Annette Parr, Lead Support and Intervention Officer

Cathryn Forbes, Specialist Officer

Paul Wood, Governance Services Officer

As the meeting was inquorate, the following discussions could not be viewed as having been approved and therefore, could not be acted upon until approved at a future quorate meeting.

SAC76 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Mr Cloud Singh

SAC77 Nominations to join the SACRE Membership

Paul Wood introduced Ms Natalie Fountain to the Council and advised that she had volunteered to join as a representative for the Teachers Association. Mr Cloud Singh would also be formally added to the Membership of the

Council as a representative of the Christian and other denominations category once the meeting was in quorum and could be fully ratified.

The Chairman welcomed Ms Fountain to the meeting.

SAC78 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 21st March 2017

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2017 were a true record.

SAC79 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

SAC80 Feedback from Primary CPD

Mrs Forbes updated the group on the feedback from the Primary CPD and commented that it had been disappointing that only 14 out of the 83 schools invited had attended. It was also disappointing that only one response had been received in relation to the survey circulated afterwards however, Mrs Forbes did advise that the verbal feedback on the event had been very positive from the attendees.

The Chairman suggested that the issue be put on the Headteachers agenda.

Councillor Marshall enquired if the schools were doing their own thing. Ms Fountain advised that her school followed the agreed syllabus from the Local Authority and felt this presented a broad and balanced curriculum.

Mrs Forbes advised of the difficulties in getting people to sign up to their Network when they were already paying for use of the one in Durham, which was already an extensive network.

Councillor Williams commented that she felt the Council had dropped the ball in this regard and it was difficult to pull this back. Mrs Forbes advised that they could continue to put expressions of interest out.

Ms Fountain commented that there was still good practices to be shared and rolled out but the difficulty in setting up a Network was not just an issue for religious education, but for all subjects and strong R.E leadership was in short supply.

Members AGREED to note the feedback

SAC81 NASACRE Conference

Mrs Forbes advised the group that she had been unable to attend the Conference but Mr Singh had been present, unfortunately his apologies were recorded for the meeting however details of the conference were available on the NASACRE website with videos of the speeches given now uploaded to the site.

Mrs Forbes also advised that Annette Parr and herself would not be in the role following this meeting. The Chairman enquired if the Council could buy into the Durham service. Mrs Forbes advised that they experienced the same pressures as us in terms of funding but was something that could be explored. Richard Cullen was to identify the relevant person to take over Mrs Forbes role.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Forbes for her work within the group and hoped to see her back as a Member for future meetings.

Members AGREED:

- to note the update and for Annette Parr to send the SACRE leaflets on for Members to circulate to prospective new members.

SAC82 Date and time of next meeting

The date and time of the next meeting would be Tuesday 14th November 2017

(Signed) Councillor L. Farthing,
Chairman



The State of the Nation:

A report on Religious Education provision within secondary schools in England

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Executive Summary



Religious Education (RE) is a vibrant, academically rigorous subject which covers multiple religious and non-religious worldviews. RE challenges young people to explore religion and belief in a way that enhances their transferable skills of literacy and reasoning in the classroom and allows them to gain a better understanding of the world around them. With the continued importance of religion and belief in public life, and substantial media coverage of issues relating to religion and belief, whether debates about ethical issues or coverage of conflicts with religious elements, it is crucial to ensure that all young people are religiously literate and

able to understand and question the accuracy of claims about different belief systems, regardless of whether they are themselves religious or not.

The importance of this subject is reflected in its legal standing. All state-funded schools, including academies and free schools, are legally required to provide Religious Education as part of a balanced curriculum.

Key findings of the State of the Nation

The State of the Nation report looks at the extent to which schools in England meet their statutory requirements to teach RE. It provides a comparison between schools where the RE curriculum is determined in three different ways:

- 1) Schools, including some academies, following an RE curriculum determined by their religious character;
- 2) Academies and other schools such as Free Schools where the RE is determined by their funding agreements;
- 3) Schools where a locally agreed RE syllabus must be followed.

The report argues that it is vital that students receive a high quality RE. It is neither educationally, morally or legally justifiable for schools to provide minimal time on the school timetable for RE, or to expect teachers with insufficient training or expertise to deliver the subject. Neither is it acceptable for any young person to leave school without the knowledge and skills delivered through RE which will allow them to understand the beliefs and values of our diverse British society, without which they will be ill equipped to take their place in the modern world.

Findings from this report include:

- **28% of secondary schools told the Department for Education that they gave no dedicated curriculum time to RE.** It is estimated that this equates to 800,000 pupils being deprived of their legal right to learn about major religions and beliefs, leaving them without the religious literacy they need for life in modern multi-faith Britain.¹
- **The level of provision of RE is largely dependent on the type of school pupils attend,** leading to widespread variation across the country.
- **Schools with a religious character typically provide a higher level of provision of RE,** suggesting that these schools place a higher priority on the subject than other types of school. 96% of schools with a religious character offer RE at KS4.² 90% dedicate at least 3% of their timetables (around 40 minutes a week) to RE at KS4.³ In addition, 90% of these schools say that over half of their RE lessons are taught by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification.⁴
- **Academies are the least likely type of school to offer RE at KS4,** with just 73% of schools reporting that they offer RE at this level⁵, and just 27% providing more than 3% curriculum time to RE.⁶

Just 66% of academies said that over half of their RE lessons are taught by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification.⁷

- **Schools following a locally agreed syllabus for RE tend to have higher levels of provision than academies, but lower than schools of a religious character.** At KS4, 45% dedicate 3% or more of their timetables to RE.⁸ As these schools convert to academy status and are no longer required to follow their locally agreed syllabus, there is a real concern that their level of RE provision may drop.
- Full course Religious Studies GCSE students should receive 10% curriculum time (more than two hours per week) of RE lessons and pupils taking the short course GCSE should spend 5% of curriculum time (one hour) on this subject.⁹ This standard is very rarely met, meaning that **RS is not being treated fairly in comparison with other GCSE subjects and students across the country are not receiving the level of provision they deserve.**
- A worrying number of **schools are teaching RE full course on short course hours.** Almost half (42%) of academies and agreed syllabus schools (43%) reported that students taking the full course GCSE receive just one hour

or less per week.¹⁰

- **Non-examined RE is often not sufficient to meet the aims of the subject and leads to schools simply not teaching it,** which fails pupils. Of the schools claiming to offer non-examined RE to Year 11 pupils, 83% admitted their students receive zero minutes of teaching per week.¹¹ It may be that offering RE is done as a tick-box exercise with schools claiming not to be resourced effectively in terms of trained or qualified staff or funding to deliver appropriate teaching.
- **The number of schools removing GCSE RS from their curriculum entirely has risen steadily between 2014 and 2016 (3% overall).**¹² Schools with a religious character are least likely to not enter any pupils for GCSE RS but more than 14% of academies do not enter a single pupil for any GCSE in RS.¹³
- **Only 47% of academies have at least 75% of their RE lessons taught by a fully qualified specialist.** This compared to 58% of agreed syllabus schools. Once again schools with religious character perform best, with 77% of respondents reporting this standard.¹⁴
- **Students at schools with religious character are significantly more likely**

to be taught RE by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification than students in an academy, meaning that once again, academy students are missing out.

- **The number of schools entering between 90 and 100% of their year 11**

cohort has fallen steadily from 49% in 2014 to 45% in 2016.¹⁵ This reflects a move away from entering whole cohorts for either the short course of the full course, almost certainly prompted by the removal of the short course from accountability measures.¹⁶

Summary of recommendations

The Department for Education should:

- 1** Hold schools to account for the level of provision and standards of teaching of RE.
- 2** Encourage ministers to speak about the importance of RE in the curriculum and about its impact on wider educational outcomes, including on society at large.
- 3** Issue a clear public statement that it is not acceptable in any circumstances for a school to be failing to provide RE at any Key Stage as part of its broad and balanced curriculum.
- 4** Publish data about RE provision routinely in an accessible format (without the need to issue Freedom of Information requests) to allow local Standing Advisory Councils for RE (SACREs) and other bodies to more easily fulfil their duty to monitor provision for RE in their local area. This data should include school workforce data and GCSE entries.
- 5** Clarify and strengthen the mechanisms by which complaints can be made about schools failing to provide pupils with their entitlement to high quality RE.
- 6** Ensure that it is a condition of the successful completion of teacher training that there is evidence that newly qualified RE teachers have an appropriate level of RE knowledge, understanding and skills to take up their first post.

School leaders including headteachers and governors should:

7	Review the specific requirements for RE provision and ensure that they can demonstrate that each pupil on the school roll is receiving their entitlement to RE in each school year.
8	Review the specific content requirements (in particular where they include being taught an accredited course at Key Stage 4 if that is what is required in the syllabus).
9	Ensure that all specialist and non-specialist teachers who provide RE have access to subject specific CPD throughout their career.
10	Ensure that all non-specialist RE teachers who teach RE receive high quality subject specific training, such as the Teach RE course, before they commence teaching RE.

Ofsted should:

11	Ensure that the level of provision for RE is monitored during routine inspections with an expectation that the curriculum cannot be considered 'broad and balanced' unless RE is provided.
12	Ensure that all those teaching RE are suitably qualified and/or trained to do so.
13	Review the training of inspectors so that they are aware of specific requirements for RE in each school that is inspected and can differentiate between strong and weak provision.
14	Carry out an investigation into the impact of different levels and quality of RE provision on wider pupil outcomes.

Parents/Carers should:

15	Request information about the programme of RE taught at their child's school (this should be published on the school website). If RE is not mentioned, or if the practice does not seem to match the published plan, ask questions or complain if necessary.
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The Importance of Religious Education in Schools



RE as a subject

RE is a vibrant, academically rigorous subject that has developed significantly in recent decades. Alongside the subject's contribution to pupils' mental, cognitive and linguistic development, it offers distinctive opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.¹⁷

Covering multiple religious and non-religious world views, RE challenges children to explore religion and belief in a way that develops the transferable skills of literacy and reasoning in the classroom and allows them to gain a better understanding of the world around them. By developing knowledge and understanding of different religions and worldviews in the security of a

classroom, young people have the opportunity to engage with complex, diverse, and constantly evolving subject matter.

The value of RE is recognised by the public at large. Research into attitudes to RE conducted by YouGov in 2012 showed that the public backs RE as a compulsory subject, with 50% saying it should remain compulsory and 32% saying it should not.¹⁹

At a time where religious extremism plays such a significant role in the news, it is more important than ever to be religiously literate and to understand and question the accuracy of claims about different faiths.

“Religious Education is highly valued and a vital part of the curriculum we offer”

(Anonymous – school survey response)



“I unexpectedly – but happily – found out I was interested in Religious Studies when I was doing my GCSE. I have now completed my A Level and am in the process of starting a theology and ethics degree at Manchester University.

Religion is the most written about and talked about subject in the history of humanity. My interest in the subject evolved as I studied just some of the range of texts on the curriculum and developed the key academic skills of independent, critical thinking and analysis – recognising and appreciating that in a classroom of 30 students, three might be 30 different but equally strongly-held opinions.

My studies helped me to understand the logical connection between ideas, and as my confidence grew I was increasingly able to take part in class discussions on issues that could sometimes be controversial.

For me, every day introduced new aspects to studying RS that challenged and stimulated me – from the big, cosmological questions around the existence of God to situational ethics and the role of religious practices in contemporary 21st century society – and which have allowed me to have a better understanding of people and the variety of ideas, and have prepared me for life”.

- Louise Pryah, Haslingden High School

The legal basis of RE

All state-funded schools, including academies and free schools, are legally required by the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act to provide RE as part of a balanced curriculum.¹⁸ This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The key document in determining the teaching of RE in most schools is the locally agreed syllabus within the local authority concerned. Schools, including academies and free schools, designated as having a religious character are free to make their own decisions in preparing their syllabuses.¹⁹ Academies without a religious character must deliver RE in accordance with the requirements of their funding agreement with the Secretary of State. Local authorities must ensure that the agreed syllabus for their area is consistent with Section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996, which requires the syllabus to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

Schools are not obliged to provide RE to

pupils who are under compulsory school age, although there are many instances of good practice where RE is taught to these pupils. Separate legislative provision on RE is made for maintained special schools.²⁰ Regulations covering maintained special schools require them to ensure that, as far as practicable, a pupil receives RE.²¹

Agreed syllabus schools, including community, foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled schools without a religious character: RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the local authority by which the school is maintained.²²

Schools with religious character, including foundation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character: RE provision is to be provided in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. However, where the parent of any pupil at the school requests that RE is provided in accordance with provisions of the trust deed relating to the school (or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, in accordance with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character), then the governors must make arrangements for ensuring that RE is provided to the pupil in accordance with the relevant religion for up to two periods a week unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so.²³

In voluntary-aided schools with a religious character, RE is to be determined by the governors and in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed relating to the school or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character. However, where parents prefer their children to receive RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, and they cannot reasonably or conveniently send their children to a school where the syllabus is in use, then the governing body must make arrangements for RE to be provided to the children within the school in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so. If the local authority is satisfied that the governing body is unwilling to make such arrangements, the local authority must make them instead.^{xxiv}

Academies: Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools managed by independent sponsors, established under Section 482 of the Education Act 1996. Some academies have a religious character. All academies are required, through their funding agreements, to teach RE.

The Funding Agreement for an Academy ***without a religious designation*** states that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements

for agreed syllabuses that are set out in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This means a syllabus that “reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”. It also means that an academy without a religious designation must not provide an RE syllabus to pupils by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination. This gives an academy without a religious designation the freedom to design its own RE syllabus (within those constraints) and not be bound by the specific locally agreed syllabus that maintained schools are required to follow. However, academies are free to follow the locally agreed syllabus if they choose or they can choose another from a different local authority area.

