

Agenda

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday, 15 May 2019, 2.00 pm
County Hall, Worcester

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Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday, 15 May 2019, 2.00 pm, County Hall, Worcester

Membership:

Group A (Representatives of Christian and other faiths)

Mrs L Thorne (Ba'hai - Chairman), Mr G Bounds (Free Church Representative), Mrs T Khawaja (Muslim Representative), Mr J Loyal (Sikh Representative), Mrs C Parker (Methodist Representative) and Dr Y Stollard (Jewish Representative)

Group B (Church of England Representatives)

Kate Cope (Church of England), Mrs T Lister (Church of England) and Ms K Poole (Church of England)

Group C (Representatives of Recognised Teachers Associations)

Charlotte Betteridge (NASUWT) and Mr C Giles (Teacher Representative)

Group D (Elected representatives of the Local Authority)

Mr M E Jenkins (Worcestershire County Council), Mr R C Lunn (Worcestershire County Council) and Dr K A Pollock (Worcestershire County Council)

Co-opted Representatives

Ms E Hill (University of Worcester) and Ms A Hooper (Humanist Representative)

Agenda

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

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Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Tuesday, 5 February 2019, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Mrs Lindsay Thorne (Chairman), Mr Robin C Lunn (Vice-Chairman), Mr Graham Bounds, Ms K Cope, Mr Chris Giles, Mr M Jenkins, Mrs Tasnim Khawaja, Mrs Tracy Lister, Mr K Pollock and Dr Yvonne Stollard.

Also attended:

Mr S Pett, RE Today - Adviser to SACRE
Kate Griffiths – Committee Officer

647 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Ellie Hill, Jatinderpal Loyal, Christine Parker and Kerry Poole.

The Chairman welcomed Kate Cope, the new Church of England representative who worked alongside Tracy Lister helping teachers in Church of England schools.

648 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2018 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the chairman.

649 Annual Report and Exam results

The Annual Report had been discussed at previous meetings and would be updated with figures for exam results for 2017/18.

Chris Giles distributed information which showed the number of students entered for exams and the results in 2018 in Worcestershire. At GCSE level Worcestershire was maintaining its standards with 4% more than the West Midlands figure gaining a level 5, and the same percentage gaining a level 8. The A level figures showed a large drop in the numbers taking the exam. Stephen distributed figures which showed the numbers of students who were entered for RS exams from individual schools. The percentages varied greatly.

Monitoring the teaching of RE was one of SACRE's duties and Chris Giles and Stephen Pett agreed to carry out further work to look at why the numbers of A level students had fallen and whether schools were fulfilling their statutory duties in teaching RE.

ACTION: a report would be brought to the next meeting covering suggestions for what action could

650 Future Support for Teachers / Conferences

be taken to support schools to fulfil their statutory duties.

Regional Ambassadors

NATRE had divided the Country into regions and appointed an RE Ambassador in each region. Chris Giles was the Ambassador for the West Midlands and helped support local groups so that every teacher can join a support group within a half an hour drive. Culham St Gabriel was supporting the Ambassadors and a strategy was being developed. Teachers could apply for grants to set up a local group and would receive cover for one day a month.

Primary Conference

Stephen Pett had met with Margaret James from the Diocese and they would co-ordinate their efforts.

Hub Leaders

Ellie Hill and Stephen Pett had spoken at a conference in Crewe to describe how they had set up the Hub Leaders project. Ellie would be publishing a research paper about it. The Rivers Church of England Multi Academy Trust, the Diocese and SACRE were now working more closely together to organise Hubs.

Secondary Students conference

Chris Giles had organised a successful network meeting that had been attended by the Mayor of Worcester as well as a press officer. Interesting questions had been asked such as whether there was any link between a lack of religious education and a lack of social cohesion.

The 2019 Student Conference would be held on 14 June at the University of Worcester and could accommodate up to 200 Students.

Secondary Teacher conference

Titled 'Deeper thinking: deeper learning' this conference would be held on 25 June at Puckrup Hall.

651 Agreed Syllabus Options

There was a legal requirement to review the syllabus every five years. RE Today worked with Worcestershire SACRE to develop the current Syllabus which runs from 2015-2020.

For 2020-2025 the options for SACRE to consider are to either:

- a) Renew the license with RE Today for the current syllabus. This would include a supplement to update the syllabus regarding the Commission on RE plus changes to KS 4 and 5 and assessments;
- b) Adopt RE Today's more recent Syllabus Model B. This incorporates more of the Understanding Christianity resource and a revised assessment model; or
- c) Commission a bespoke new syllabus.

Due to the considerable extra cost of option C, it was quickly assumed that the choice was in reality between options A and B.