Foundation or voluntary controlled schools ***with a religious designation*** that convert to academies must arrange for RE in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses (in the main Christian whilst taking account of the other principal religions etc. as set out above) unless any parents request that their children receive RE in accordance with the tenets of the school’s faith. If any parents do request this, the academy must make arrangements for those children to receive such RE unless,

because of special circumstances, it would be unreasonable to do so. The Funding Agreement sets this out (by applying the relevant provisions of the Education Act 1996 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). In practice, these academies generally choose to follow the locally agreed syllabus.²⁵

RECOMMENDATION 7:

School leaders should review specific requirements for RE provision and ensure that they can demonstrate that each pupil on the school roll is receiving their RE entitlement in each school year.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Schools leaders should review the specific content requirements (in particular where they include being taught an accredited course at Key Stage 4 if that is what is required in the syllabus).

About the State of the Nation – Report Methodology



The aim of this State of the Nation report is to draw together existing data sets, and supplement them with new survey material, in order to demonstrate the current levels of provision of RE across the country. The report focuses exclusively on secondary school provision.

The State of the Nation Report's findings are based on three data sets.

1) School survey

The first data set that this report is based on is a direct survey of schools about their RE provision. This survey was carried out online with all secondary schools in England emailed an invitation to participate. This survey was carried out by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) and RE Today Services. The schools that provided responses were then cross-referenced using

their unique reference number (URN) in EduBase, which allowed the responses to be filtered and categorised into different groups to aid analysis.

A total of 790 responses were received. 318 were from schools where a locally agreed syllabus applies, 93 were from schools with religious character (including Academies where a Diocesan or 'faith-based' syllabus applies), and 139 were from academies without a religious character (but where the funding agreement determines the requirement for RE provision). At the remaining 240 schools the means by which the schools RE is determined could not be identified. Data from these 240 schools has only been included in the report analysis where relevant.

By comparing the sample of schools in the school survey with information on EduBase, it was found that schools with a locally agreed syllabus were overrepresented in the sample (accounting for 56% of schools in the sample, while making up only 24% of secondary schools nationally), schools with religious character were relatively accurately represented (accounting for 19% of schools in the sample, while making up 18% of secondary schools nationally), but academies without a religious character were significantly underrepresented (58% nationally and 25% within this data set).

Whilst the overall sample generated by the

school survey is not perfectly representative, the types of schools that are under-represented are those that (where they have answered) have the worst levels of provision. This means that the picture of RE provision generated by the school survey is likely to under-emphasise the scale of the problem. While the school survey provides alarming figures for the degree to which schools are failing to meet their legal obligations to provide RE, this deeply concerning snapshot is, if anything, a conservative under-estimate of the degree of non-compliance.

2) School Workforce Census data for the years 2010-2015

The second data set that this report draws on is the school workforce data collected from schools by the Department for Education (DfE) between 2010-2015. This specific data set was obtained following discussions with the DfE and a Freedom of Information Request on 4th February 2017 by the National Association of Teachers of RE.

The following data was requested from each secondary school that admits secondary aged pupils in England, for each of the five years 2010-2015 and for each year group:

- the number of hours of RE taught (including those where the information

provided would be 'no response' or the response is zero);

- the number of hours taught to the year group;
- the percentage of the hours taught in a school week that is RE focussed.

The School Workforce Census collects curriculum information from a large sample of secondary schools. Curriculum information is requested from all secondary, middle deemed secondary and all-through schools, including relevant academy schools, with the timetabling software that interfaces with their Management Information System. In 2015 2,909 secondary schools provided curriculum information. However, not all schools provided complete curriculum information.

We found that 787 schools (28%) of all the 2,793 Census schools reported that they gave no time to RE. We then multiplied that figure by the average state secondary school size (1,000) to reach a figure of 800,000 pupils being deprived of their legal right to RE.

3) Data on entries for GCSE Religious Studies for the years 2014-2016

The third data set on which this report is based is the Department for Education's (DfE) data on GCSE entries. This was

obtained following a Freedom of Information Request on 11th April 2017 by the National Association of Teachers of RE.

The following data was requested from each school that admits secondary aged pupils in England, for each of the three years 2014-2016:

- The percentage of the year 11 cohort entered for:
 1. Full course Religious Studies GCSE
 2. Short course Religious Studies GCSE
 3. No GCSE in Religious Studies
- The percentage of pupils achieving a grade within the range A*-C as a proportion of those entering:
 - Full course Religious Studies GCSE only
 - Short course Religious Studies GCSE only

The 2015 data includes information from 2,856 secondary schools but some data is suppressed to protect confidentiality. This is the case where there are only one or two entries and it might be possible to identify an individual. This does not have a significant effect on the analysis.

Categorising the data

For the purpose of interrogating the various data sets and making useful comparisons, this report categories schools into the following three groups:

1. Agreed Syllabus: Schools where a local Agreed Syllabus applies. Includes:

- Community Schools
- Foundation Schools
- Voluntary Aided Schools without a religious character
- Voluntary Controlled Schools

2. Religious Character: Schools including Academies where a Diocesan or 'faith- based' syllabus applies. Includes:

- Sponsor-Led Academies with a religious character
- Voluntary Aided Schools with a religious character
- Church of England, Roman Catholic and other faith-based Academies - sponsored and not sponsored

3. Academies: Academies without a religious character where the funding agreement states the requirement for the provision for RE – including:

- Free Schools
- Academy sponsor led without a religious character

The State of the Nation report was commissioned and produced by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) and RE Today working in a joint venture as the RE PR Group.

School survey findings



Level of provision

All schools (as specified in the earlier chapter on legal obligations) must teach RE. This can be provided through a variety of formats; including, for pupils at KS4, a number of examined options – GCSE RS full course and short course – as well as non-examined religious education. This does not mean that schools can ‘provide RE’ as a tick-box exercise. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that teaching hours for this subject are sufficient to cover the curriculum and meet subject aims. RE is a rigorous and academic subject that covers a substantial volume of specialist material:

it is not possible to do justice to the subject if it is not given sufficient curriculum time, and a cursory study of RE denies students the opportunity to develop the religious literacy necessary for life in modern Britain.

Lack of provision

Despite the clear legal and contractual obligations schools have to teach RE, the results of the school survey of secondary schools found that **25% of all schools do not offer RE to all students at KS4.**²⁶ This lack of provision is likely to be driven by a range of factors. The exclusion of RS from

the Ebacc, the removal of short course GCSE from performance tables and a lack of vocal support for the subject from government ministers has meant that some headteachers have felt unable to prioritise the subject: without support from heads and senior leaders the subject has become vulnerable.

The exclusion of all short course GCSEs from the Department for Education's performance tables has led to a dramatic fall in entries for the short course in RS, down over 80% since 2010.²⁷ This has had a particularly significant effect on RE as this was the way many schools ensured pupils received their RE provision. In some schools the lack of available appropriately qualified teachers to provide the lessons has encouraged schools to cut the subject. The lack of repercussions for any school failing to meet their statutory duties to offer RE has made it easier for schools to make these cuts and the subject has suffered as a result.

Provision of RE varies significantly between types of school. **96% of schools with religious character offer RE at Key Stage 4.**²⁸ This is likely to reflect the status that RE

has within these schools as an important and academically significant subject.

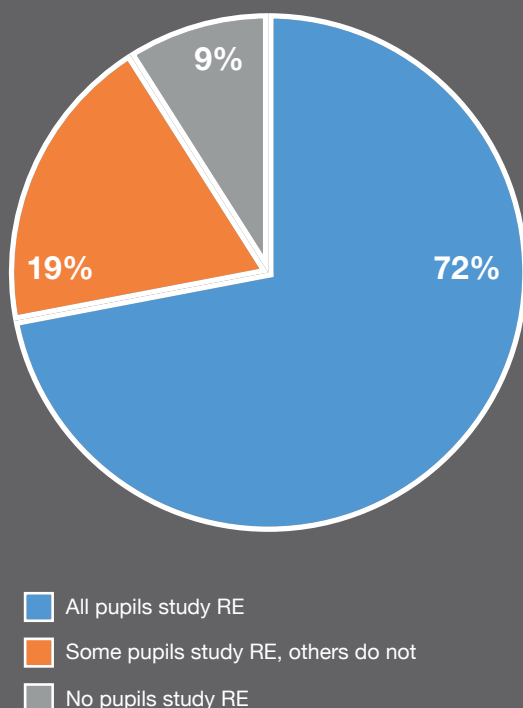
In contrast to this, **academies have a much lower level of provision of RE at KS4, with just 73% of schools reporting that they offer RE at all at this level**, suggesting that using the academies funding agreement to require it to make suitable provision for RE is not always an effective way to ensure that pupils are able to study the subject.²⁹ Whilst the freedoms bestowed upon academies allow for flexibility in designing certain elements of a curriculum, it is important that academies are fully aware of their obligation to provide RE, and make provision accordingly.

Schools following a locally agreed syllabus for RE tend to have higher levels of provision than academies, but lower than schools of a religious character.³⁰ As these schools convert to academy status and are no longer required to follow their locally agreed syllabus, there is a real concern that their level and quality of RE provision may drop. The Government must ensure that the structure put in place works

“Disappointed in the way RE is being pushed to one side even though we are a statutory subject”

(Anonymous – school survey response)

Describing provision for RE in schools at Key Stage 4 in England



for academy converters to ensure that they are able to provide an appropriate level and quality of RE.

The issue of many schools failing to make appropriate provision for RE at Key Stage 4 is underlined by the findings of the school survey. Schools were asked about the nature of their RE provision at KS4. In 72% of schools all of the pupils study RE. In 19% of schools some of the pupils study RE but others do not. In 9% of the schools there are no pupils studying RE at all.

The figure above shows that 28% of

schools do not make full RE provision for all students in breach of their legal obligation, echoing our earlier findings on the level of non-compliance.³¹

All pupils, no matter what type of school they attend, have the right to receive RE. It is unfair for pupils that the type of school they attend can have such a substantial impact on their chances of being offered the option of taking Religious Studies at GCSE. Given that the problem of ensuring that legal requirements to offer RE appears to be particularly acute at academies, steps should be taken to provide them with the support they need to be able to meet their statutory and contractual obligations. If more schools that currently follow locally agreed syllabuses become academies then this will become even more necessary.

Non-examined RE

Schools do not have to offer an examined course in RE to meet their legal obligations. Depending on the Agreed Syllabus followed it is sometimes possible to offer a non-examined course in RE, taught at an appropriate level and to a high standard. Nonetheless, these non-examined courses should still meet the recommended curriculum time (5%). The school survey found, however, that **non-examined RE is often insufficient and in many cases those schools claiming to offer a non-examined RE course also**

reveal that they spend no time teaching it.

Of the schools claiming to offer non-examined RE to pupils in year 11, 83% admitted that their non-examined year 11 RE students received zero minutes of teaching per week.³² In addition, just 3% of schools with religious character, 1% of academies and no agreed syllabus schools report more than 60 minutes of teaching per week on non-examined RE.³³ There are still relatively few schools providing 31-60 minutes of teaching per week for non-examined RE: just 11% of academies, 3% of schools with religious character and 6% of agreed syllabus schools.³⁴ It is clear that non-examined RE is not associated with an adequate number of minutes of teaching per week, no matter what the school type. In all but a handful of cases, if a school is not offering full or short course GCSE

RS at key stage 4, the provision of RE is not sufficient and the school will almost certainly be in breach of their legal obligations.

In some schools, it may be that the official claim is that they are offering RE through another subject, such as PSHE or in a registration session, but this practice is often not adequate to be able to deliver appropriate teaching, especially when teachers with other specialisms, who do not have sufficient training or subject expertise, are responsible for the lessons. Non-examined RE should not be used as a tick-box exercise as a means for schools to appear to meet their statutory obligations. All children have a right to an effective and informative education, and it is deeply unfair on the young people whose schools simply do not provide any meaningful teaching on this subject.

“I don’t want to offer KS4 compulsory non-examined because it won’t be taken seriously”

(Anonymous – school survey response)

OFSTED CASE STUDY:

Successfully involving students in learning RE through a non-examined course

About the programme: Broughton Business and Enterprise College actively involved students in their learning in RE through an imaginative curriculum, high quality teaching, and a lively programme of enrichment activities. The aim of this initiative was to ensure that all students would leave with knowledge, skills and attitudes to prepare them for their adult lives.

How it worked: The RE curriculum was designed to ensure that it supported the overall approach to the subject by allowing for genuine challenge and sustained enquiry.

In Year 7, RE was taught as part of a Humanities programme with RE-focused units taught for five lessons a week for two weeks every half-term. One teacher led all three humanities subjects with their class. In addition there were integrated units to which RE made a contribution. In Year 8, the three

humanities subjects were taught separately with specialist staff on a carousel programme. Students spent four hours a week on RE for three weeks, four times a year. And in Year 9, students had the more traditional one period a week of RE across the whole year.

At Key Stage 4, the full-course GCSE was offered in an open-option process and up-take was good. All students had a non-examined core programme, which proved popular. Because of the high quality of the experience of RE at Key Stage 3, students knew what to expect and they valued the enrichment time to discuss and reflect without the pressure of an examination: RE for RE's sake!

Outcome: Students felt that the course did not tell them what to believe, but made them think about their values. This school was recognised through the award of a national Gold Standard RE Quality Mark in 2012.³⁵

Curriculum time based on school type

The Ofqual register of qualifications states that full course Religious Studies (RS)

GCSE students should receive between 120-140 teaching hours which equates to 10% of curriculum time (more than two hours per week) of RE lessons, an amount

comparable to other GCSE full course subjects, with the expectation of 5% of curriculum (one hour) for short course students.³⁶ The school survey has found

that this standard is very rarely met, meaning that **students across the country are not receiving the level of provision they deserve.**

Summary of findings from the school survey:³⁷

- In Year 10:
 - 45% of agreed syllabus schools stated that their full course Year 10 students receive just 60 minutes or less of teaching per week;
 - 14% of schools with religious character stated that their full course Year 10 students receive 60 minutes or less of teaching per week;
 - 39% of academies stated that their full course Year 10 students receive 60 minutes or less of teaching per week.
- In Year 11:
 - 41% of agreed syllabus schools stated that their full course Year 11 students receive just 60 minutes or under of teaching per week;
 - 22% of schools with religious character stated that their full course Year 11 students receive 60 minutes or less of teaching per week;
 - 45% of academies stated that their full course Year 11 students receive just 60 minutes or under of teaching per week.

There remains an unacceptable level of provision across all school types in terms of timetabled contact hours for those students in Key Stage 4 who are studying for the full course.

The school survey shows that a worrying

number of **schools are teaching RE full course on short course hours.**³⁸ 18% of schools with religious character are failing to provide even 5% timetabled hours for the full course (around one hour a week). This rises to **42% of academies and 43% of schools with an agreed syllabus** where

pupils who are undertaking the full course GCSE receive one hour or less per week, when they should be receiving at least two hours of formal RE contact time. This demonstrates that a significant number of schools are expecting teachers to prepare students for a full course RE in the time expected for a short course or even less. The result is that many students are entering GCSE examinations having had significantly fewer lessons than many of their counterparts. They also receive fewer lessons than pupils studying similar subjects such as history or geography.

This is likely to be the result of a number of reasons, including pressures on staff numbers and available time-table hours. At a time when many schools are finding their budgets increasingly squeezed, subjects which are considered lower priorities are often the first to suffer cuts; including RE.

Even more concerning, the school survey has uncovered a significant number of

secondary schools which fail to even provide 3% curriculum time for any type of course. Any school offering less than 3% would be deemed a problem school in terms of their RE provision.

For Key Stage 4 full course students:⁴⁰

- **25%** of academies provide **less than 3%** timetable time for RE
- **25%** of agreed syllabus schools provide **less than 3%** timetable time for RE
- **7%** of schools with religious character provide **less than 3%** timetable time for RE

Once again Key Stage 4 students studying full course at a school with religious character are significantly more likely to receive an acceptable amount of teaching time than their counterparts in academies or schools with an agreed syllabus.

“RE is side-lined along with the Arts subjects due to more timetabling for EBacc subjects”

(Anonymous – school survey response)

Tackling non-compliance

In too many cases, there are no consequences for those schools that actively, or unintentionally flout their legal obligation, as RE does not feature in measures such as the EBacc and performance tables which are used to hold schools to account.

In England, the DfE measures and reports on school performance, thereby incentivising schools to provide teaching and qualifications in a restricted list of subjects, known as the EBacc. RS GCSE, however, is excluded from the EBacc, meaning that an important incentivisation mechanism is lost. This is in contrast to the system in Wales, where the Government did not introduce the EBacc and instead measures school performance in terms of 5 A*-C grades which must include Maths and either English or Welsh, but which otherwise can include any subject including RS. The result of this is that GCSE entry numbers have continued to rise in Wales while they have begun to fall in England.⁴¹

The Government needs to refine school accountability measures to prevent them acting as a disincentive to RE provision. Ofsted inspectors should be equipped for school visits with information about the form of RE provision that they should expect to see at the specific school, alerted where prior data suggests there might be a problem and sufficiently trained to make

judgements about the quality of outcomes they might evidence through pupil work and conversations and in classrooms.

Further to this, it is important to ensure a clear process is in place for escalating and dealing with concerns about the level and quality of provision of RE in schools. Schools should have a clear process for dealing with complaints. The DfE should be responsible for ensuring schools are aware of the need to have a process, and should clarify how such a process should work.

Dealing with a complaint

In order to maximise compliance, the DfE must hold schools to account for the level of provision and standards of teaching of RE. This report demonstrates the need for data on school performance to be closely monitored and acted upon by the DfE. This should, however, go further; the DfE should make data about RE routinely available without the need for a Freedom of Information Request, in order to allow local Standing Advisory Councils for RE (SACREs), parents, students and other interested parties to understand how a school is performing and take action to raise a complaint if necessary. The data that should be made routinely available should include school workforce data and GCSE entry data (for both full and short course) – both at school level.

It is important to have a clear process for dealing with complaints and to ensure that schools are aware of this process. A complaint can be made by anyone (including students, parents and teachers) and can be on a wide range of issues, including failure to provide adequate RE. All schools are required to have a complaints policy so that anyone is able to make a complaint and have it dealt with appropriately. The current process usually follows the following pattern:

- When a complaint is made, generally the headteacher will informally try to settle the complaint.
- If no settlement can be achieved, then a formal complaint can be made to the headteacher in writing.
- Should the complaint fail to be resolved, it would then be escalated to the board of governors.

- Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of the decision made by the governors, then schools complaints policies often provide for the complainant to appeal to a panel of governors (it should be noted that not all schools will have an appeal panel).
- Should the complainant remain dissatisfied, the complaint would be escalated to the Secretary of State for Education.

NATRE tested this process in 2017. In doing so, the Secretary of State, through the Department for Education, has demonstrated a willingness to intervene when necessary in resolving complaints about a school failing to make appropriate provision for RE.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The DfE should hold schools to account for the level of provision and standards of teaching RE.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The DfE should issue a clear public statement that it is not acceptable in any circumstances for a school to fail to provide RE at any Key Stage as part of its broad and balanced curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

The DfE should clarify and strengthen the mechanisms by which complaints can be made about schools failing to provide pupils with their entitlement to high quality RE.

RECOMMENDATION 15:

Parents/Carers should request information about the programme of RE taught at their child's school (this should be published on the school website). If RE is not mentioned, or if the practice does not seem to match the published plan, ask questions or complain if necessary.

The role of Ofsted

Ofsted has a role in inspecting and regulating services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. Inspections are conducted using a framework for inspection.

In order to inspect RE provision, inspectors need to understand the specific

requirements relating to the provision of RE for different school types, and should ensure that every school they inspect can provide evidence of quality of RE provision. This is essential in order to ensure that schools do not flout their responsibilities and young people do not miss out on their entitlement to high quality RE. Non-compliance must be reported in Ofsted reports.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

Ofsted should ensure that the level of provision for RE is monitored during routine inspections with an expectation that the curriculum cannot be considered 'broad and balanced' unless RE is provided.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

Ofsted should ensure that all those teaching RE are suitably qualified and/or trained to do so.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

Ofsted should review the training of inspectors so that they are aware of specific requirements for RE in each school that is inspected and can differentiate between strong and weak provision.

RECOMMENDATION 14:

Ofsted should carry out an investigation into the impact of different levels and quality of RE provision on wider pupil outcomes.

Teacher Qualifications and Specialism



In addition to access to RE, students have a right to receive high quality RE, taught by highly qualified and well-trained teachers no matter what type of school they attend or where in the country their school is located.

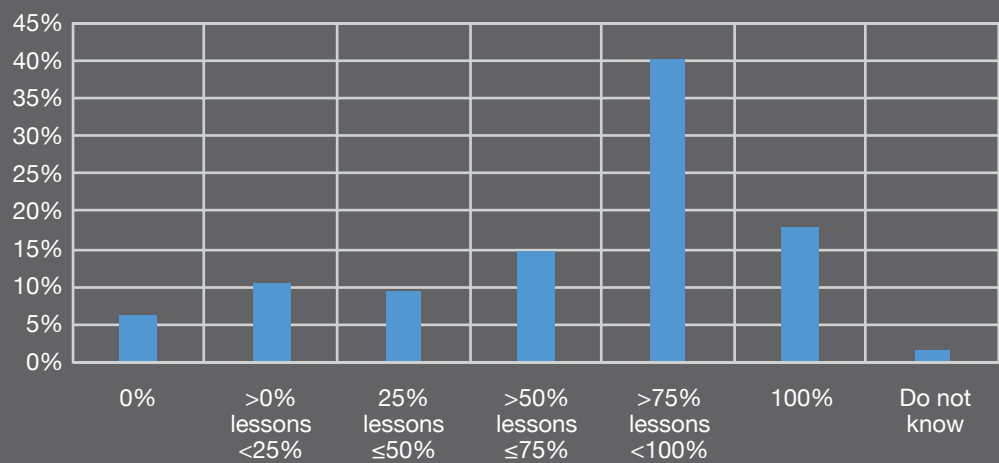
The type of school again has a significant impact on the likelihood of a student to be taught by a specialist RE teacher. **Students at a school with religious character are significantly more likely to be taught RE by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification** than students in an academy,

meaning that once again academy students are missing out. 90% of schools with religious character reported that over half of RE lessons are taught by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification, while this is the case in just 66% of academies.⁴² Agreed syllabus schools fall somewhere in between the two, with 73% of lessons taught by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification, suggesting that you are more likely to get a trained RE teacher in an agreed syllabus school than an academy, but still not as likely as in a school with religious character.

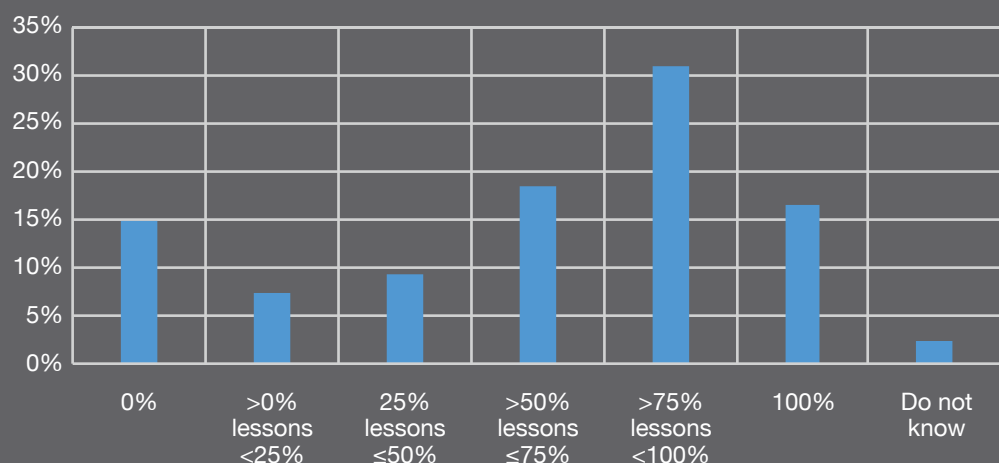
The school survey asked “what percentage of Religious Education lessons at your school are taught by a teacher with a relevant post-A-level qualification (degree or PGCE in Theology/Religious Studies/Philosophy etc.)”? These charts show how

significantly the likelihood of being taught RE by an appropriately qualified teacher changes in different types of school.

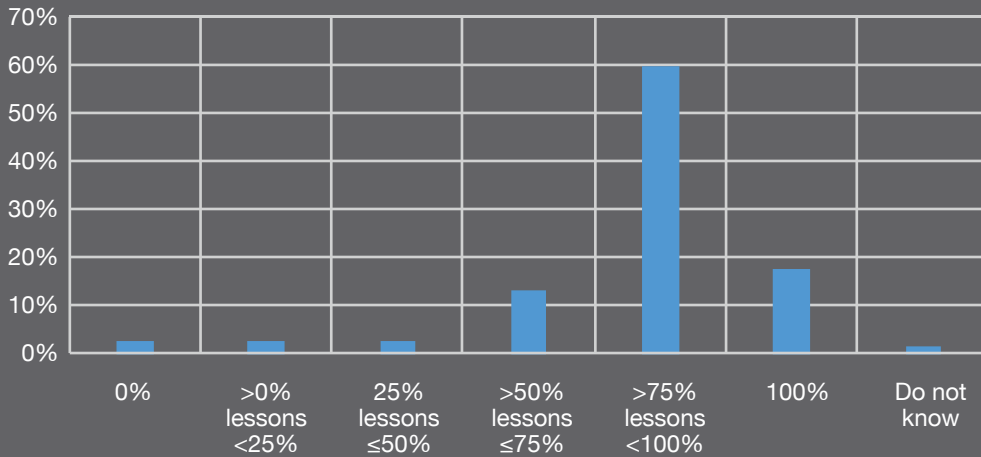
Agreed Syllabus



Academies



Religious Character



Recruitment of RE specialist teachers

There are two ways to become a specialist RE teacher: firstly through being trained, and secondly through gaining experience of teaching the subject.

Students who receive RE from a specialist teacher are more likely to receive higher quality teaching than students who are taught by non-specialist teachers.

“Serious concerns about future staffing and delivery of new specification due to limited teacher specialists. Hard to cover content and many classes taught by non-specialists who are struggling to understand new concepts”

(Anonymous – school survey response)

The Beyond the Ordinary Campaign

The Religious Education Council was concerned by the continued fall in numbers of trainee secondary RE teachers. After bursaries for RE teacher trainees were removed for 2013/14, recruitment had dropped to just 71% of the Government target. As a result, the Religious Education Council, NATRE and others campaigned for the restoration of the bursaries.