Initial comments from members included:

- From a teacher's point of view it was felt that option B would be best as many schools were already using the 'Understanding Christianity' resource so the new syllabus would support that but would not be too large a leap away from what they were already using
- It was clarified that the Understanding Christianity resource was made available once teachers had completed 3 days of training. The majority of Church Primaries across England used the resource
- Syllabus Model B was more systematic than the current thematic Worcestershire syllabus
- It was felt that the description of the options did not include enough about other world views such as humanism; in response RE Today thought that both options did include other world views but it was not clearly represented in the overview of the options
- Members felt that it was important that pupils needed to learn about the basis of Christianity before they were able to compare it to other religions and world views.

Prior to the next meeting Stephen Pett would speak to more teachers in Worcestershire to gain their views and further information would be sought regarding the funding available.

ACTIONS:

- a) **At the next meeting there would be further discussion regarding the new syllabus**

		<p>b) The topics contained in the Option B syllabus should be emailed around to SACRE members</p> <p>c) A questionnaire would be sent to teachers asking their opinion of the syllabus</p> <p>d) The dates and details of the conferences would be sent to teachers and SACRE members.</p>
652	Monitoring RE Provision in Schools	<p>As mentioned under the previous item a survey had been prepared to send to schools. The survey would ask what teachers thought of the current syllabus but it would also ask about how RE was delivered in each school to ascertain if schools were fulfilling the statutory requirement for teaching RE.</p> <p>ACTION: Once the results from the survey had been received SACRE would consider how to offer support to the schools who needed help to meet the statutory requirement.</p>
653	Feedback from Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasnim Khawaja reported that Bromsgrove and Redditch had welcomed 7 new people to Bromsgrove and 5 families in Redditch. She had an awareness raising presentation which she could deliver to schools in assemblies or in workshops • It was Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January and a large number of schools were involved in various events • On Sunday 10 February there was a Jewish Muslim Storytelling event • Worcestershire Interfaith Forum and Holland House were holding an event on 14 March – ‘Opening our eyes to each other’.
654	Any Other Business	None
655	Future Meeting Dates	<p>Wednesday 15 May 2019</p> <p>Wednesday 2 October 2019</p>

The meeting ended at 4.00pm.

Chairman

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Draft Ofsted inspection pack

From Page 13

Inspection of religious education (RE) and collective worship

33. The Secretary of State designates certain schools as having a religious character.²⁴ In schools without a religious character, Ofsted inspects RE and collective worship as part of inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. This is different in schools with a religious character. In these schools, denominational education and collective worship are inspected by a body appointed by the maintained school's governing body under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 or as provided in the academy's funding agreement.²⁵

34. If a school has been designated as having a religious character, Ofsted is not able to comment on the content of collective worship or on denominational RE. Inspectors may, however, gather evidence from anywhere relevant (including RE lessons and assemblies) to evaluate pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, personal development and/or behaviour and attitudes. The fact that the school has been designated as having a religious character must be referenced in the 'Information about this school' section of the inspection report.

35. Section 48 inspections (or the equivalent inspection of an academy) are carried out every three to five years²⁶ (and usually within two to three years of a new voluntary-aided school or academy/free school opening). Ofsted's lead inspector will check the section 48 arrangements, including when the next inspection is due, and will write about this in the 'Leadership and management' section of the inspection report. They will ensure that the required consultation has taken place with the prescribed faith body when a school has a prescribed faith body, and decides not to use that body's inspection service but appoint its own inspector.

36. Inspectors will familiarise themselves with any issues raised in any section 48 inspection (or equivalent) held since the last Ofsted inspection. Inspectors will not, however, use that evidence in an Ofsted inspection.²⁷ The lead inspector will report if the section 48 inspection (or equivalent inspection of an academy) is overdue and that, therefore, the school is failing in its statutory duty. They will do this in the 'Leadership and management' section of the inspection report.

37. If a section 48 inspection (or equivalent inspection of an academy) happens at the same time as an Ofsted section 5 inspection, inspectors will mention this in the 'Information about this school' section.²⁴ A school with religious character – often called a faith school – is designated under section 69(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;

²⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents. In a faith school, pupils are educated in the context of the principle of a religion. It is normal for there to be a formal link with a religious organisation.

²⁵ Regulation 9 of The Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/2038/regulation/9/made.

²⁶ Regulation 4 of The Education (School Inspection) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2009/1564/made.

²⁷ Protocol between Ofsted and signatory faith group inspectorates.

From Page 41

Curriculum flexibility

158. The curriculum sets out the aims of a programme of education. It also sets out the structure for those aims to be implemented, including the knowledge, skills and understanding to be gained at each stage. It enables the evaluation of pupils' knowledge and understanding against those expectations.