The Department for Education did reintroduce RE training bursaries, in October 2014. With RE bursaries ranging from £4,000 to £9,000 (compared with up to £30,000 for other subjects), growing disillusionment within the teaching profession, and the Government's Get Into Teaching campaign focused on attracting STEM subject teachers, the challenge was to inspire potential candidates about teaching a stimulating, fascinating subject.

The Religious Education Council, supported by NATRE and the Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education, therefore launched the "Beyond the Ordinary" campaign to try and attract more people to train to become RE teachers. The campaign launched in March 2015, when applications were still 25% down on the

previous year (960 versus 1,280) despite the re-introduction of bursaries five months earlier. It ran until October 2015.

- By May (two months after launch) the decline started to reverse, with successful applicants up year-on-year for the first time (from 340 to 350).
- By September 2015 RE applications reached 1,630, closing the deficit by 14 percentage points (from -25% to -11%) and outperforming all other subjects as a whole (-15%).
- The decline in recruitment was reversed. By September the number of trainees placed had increased 8% versus 2014 (420 versus 390).
- Research among trainee RE teachers in October 2015 (by the Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education) found 38% were aware of Beyond the Ordinary. Of these, 44% said their decision to become an RE teacher was influenced by the campaign.
- The legacy of the campaign continues today. By February 2016, RE teacher trainee applications were up 35% year-on-year. Over the same period all secondary teacher trainee applications were down -2.5%.

The Beyond the Ordinary campaign

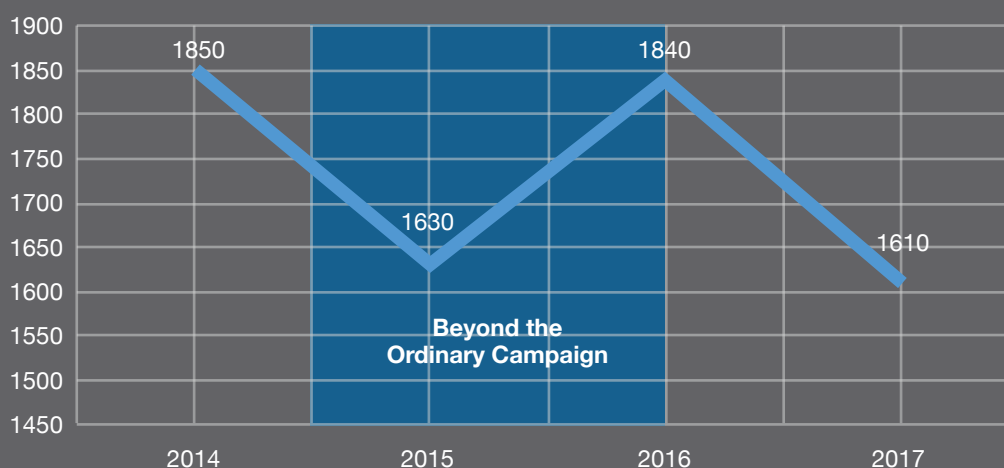
The Beyond the Ordinary campaign reversed the decline in applications for trainee secondary RE teachers. By February 2016

applications had increased by a staggering 35% year-on-year. Despite this success, changes to bursaries for RE teachers meant that the number of 2017 applications is down, as demonstrated by the following graphs:

RS ITT Application 2014-2017

N.B. 2017 figures at 21.08.17

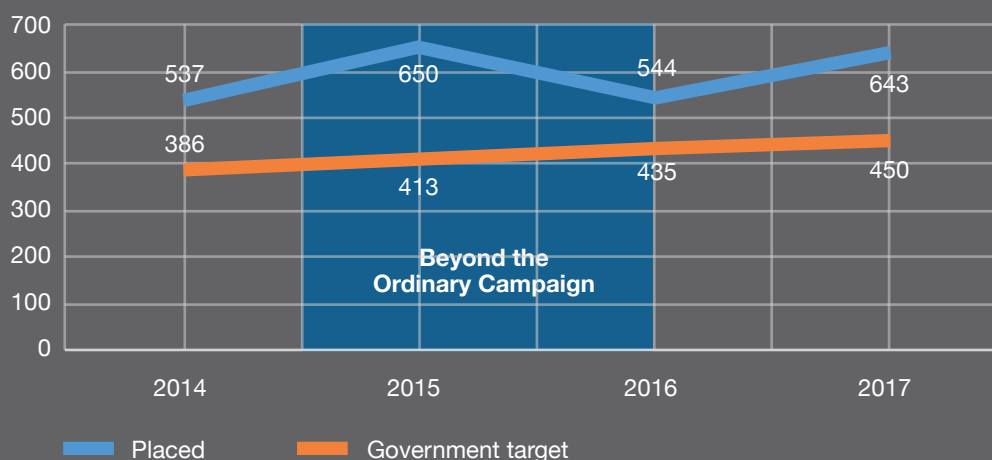
Applications



Number of applicants places compared with DfE target 2014-2017

N.B. 2017 figures = Placed or Conditionally Placed at 21.08.17

Placed v Government Target



It is evident that steps can be taken to improve the number of applications for RE teacher training. The Beyond the Ordinary Campaign, entirely funded by the RE community, greatly contributed to the peak in number of applications to 1,840 in 2016. The drop in applications in 2017 to 1,610 suggests that more effort needs to be made to encourage applications. The end of funding for the Beyond the Ordinary campaign, a decline in application numbers generally and the fact that the bursary level is low means that the numbers applying to be RE teachers are not sufficient to meet demand.

Incentivisation mechanisms, such as bursaries, play an important role in encouraging a higher number of applications for RE, and should be promoted to students considering a career in teaching. At a time where people's worldviews are increasingly complex, it is vital to ensure that appropriately trained, specialist RE teachers are available to encourage religious literacy and encourage honest and open dialogue about the religions and beliefs that we live amongst.

The school survey found that where RE specialist roles exist within schools, very few have vacancies. This suggests that RE specialist teachers are valued and recognised as essential to the delivery of good RE. However, it might also suggest that schools are cutting the number of RE

specialist posts, relying instead on teachers with other specialisms to teach the subject. In fact, the school survey found **that in 49% of secondary schools fewer than half of the RE lessons are taught by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification.**⁴³

Training non-specialist teachers

More than twice as many teachers of RE (56%) as History (28%) have no post-A level qualification in the subject as demonstrated by the DfE School Workforce Data 2015.⁴⁴ Even more worrying, the situation has deteriorated even further from 2014 in both Religious Education and Geography.

Whilst in principle it might not be a problem for a teacher qualified in another related subject, to retrain to teach RE, it is of crucial importance to ensure that anyone teaching RE receives training in order to ensure they deliver accurate information to students. The danger of having inadequately training non-specialist teachers teaching RE could be severe in terms of perpetuating inaccuracies about religions or beliefs.

It is equally unacceptable for schools where there is one specialist RE teacher to expect them to plan lessons for non-specialist teachers who then deliver the RE lesson. This has serious implications for teachers' workloads and once again this risks the

accuracy of any discussion that is able to take place within the classroom.

The school survey found that 15% of academies reported that no RE lessons were taught by a teacher with a relevant post A-Level qualification, suggesting that these schools are not putting a high priority on securing staff with relevant qualifications, but are making simple provisions to meet their statutory or contractual requirements.⁴⁵ It is likely that schools of all types that fail to provide training for non-specialist RE teachers teaching RE are failing to take their duty to

religiously educate their students seriously and placing them at risk of not having their questions answered appropriately or accurately.

Training must be provided for all non-specialist teachers who deliver RE lessons, before they commence teaching any RE lessons; for example completion of the *Teach RE* course.⁴⁶ It is surely a students' entitlement that they are educated by a teacher who has a solid grasp of the subject which they are teaching so that they are able to provide a high quality education.

CASE STUDY: ARK Network Events

In 2016-17 ARK schools held three full day network events that involved subject team training.

“Subject specialist training is so important in RE to ensure that the quality of provision gives our students the opportunity to develop excellent religious literacy. With training cuts nationally at post-graduate level for RE recruitment, many schools are faced with asking non-specialists to teach RE.

With this in mind, it is imperative that subject knowledge and pedagogical tools necessary to teach good quality RE lessons are shared in a collaborative

fashion across a network. Sharing resources each term lifts a burden off teachers that have less experience and are struggling with the demands of new specifications that require expert subject knowledge.

Further to this, where school leaders are not providing adequate time for the provision of RE, coming together to strengthen discussions and proposals that can be put to school leaders (and MATs) ensure its profile and status in a school is upheld.”

Provided by: Adam Whitlock, Senior Leader, Head of RE Faculty & Collective Worship, ARK Schools

RECOMMENDATION 9:

School leaders should ensure that all specialist and non-specialist teachers who provide RE have access to subject specific CPD throughout their career.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

School leaders have a responsibility to ensure that all non-specialist RE teachers who teach RE receive high quality subject specific training, such as the Teach RE course, before they commence teaching RE.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

The DfE should ensure that it is a condition of the successful completion of teacher training that there is evidence that newly RE qualified teachers have an appropriate level of RE knowledge, understanding and skills to take up their first post.

School Workforce Census Findings



Results of analysis of the school workforce survey: Provision for RE in different types of schools

Since the Dearing Report, The National Curriculum and its Assessment (1994), recommended that schools devote at least 5% of curriculum time to RE (just one hour per week on average), most agreed syllabuses have either assumed or stipulated that this would be the time required to meet the outcomes. There were good reasons for this recommendation in 1994 which is just as relevant in 2017 if not more so. The equivalent of an hour per week is not unreasonable given the legal expectation set

out in 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 that by the end of their school careers, all pupils in state funded schools will have followed a continuous programme of learning that encompasses not only Christianity but 'teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. It is often forgotten that although academies and free schools have a choice over whether or not to follow a local agreed syllabus, this requirement is included in their Funding Agreements with the Department for Education and so is contractually binding on them also.

The development of the GCSE short course

reinforced the expectation that 5% of time will be provided for RE by building an accredited course that required 60-70 guided learning hours - i.e. around an hour per week over two years.

What proportion of a school's teaching hours are dedicated to RE?

Whereas around 28% of all state funded schools (787 of the 2793 that provided relevant information in 2015) report that they are making no provision for RE even though it is a requirement for all to do so, that figure varies significantly depending on the type of school and has increased by 12% since 2011.

- At Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11-13 years), **34% all academies report that they offer no timetable time for RE at all**. That figure increases to almost 44% at Key Stage 4 (pupils aged 14-16 years).
- This means that **pupils attending academies without a religious character are half as likely to receive RE lessons as their peers in local authority maintained schools** where the law states that a local determined agreed syllabus must be followed.
- However, even given the apparent protection of the law, in around **one in five local authority maintained**

schools where the agreed syllabus applies, **there is no timetable time for RE in Key Stage 3**. In a similar proportion of these schools, there is no timetable time for RE in Key Stage 4.

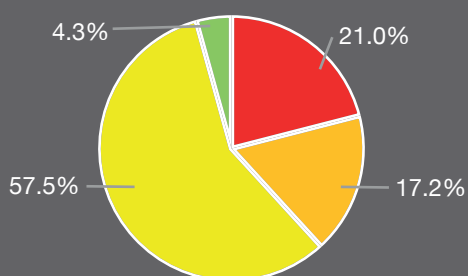
- **Schools with a religious character are far more likely to be making provision at or above the 5% level** assumed by the writers of most agreed syllabuses. Around 6% of these schools report making no timetable provision and it is likely that the majority of these do not report timetable time for Religious Education because they give the subject a title specific to the type of school.
- In addition to the schools reporting no timetable time for RE, **many are falling short of the 5%** curriculum time assumed by the writers of most agreed syllabuses would be required to meet the outcomes. Again, this figure varies by type of school as follows:
 - At Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11-13) the 5% standard is met or exceeded in:
 - 62% of agreed syllabus schools
 - 90% of schools with a Religious Character
 - 44% of Academies
 - At Key Stage 4: (pupils aged 14-16) the 5% standard is met or exceeded in:
 - 45% of agreed syllabus schools
 - 91% of schools with a religious character
 - 27% of academies

- At Key Stage 3 the 5% standard is **MET OR EXCEEDED** in 64% of all state funded schools.

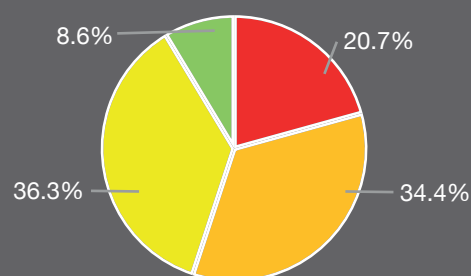
- At Key Stage 4 the 5% standard is **MET OR EXCEEDED** in 50% of all state funded schools.

Percentage of curriculum time spent on RE in KS3

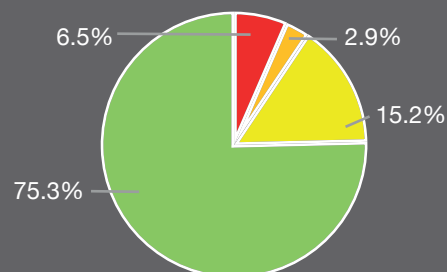
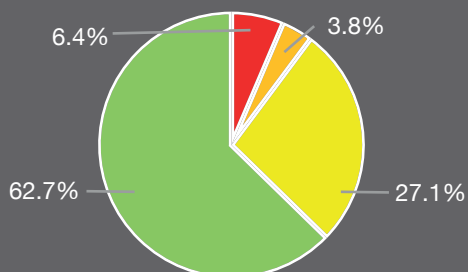
Schools where an Agreed Syllabus applies



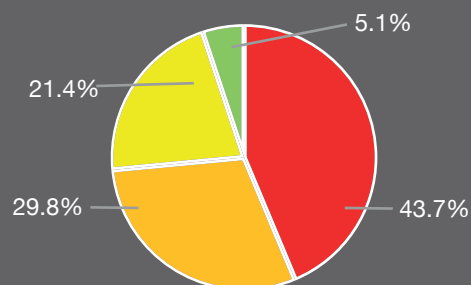
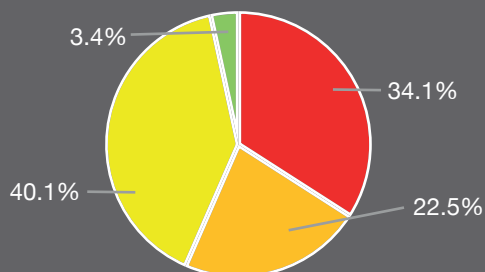
Percentage of curriculum time spent on RE in KS4



Schools with a Religious Character

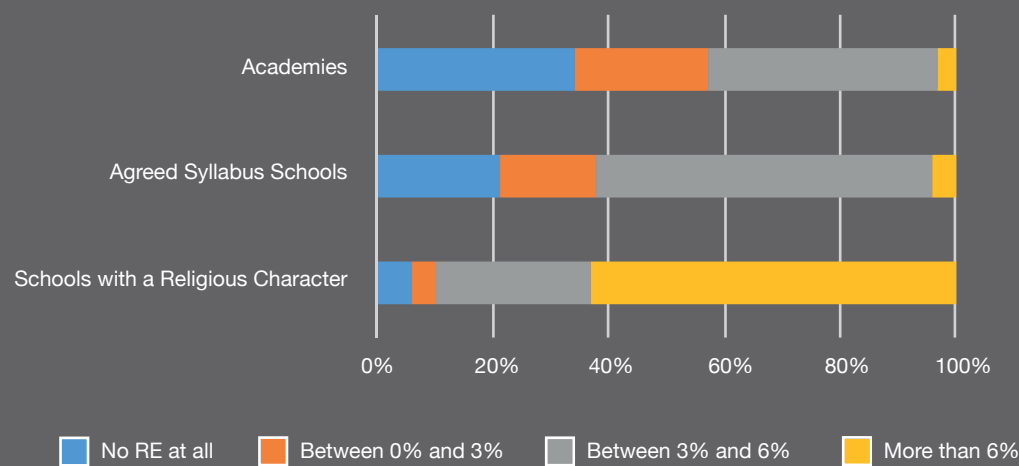


Academies

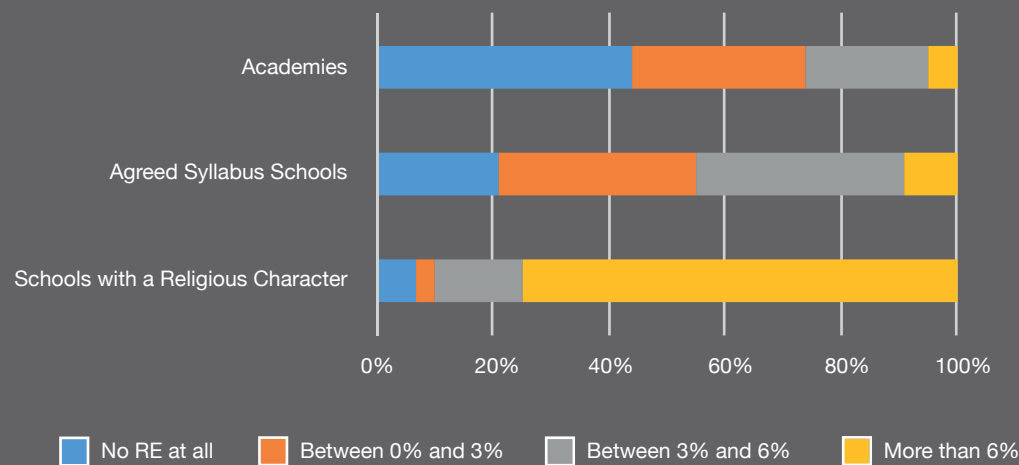


■ No RE at all
 ■ Between 0% and 3%
 ■ Between 3% and 6%
 ■ More than 6%

Curriculum time for RE at Key Stage 3



Curriculum time for RE at Key Stage 4



Regional Variation in Provision in Different Types of Schools



GCSE Entries Findings



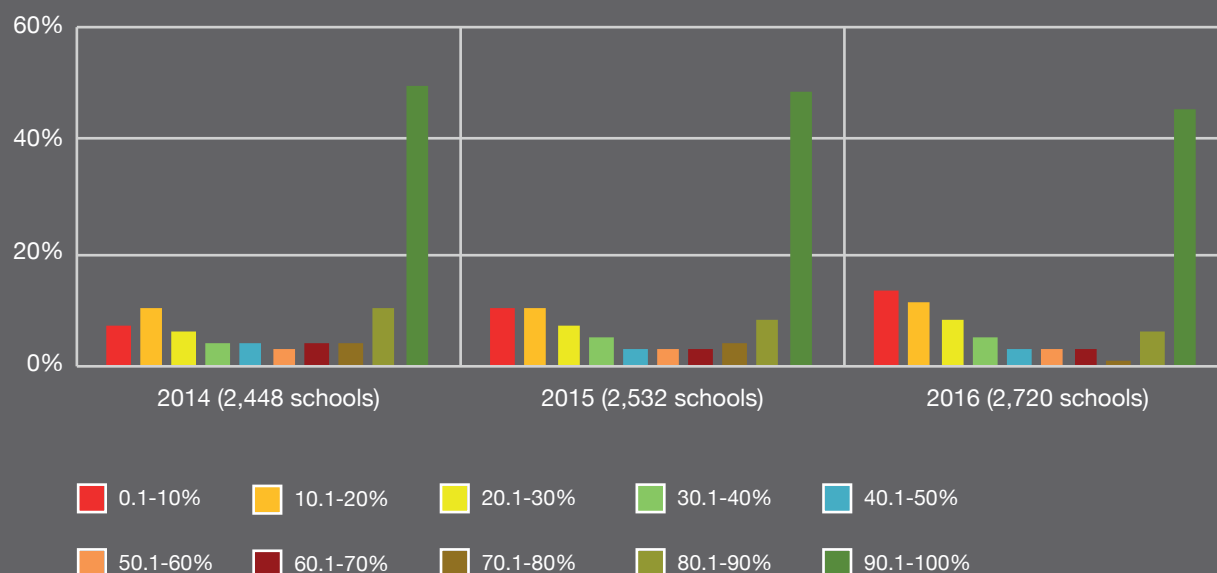
A report on GCSE Entries is produced on an annual basis by NATRE as part of its work to support its members in campaigning for high quality provision for RE for all pupils. In schools where a local Agreed syllabus applies, it is common for there to be a requirement that students follow a GCSE qualification at Key Stage 4; either short or full course. Where this regulation applies, the percentage of entries is *an indicator* of the degree to which a school is meeting its legal requirements, although there are often good educational reasons why a small

number of pupils in each cohort might not be entered. The short course is designed to be taught in 60-70 teaching hours; the equivalent of about one hour per week over two years.

The analysis that follows highlights a number of issues including different patterns of entry in different types of school, regional variations in entries and most alarming, the number of schools entering no pupils at all for any Religious Studies GCSE.

Percentage of year 11 cohort entered for GCSE *

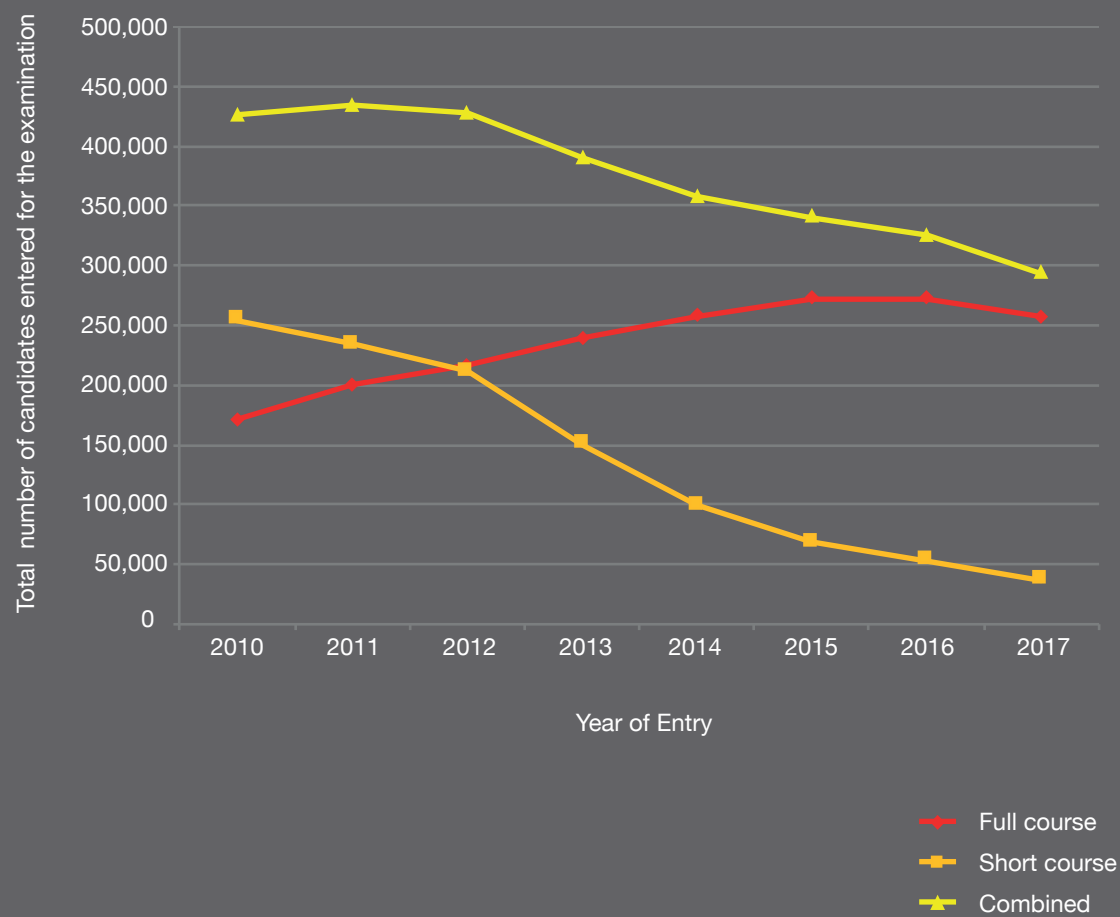
*Excluding those schools making no entries for any GCSE in RS



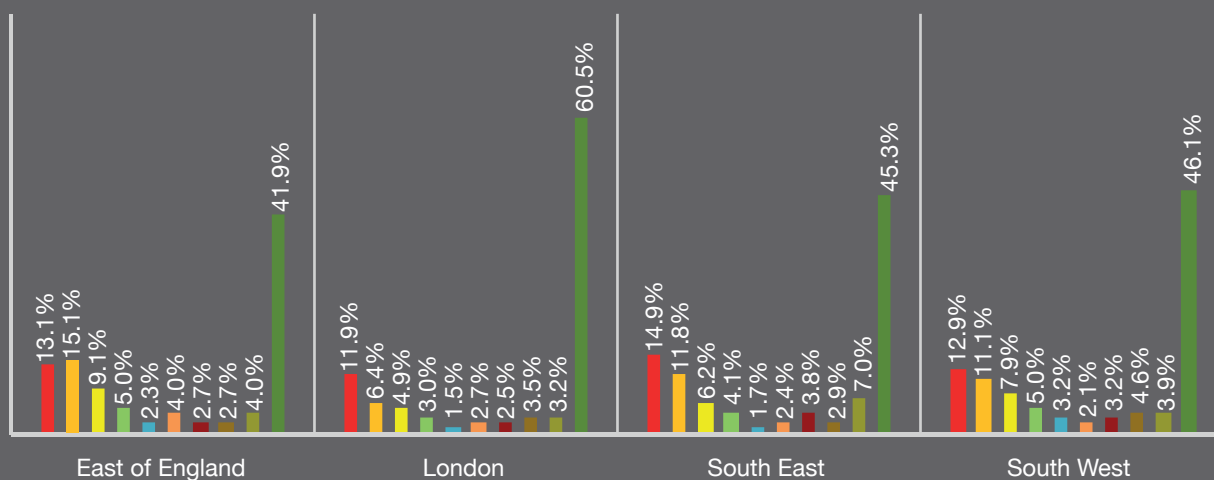
The number of entries for GCSE has remained steady over the last three years however, this figure masks some major changes to patterns of entry. The number of schools entering between 90 and 100% of their year 11 cohort has fallen steadily from 49% in 2014 to 45% in 2016. This reflects

a move away from entering whole cohorts for either the short course or the full course, almost certainly prompted by the removal of the short course from accountability measures. Those entering 80-90% has also fallen from 10% in 2014 to 6% in 2016.