159. All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the national curriculum subjects, religious education and age-appropriate sex education.⁵⁸ Academies are expected to offer all pupils a

curriculum that is similar in breadth and ambition to the national curriculum, including the requirements to teach English, mathematics, science, and religious education.

From Page 42:

Curriculum narrowing

161. Ofsted's research into the curriculum has shown that some schools narrow the curriculum available to pupils, particularly in key stages 2 and 3. Our research shows that this has a disproportionately negative effect on the most disadvantaged pupils.⁶⁰ It is appropriate that, in key stage 1, teachers focus on ensuring that pupils are able to read, write and use mathematical knowledge, ideas and operations. From key stage 2 onwards and in secondary education, however, inspectors will expect to see a broad, rich curriculum. Inspectors will be particularly alert to signs of narrowing in the key stage 2 and 3 curriculums. If a school has shortened key stage 3, inspectors will look to see that the school has made provision to ensure that pupils still have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects in Years 7 to 9.

162. At the heart of an effective key stage 4 curriculum is a strong academic core: the EBacc. The government's response to its EBacc consultation, published in July 2017, confirmed that the large majority of pupils should be expected to study the EBacc. It is therefore the government's ambition that 75% of Year 10 pupils in state-funded mainstream schools should be starting to study EBacc GCSE courses nationally by 2022 (taking their examinations in 2024), rising to 90% by 2025 (taking their examinations in 2027). It is important that inspectors understand what schools are doing to prepare for this to be achieved, and they should take those preparations into consideration when evaluating the intent of the school's curriculum.

Ofsted and the new inspection framework:

Summary of key points, from Claire Clinton, RE Matters, adviser to Newham SACRE

Summary:

- revised framework to focus inspection on what children learn through the curriculum, rather than over-reliance on performance data
- proposals will call time on the culture of 'teaching to the test' and off-rolling
- new separate behaviour judgement to give parents reassurance that behaviour is good
- most evidence-based, research-informed and tested framework in Ofsted's 26-year history
- Ofsted will look at how a nursery, school, college or other provider's results have been achieved – whether they are the result of broad and rich learning, or gaming and cramming.

New 'quality of education' judgement

- This judgement will have the curriculum at its heart. It replaces the 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes' judgements from the current framework.

What will inspectors look at?

- The extent to which your curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills pupils will gain at each stage (intent)
- The way you teach and assess your selected curriculum, to support pupils to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills (implementation)
- The outcomes pupils achieve as a result of the education they've received (impact) See paragraph 155 of the draft inspection handbook for maintained schools and academies.

Inspectors will:

- Gather direct evidence of quality of education in your school
- Have meaningful discussions with you about how you know the curriculum is having an impact
- Ask you to explain: - Why you've decided to collect the assessment information you collect - What you're drawing from this information - How that informs your curriculum and teaching - What's staying the same?

Worcestershire Primary RE Conference

RE with impact: thinking hard and learning lots

Date: **Monday 24 June**

Venue: TBC – central Worcester location

9.30am-3.30pm (Registration and refreshments from 9.00am)

This conference will support schools in planning and teaching great RE that has an impact on pupils. It will focus on practical classroom ideas and strategies, based on the latest research and practice. It will explore ways of helping pupils to build on and make sense of prior learning, using engaging resources and activities that make children think hard, as well as contributing to their wider personal development.

Session 1: Effective assessment in RE **Fiona Moss**

This session will explore a range of models of assessment used by teachers around the country. It will weigh up some advantages and disadvantages of different models, focusing on practical, manageable and worthwhile assessment processes that make a difference to pupils' learning.

Session 2: RE, learning and the brain **Stephen Pett**

In this session we will explore some of the recent research on the brain and learning. Lessons from neuroscience and cognitive psychology will be applied to planning and teaching generally, with a focus on examples of excellent RE that helps pupils to think hard and learn lots. Connections will be made to the assessment models explored in session 1.

Session 3: Teaching non-religious worldviews **Fiona Moss**

In the UK, 53% of people are non-religious, according to the 2016 British Social Attitudes Survey. Many children in our classes come from homes with no particular religious affiliation. This session will explore thoughtful ways of helping pupils to understand something of the variety of non-religious worldviews held in the UK.

Session 4: Building local groups in Worcestershire **Local teachers**

Find out about what happens in local groups near you, including regional NATRE groups. Hear from some local group leaders, who will share some classroom ideas. Discover the results of Uni of Worcester research into the impact of developing local group leaders.

Copies of all resources used on the day will be available to take away, and electronic copies available to download afterwards. A wide range of resources will be available to purchase or order on the day.