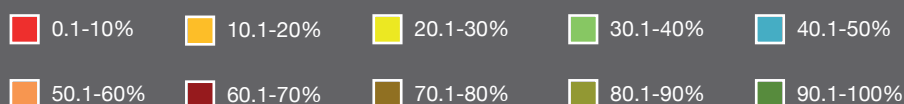
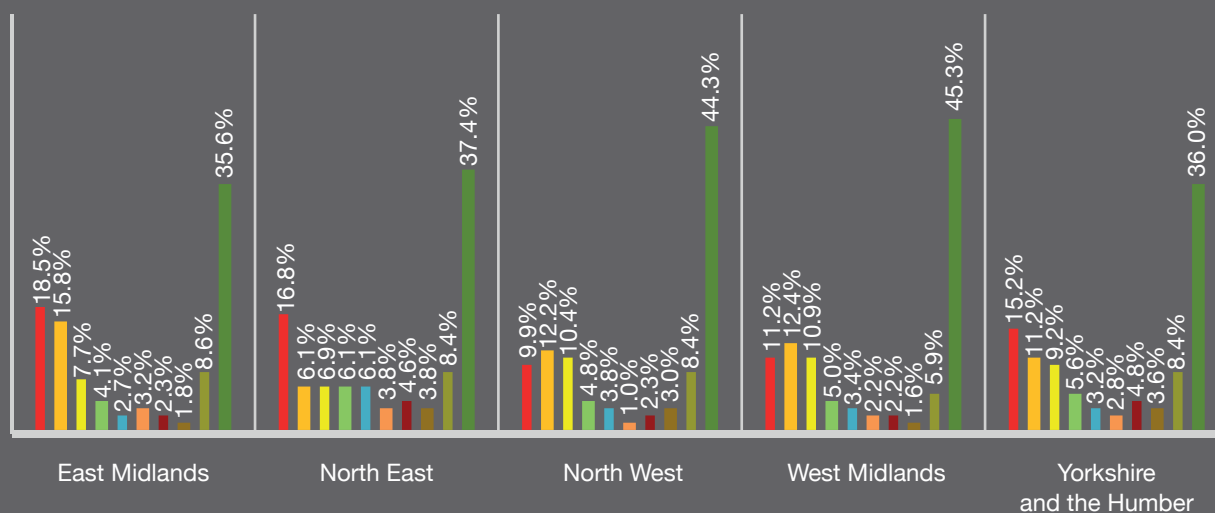
GCSE Religious Studies Entries in England 2010-2017



Percentage of pupils entered for GCSE RS in 2016 by region -SOUTH



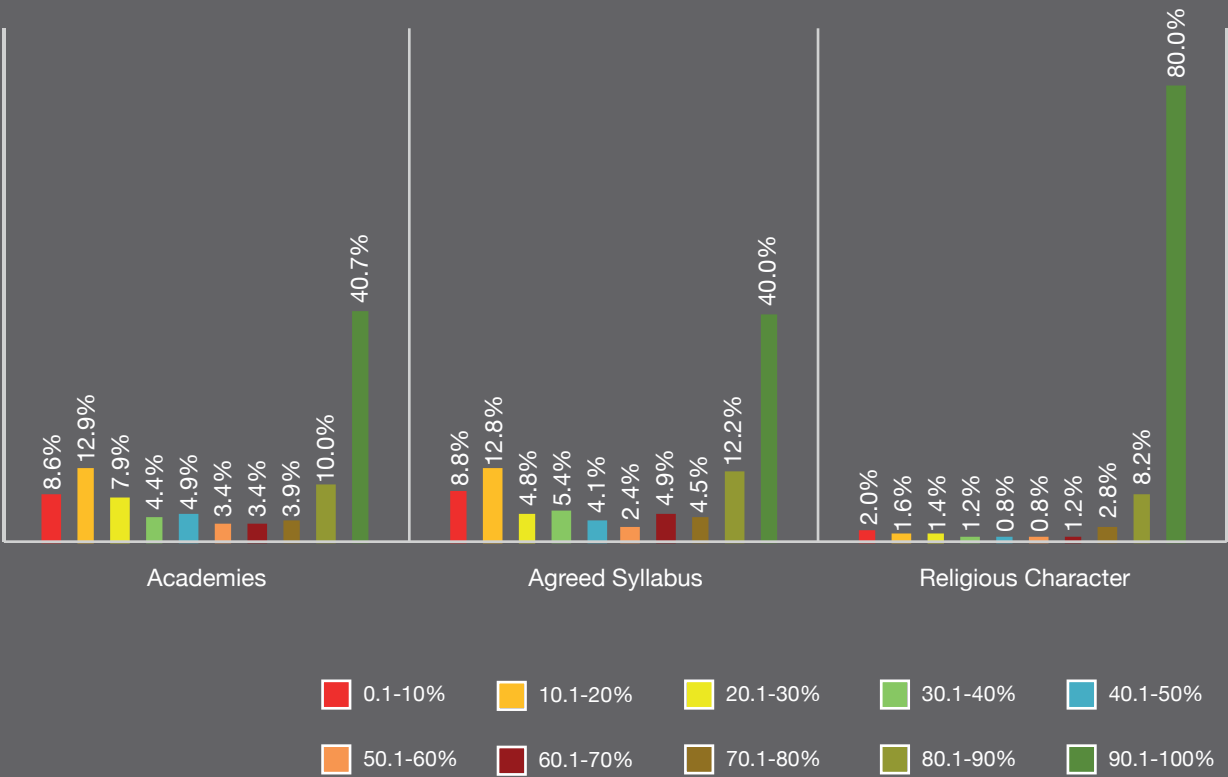
percentage of pupils entered for GCSE RS IN 2016 by region Midlands and the North



At the other end of the scale, more schools are entering smaller groups of pupils, i.e. those who have opted to study the full course GCSE. The number of schools

entering between 0.1% and 10% of the cohort has risen from 7.4% in 2014 to 13.3% in 2016.

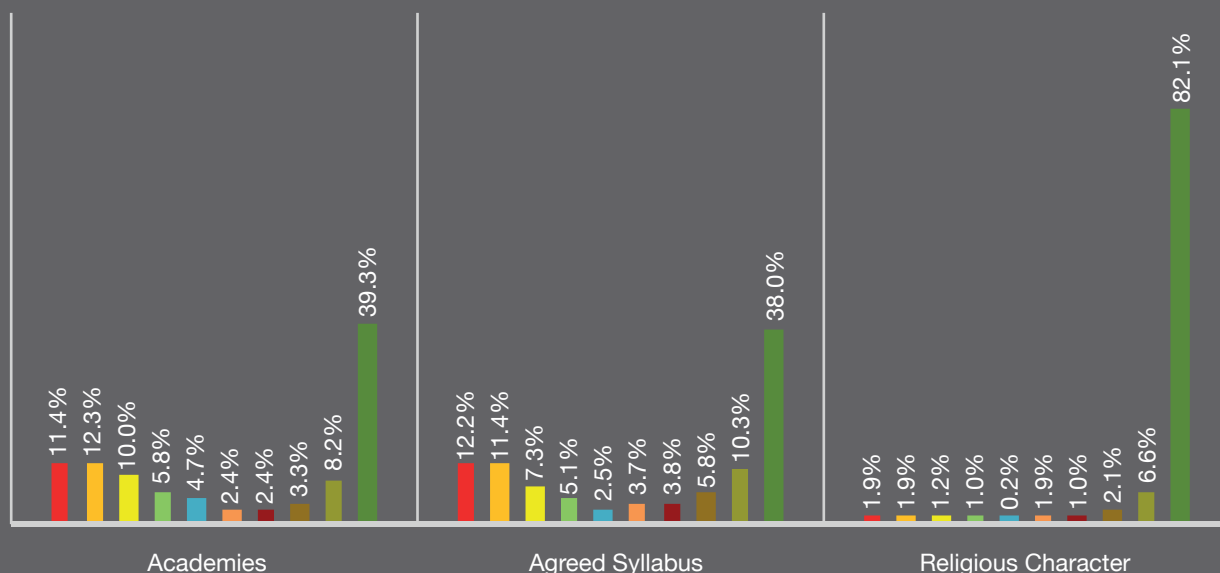
Percentage of year 11 cohort entered 2014 - 2448 Schools



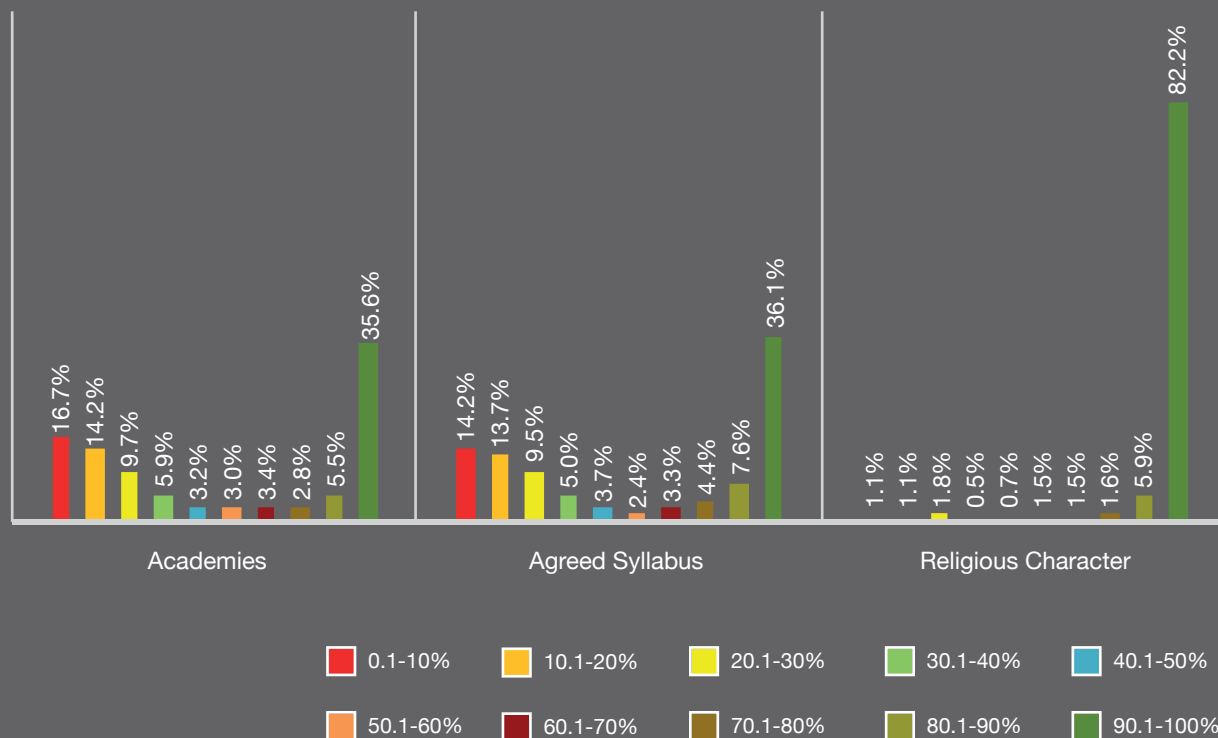
There is a marked difference between types of schools in relation to the patterns of entry. Most schools with a religious character enter almost the whole cohort of year 11 for a GCSE. In 2014, between 90 and 100% of pupils at 80% of these schools were entered for a GCSE in RS. In other types of school, in 2014, half as many

schools entered this proportion of students (40%) but this figure has fallen to around 36% by 2016. The number of schools without a religious character entering between 0 and 10% of their cohorts increased from around 8% in 2014 to around 16% in 2016.

Percentage of year 11 cohort entered 2015 - 2532 Schools



Percentage of year 11 cohort entered 2016 - 2720 Schools

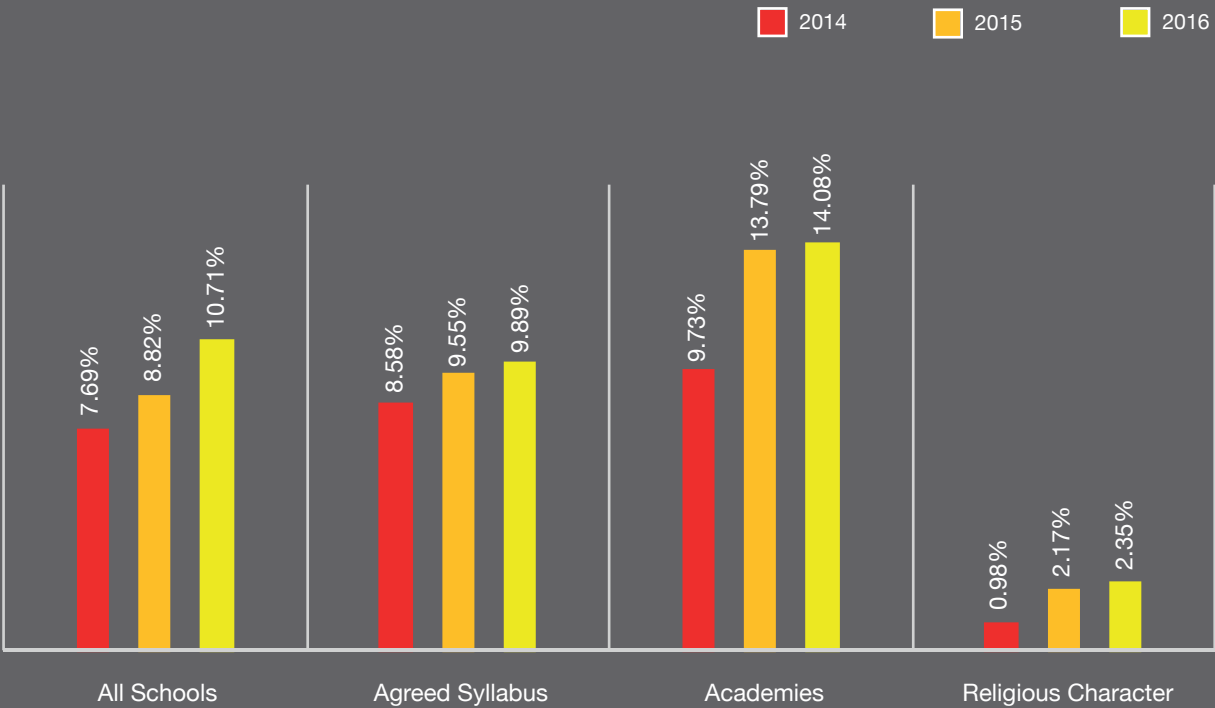


Schools where Religious Studies is not studied at GCSE level at all

The number of schools removing GCSE RS from their curriculum entirely has risen steadily between 2014 and 2016 (3%

overall). Schools with a religious character are least likely to not enter any pupils for GCSE RS but more than 14% of Academies do not enter a single pupil for any GCSE in RS.

Percentage of Schools of Different Types Making No Entries For Any GCSE 2014-16



The ability of students to access RE teaching is likely to have a direct impact on the number of entries made for GCSE examinations. Naturally, this extends to the number of entries made for A-Level examinations and the number of entries for

RE within the International Baccalaureate. This in turn affects to university entries, and further again, the number of theology and religious studies graduates, alongside those in other related disciplines, who might decide train to teach RE.

Percentage of the 326 schools with no GCSE RS entries in each region



RECOMMENDATION 4:

The DfE should publish data about RE provision routinely in an accessible format (without the need to issue Freedom of Information requests) to allow local Standing Advisory Councils for RE (SACREs) and other bodies to more easily fulfil their duty to monitor provision for RE in their local area. This data should include school workforce data and GCSE entries.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The DfE should encourage ministers to speak about the importance of RE in the curriculum and about its impact on wider educational outcomes, including on society at large.

Conclusion



There are many excellent examples of RE being taught to a high level and quality across the country and within various different school types. Where RE is taught well, it leads to informed discussion around complex religions and beliefs, thereby promoting religious understanding and tolerance. At a time where the UK is becoming increasingly multicultural, it is more important than ever for young people to understand the religions and beliefs of the communities in the United Kingdom. We must do our best to ensure that students leaving school are religiously literate.

The State of the Nation report has

demonstrated that there are problems around the country with both the level and quality of provision of RE, meaning that around 800,000 students are missing out on the education they are entitled to every year. This is unacceptable. The DfE, Ofsted and individual schools must ensure that provision requirements are met – not just as a tick-box exercise, but as a means of genuinely educating young people. This should be reflected in the curriculum time dedicated to RE, as well as the investment in specialist RE teachers. Where it is not possible to recruit specialist RE teachers, schools must ensure that any teacher delivering RE lessons has an appropriate

level of training in order to avoid perpetuating inaccuracies which could impact on cohesion and inclusivity in society.

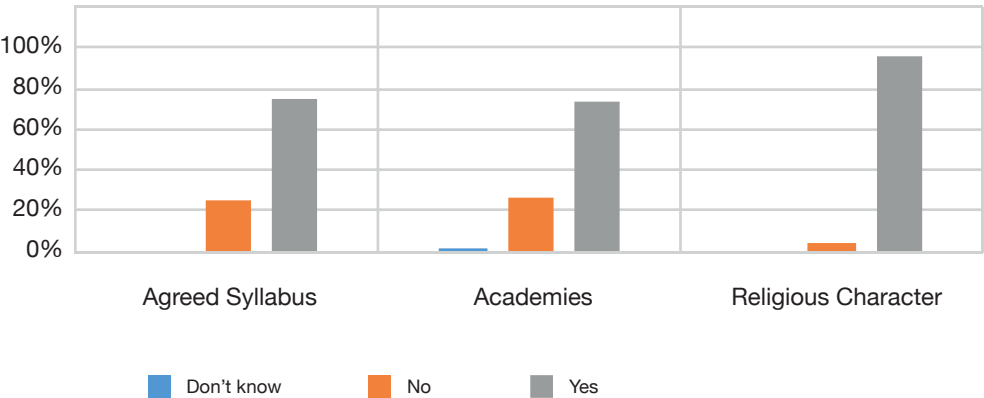
This State of the Nation report has highlighted a number of recommendations, which should be acted upon by the DfE, Ofsted and school leaders. It is essential that these recommendations are followed so that that all pupils in all secondary schools receive fair access to RE and a high quality of teaching.

Appendix

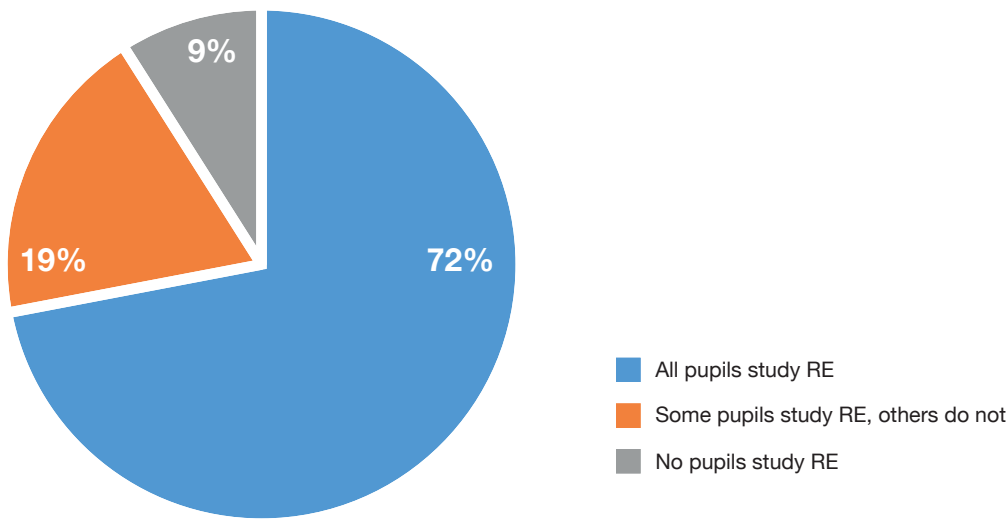
This provides a summary of the answers given in the school survey for a number of the questions asked which have been cited in this report.

Does your school offer Religious Studies to all students at Key Stage 4 (KS4)?

	Don't know	No	Yes
Agreed Syllabus	0%	25%	75%
Academies	1%	26%	73%
Religious Character	0%	4%	96%



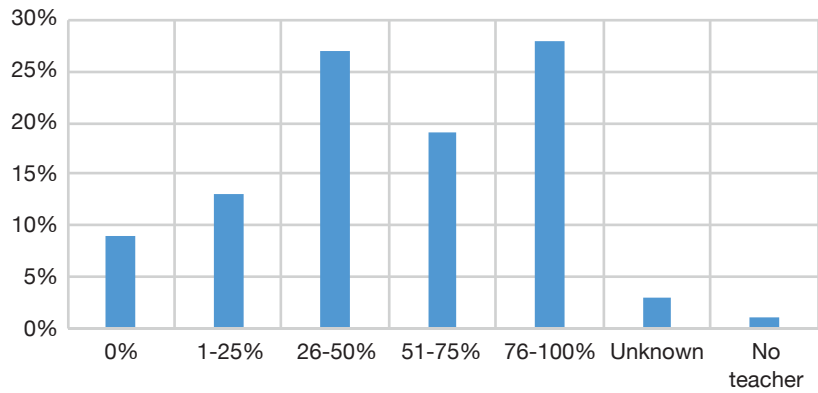
How would you describe your school's Religious Education provision at KS4 for Year 10?



How many teachers currently teaching Religious Education have a relevant post A-Level qualification (degree or PGCE in Theology/Religious Studies/Philosophy etc.)?

	Percentage of schools
0%	9%
1% to 25%	13%
26% to 50%	27%
51% to 75%	19%
76% to 100%	28%
Unknown	3%
No teacher	1%

Percentage of RE teachers at each school with a relevant post A level qualification



“What percentage of Religious Education lessons at your school are taught by a teacher with a relevant post-A-Level qualification (degree or PGCE in Theology/Religious Studies/Philosophy etc.)”?

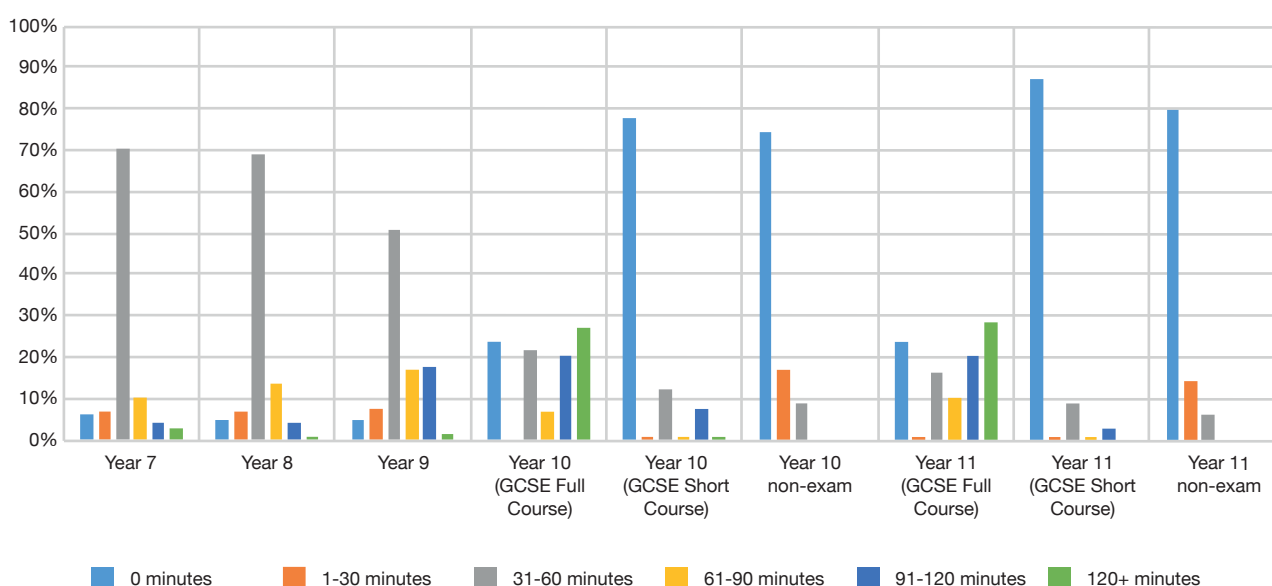
	0%	>0% lessons <25%	25% lessons =50%	>50% lessons =75%	>75% lessons <100%	100%	Do not know
Agreed Syllabus	5.98%	10.26%	9.40%	14.53%	40.17%	17.95%	1.71%
Academies	14.98%	7.37%	9.22%	18.43%	30.88%	16.59%	2.53%
Religious Character	2.90%	2.90%	2.90%	13.04%	59.42%	17.39%	1.45%
All schools	10.89%	7.22%	8.48%	16.96%	36.58%	17.59%	2.28%

“How many minutes of Religious Education does each pupil receive on average each week”?

Agreed Syllabus Schools:

How many minutes of Religious Education does each pupil receive on average each week?

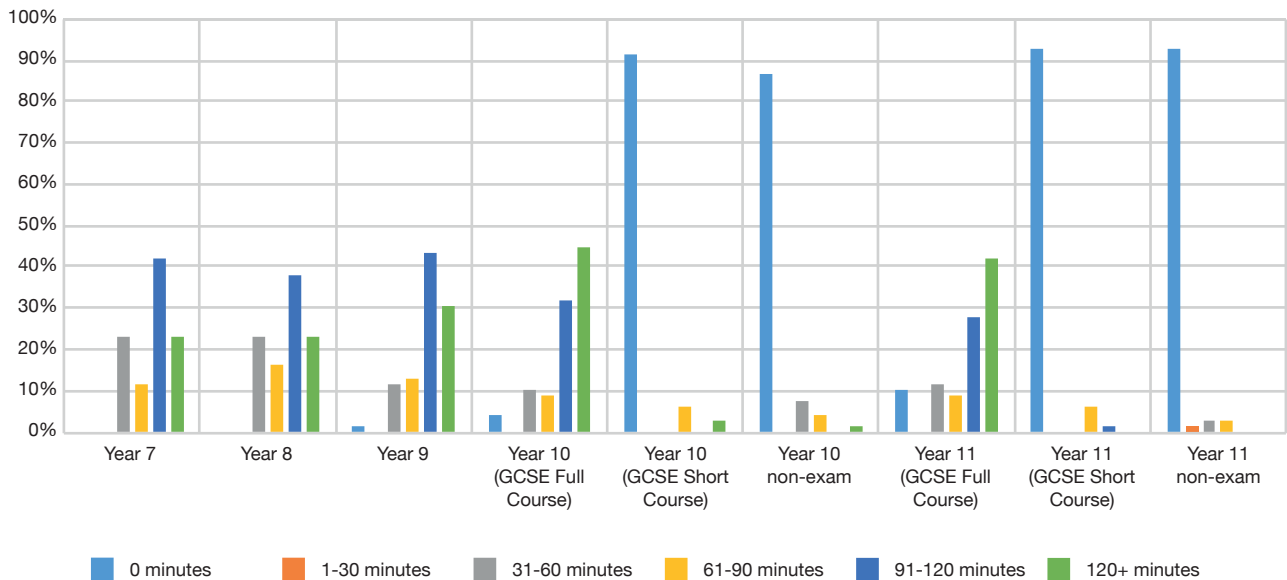
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10 (GCSE full course)	Year 10 (GCSE short course)	Year 10 non-exam	Year 11 (GCSE full course)	Year 11 (GCSE short course)	Year 11 non-exam
0 minutes	6%	5%	5%	24%	78%	74%	24%	87%	79%
1-30 minutes	7%	7%	8%	0%	1%	17%	1%	1%	15%
31-60 minutes	70%	69%	50%	21%	12%	9%	16%	9%	6%
61-90 minutes	10%	14%	17%	7%	1%	0%	10%	1%	0%
91-120 minutes	4%	4%	18%	21%	8%	0%	21%	3%	0%
121+ minutes	3%	1%	2%	27%	1%	0%	28%	0%	0%



Schools with a religious character:

How many minutes of Religious Education does each pupil receive on average each week?

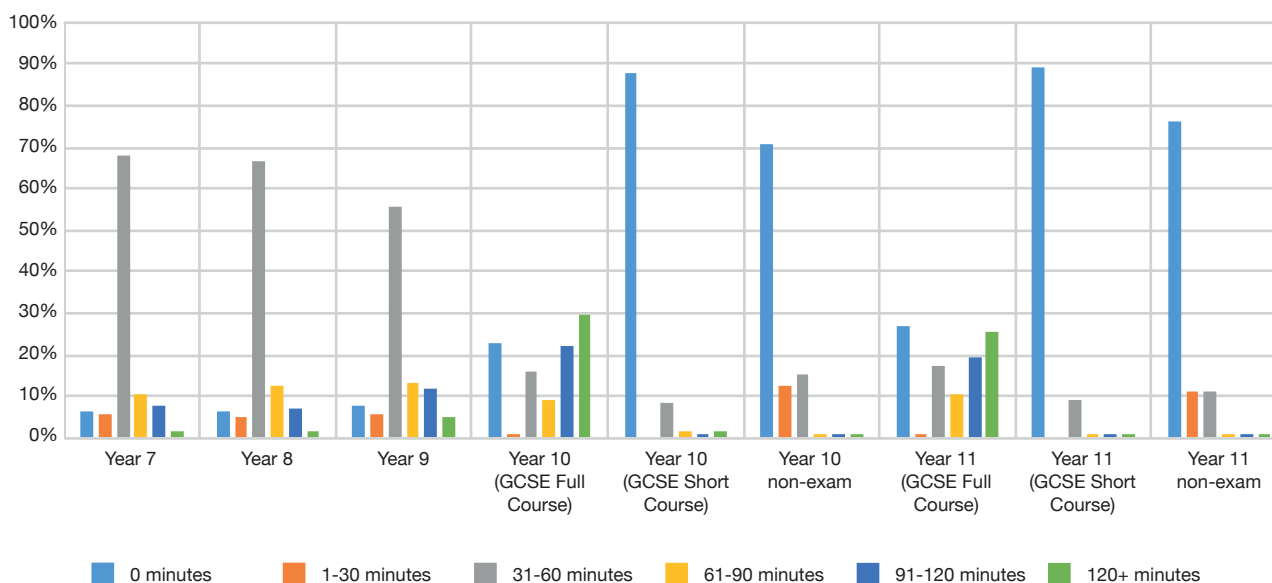
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10 (GCSE full course)	Year 10 (GCSE short course)	Year 10 non-exam	Year 11 (GCSE full course)	Year 11 (GCSE short course)	Year 11 non-exam
0 minutes	0%	0%	1%	4%	91%	87%	10%	93%	93%
1-30 minutes	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
31-60 minutes	23%	23%	12%	10%	0%	7%	12%	0%	3%
61-90 minutes	12%	16%	13%	9%	6%	4%	9%	6%	3%
91-120 minutes	42%	38%	43%	32%	0%	0%	28%	1%	0%
121+ minutes	23%	23%	30%	45%	3%	1%	42%	0%	0%



Academies:

How many minutes of Religious Education does each pupil receive on average each week?

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10 (GCSE full course)	Year 10 (GCSE short course)	Year 10 non-exam	Year 11 (GCSE full course)	Year 11 (GCSE short course)	Year 11 non-exam
0 minutes	6%	7%	8%	23%	88%	71%	27%	89%	76%
1-30 minutes	6%	5%	6%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	11%
31-60 minutes	68%	67%	56%	16%	9%	15%	17%	9%	11%
61-90 minutes	10%	12%	13%	9%	1%	1%	10%	1%	1%
91-120 minutes	8%	7%	12%	22%	1%	0%	20%	0%	0%
121+ minutes	2%	2%	5%	29%	2%	0%	25%	1%	0%



References

- 1 Schools Workforce Census 2010-2015 – <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Report%20on%20the%20provision%20for%20RE%20SWF%20for%20SOTN%202017%20final4%20130917.pdf>.
- 2 School survey, Question 1 – See Appendix 1.
- 3 Schools Workforce Census 2010-2015 – <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Report%20on%20the%20provision%20for%20RE%20SWF%20for%20SOTN%202017%20final4%20130917.pdf>.
- 4 School survey, Question 13 – See Appendix 1.
- 5 School survey, Question 1 – See Appendix 1.
- 6 Schools Workforce Census 2010-2015 – <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Report%20on%20the%20provision%20for%20RE%20SWF%20for%20SOTN%202017%20final4%20130917.pdf>.
- 7 School survey, Question 13 – See Appendix 1.
- 8 Schools Workforce Census 2010-2015 – <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Report%20on%20the%20provision%20for%20RE%20SWF%20for%20SOTN%202017%20final4%20130917.pdf>.
- 9 Register of Regulated Qualifications (<https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>): The Ofqual register of qualifications that sets out that pupils that follow a GCSE Full course should expect to receive between 120 and 140 hours of classroom teaching over the course which equates to approximately 10% of curriculum time.
- 10 School survey, Question 19 - See Appendix 1.
- 11 School survey, Question 19 - See Appendix 1.
- 12 GCSE Entries Findings, <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/GCSE%20RS%20entries%20analysis%20over%20time%20final3%20130917.pdf>.
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- 14 School survey, Question 13 – See Appendix 1.
- 15 GCSE Entries Findings, <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/GCSE%20RS%20entries%20analysis%20over%20time%20final3%20130917.pdf>.
- 16 GCSE Entries Findings, <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/GCSE%20RS%20entries%20analysis%20over%20time%20final3%20130917.pdf>.
- 17 A Review of Religious Education in England: The Religious Education Council of England and Wales, October 2013, pg.15.
- 18 School Standards and Framework Act 1998:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/pdfs/ukpga_19980031_en.pdf
- 19 Church of England schools generally follow their locally agreed syllabus, which is why the SIAMS inspections do not inspect RE specifically (Core Q 3) although do look at it in Core Q 1 - the impact of RE on the Christian distinctiveness of the school and SMSC.
- 20 Section 80(2)(a), Education Act 2002.
- 21 Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, page 10:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf
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- 23 Schedule 19(3), School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- 24 Schedule 19(2), School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- 25 RE and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools -Department for Education FAQs.

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- 27 GCSE Entries Findings, GCSE Entries Findings,
<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/GCSE%20RS%20entries%20analysis%20over%20time%20final3%20130917.pdf>.
- 28 School survey, Question 1 – See Appendix 1.
- 29 School survey, Question 1 – See Appendix 1.
- 30 School survey, Question 1 – See Appendix 1.
- 31 School survey, Question 2 – See Appendix 1.
- 32 School survey, Question 19 – See Appendix 1.
- 33 School survey, Question 19 – See Appendix 1.
- 34 School survey, Question 19 – See Appendix 1.
- 35 Engaging students in high quality and challenging religious education: Broughton Business and Enterprise College, Ofsted Case Study, 2013. Link:
http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/media/file/Broughton_Business_and_Enterprise_Co.pdf
- 36 Register of Regulated Qualifications: <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>.
- 37 School survey, Question 19 - See Appendix 1.
- 38 School survey, Question 19 - See Appendix 1.
- 39 School survey, Question 19 - See Appendix 1.
- 40 School survey, Question 19 - See Appendix 1.
- 41 GCSE Entries Findings, <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/GCSE%20RS%20entries%20analysis%20over%20time%20final3%20130917.pdf>.
- 42 School survey, Question 13 – See Appendix 1.
- 43 School survey, Question 12 – See Appendix 1.
- 44 <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/School%20workforce%20survey%202015%20report%20301016.pdf>
- 45 Schools with a religious character
- 46 Link: <http://www.teachre.co.uk/teach-re-course/>



date: **Fri 24th Nov 2017**

10.00 am - 3.45 pm

venue: **Ibis Hotel** (New Street),
Arcadian Centre
21 Ladywell Walk,
Birmingham B5 4ST
(five minute walk from New Street Station)

“The Commission on RE: The Interim Report”



What issues does the
Interim Report raise?
Opportunity, threat, a
middle way? What might it
mean for pupils, teachers, advisers & SACREs?

The Commission on Religious Education: The Interim Report

What are the key issues the Interim Report identifies? What does the Report say about the evidence that has been presented so far? Does the Report comment on the nature or quality of the evidence that the Commission has received? Is the Commission still looking for additional evidence? In the light of the Interim Report what questions would you wish to put to the Commission?



What has the Commission on RE been asked to consider?

Should there be a common
entitlement in RE?

If so what should that
entitlement be?

Should there be a
change in the legal
arrangements for RE?

Should RE be
locally or centrally
controlled, or
something else?

Should parents still
have the right to
withdraw their child?

Should teachers keep the
right to withdraw from
teaching RE if they wish?

What is the
nature, purpose
and scope of RE?

What changes are
needed to ensure
high quality RE?

**Cost: for AREIAC & for NASACRE
members £75**

non-Members £90

Refreshments and lunch provided

“The Commission on RE: The Interim Report”

date: **Fri 24th Nov 2017** 10.00 am – 3.45 pm

venue: **Ibis Hotel** (New Street), Arcadian Centre 21, Ladywell Walk, Birmingham B5 4ST

Programme

10.00 am – 10.50 am	Registration tea and coffee on arrival
10.50 am – 11.00 am	Welcome Paul Smalley and Jane Brooke
11.00 am – 12.00 noon	The Commission on RE – The Interim Report, observations and perspectives What does the Interim Report say? What issues does the Report raise? Presenters: Prof Denise Cush and Dr Anthony Towey
12.00 noon – 12.30 pm	Group discussion, thoughts on the interim report. Q&A session with the morning’s presenter
12.30 pm – 1.15 pm	Lunch
1.15 – 1.45 pm	In Groups discuss suitable questions for the Question Time Panel, submit questions for Question Time Panel
1.45 – 3.00 pm	<p>Question Time Panel Panel members: Rt Hon. Charles Clarke Denise Cush CoRE Commissioner Dr Anthony Towey CoRE Commissioner One other person (tbc)</p> <div>   </div> <p>Rt Hon. Charles Clarke Prof Denise Cush</p> <p>(tea & coffee will be available at the end of this session)</p> <div>   </div> <p>Dr Anthony Towey One other person (TBC)</p>
3.00 – 3.40 pm	Open Discussion , remaining issues, outstanding questions, thoughts, hopes or concerns
3.40 – 3.45 pm	Evaluation
3.45 pm	Finish

NASACRE and AREIAC working in partnership

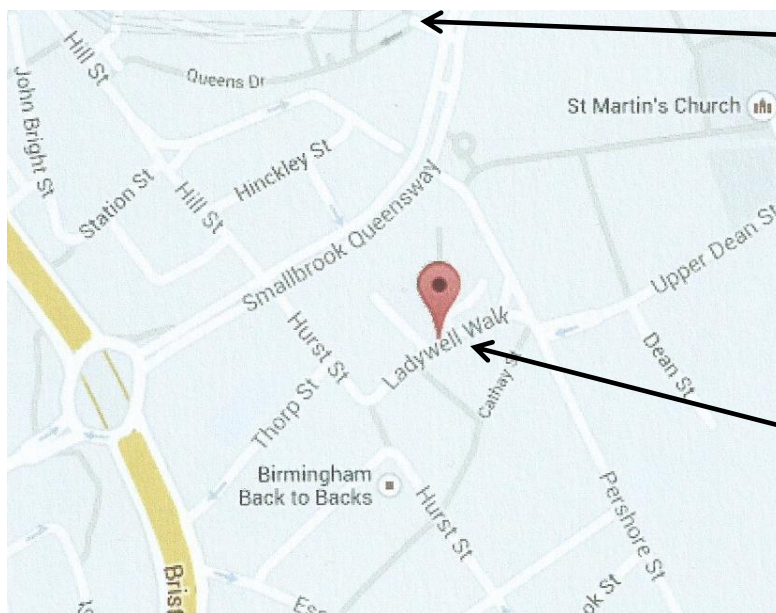
Booking Form: “The Commission on RE: The Interim Report”

To reserve a place for the Conference on Friday 24th Nov 2017 please use the online form <http://tinyurl.com/CoREInterim>

If you wish to attend this important and highly relevant conference please click on the link above. This will take you (be patient it may take a little while) to a simple form. You will be asked to submit your email address, name, postal address and phone number. You will also be asked to tick a box to indicate whether you are a member of AREIAC or NASACRE, or if you are not a member of any of these organisations. Also, you will be asked if you have any dietary requirements.

There is also a ‘reCAPTCHA’ task which you must not ignore. It is a simple task. You will be asked to click a couple of boxes in which you can see an image. Apparently the task is designed to put robots off applying to attend the conference.

You will receive confirmation of your booking form and an invoice will be emailed to you. You should also receive an email confirming your application within 60 mins of submitting your application. If not check your responses and try again. If again your application is not confirmed by email within 60 mins please contact the Chair of NASACRE Paul Smalley. Paul can be contacted on: chair@nasacre.org.uk



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