Who is it for?

The conference is aimed at teachers of RE from primary schools, including subject leaders, TAs and head teachers. It will also be valuable for governors to find out about how the new syllabus is being implemented, as well as to explore best practice in RE.

Aims

- To support schools in making progress with the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabuses for RE, with its increased flexibility and extra support for planning RE, and its focus on living religion and belief
- To provide practical strategies, guidance and resources for teachers and subject leaders in planning creative, thoughtful, rigorous RE to promote deep learning and the personal development of pupils
- To model examples of thoughtful RE, challenging all pupils and promoting deeper thinking

Fee:

£95 or £170 for two teachers from the same school, including refreshments and resources

Booking form attached.

**Booking form:
Worcestershire Primary RE Conference**

Date: Monday 24 June

Fee: £95 or £170 for two teachers from the same school

Full Name:	
School Name:	
School Address:	
	Postcode:
Telephone:	
Email address:	
Special Dietary Requirements	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Payment details:	
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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Security code <small>(last 3 numbers on signature strip)</small>	Issue no. (Switch)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Signature:	
Date:	

Send to: RE Today Services, 5-6 Imperial Court, 12 Sovereign Road, Birmingham B30 3FH
 Telephone: 0121 458 3313 **Email to:** mark@retoday.org.uk

Register On **Eventbrite**

FREE EVENT

A Level 6th Form Conference: Suffering and Evil

Venue: University of Worcester St. Johns Campus | Friday 14th June 2019

Essential information for A level students and teachers

 #AlevelRS19

Practical seminars to choose from led by A level teachers for A level students.

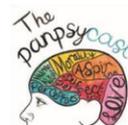
Stretch and challenge your top students to achieve A/A* grades in the exam.

Share ideas and network during the day with Worcestershire Interfaith Forum, exam boards and publishers.

Presented by



Supported by



Key Question: If there is no reward or punishment, what is the point of being good?



Darren Oldridge is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Worcester. His interests include the history of the Christian Devil, the supernatural, and witchcraft. Darren's presentation will reflect on the various roles of the Devil in the Christian past and his continuing relevance today.

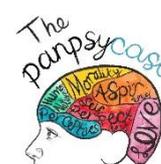


Dr David Webster is Director of the Centre for Innovation in Learning & Teaching at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His presentation will examine how people have tried to reconcile beliefs in divine goodness, the harshness and cruelty of life, and the presence of joy and bliss in at least some of our days.

Venue: 9.00am - 3:00pm – University of Worcester, St.John’s Campus, Worcester, WR2 6AJ.

9.00am	Registration from 9.00am. Please tweet messages today using #AlevelRS19	Cotsworld A&B	E1106 and 7	
9.30am	Resource Market Place			
10.00am	Introduction and Welcome - Rebecca Davidge (University of Worcester Senior Lecturer/Secondary RE PGCE Tutor)			
10.30am	Break	Urwin Lecture	EEG087	
10:45am	Keynote 1: Professor Darren Oldridge - <i>Talk of the Devil</i>			
11.15am	Keynote 2: Dr David Webster – <i>The Human Condition: Making Sense of Evil and Suffering</i>			
11:45pm	Dr Gregory Miller and Andrew Horton from the Panpsycast Team - Live Interview.			
12:10pm	Lunch (staff catered for, students eat at the University restaurant)	Seminar Rooms	EEG087	
1:10pm	Seminar Stream A. 1.10 to 1.50 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sally Johnson - <i>Achieving high grades and techniques for revision</i> Andrew Horton – <i>How to link David Hume and Aquinas into every essay!</i> Gemma Coley and Alison Palmer - <i>Has evil and suffering contributed to secularisation?</i> Lisa O'Connor – <i>Feminist theology by Ruether and Daly</i> Anna George-Plunkett – <i>The Ontological Argument</i> Annabel Borthwick – <i>Gender and Society 'Motherhood'</i> Peter Ellis - <i>The Ethics of Euthanasia</i> Ellie Hill - <i>What do we value in a good life, and why does it matter? Linked to theodicy.</i> 			
2.00 pm	Seminar Stream B. 2.00 to 2.40 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ben Smith - <i>How to get to Heaven: The Doctrine of Purgatory in Medieval Europe</i> Lisa O'Connor – <i>Understanding Secularisation at A Level</i> Gemma Thompson – <i>Business Ethics</i> Amy Everitt and Claire Watson - <i>Essay writing with a focus on Utilitarianism.</i> Rebecca Davidge - <i>Evil and Suffering at A Level and degree level – What's the difference?</i> Alice Thomas - <i>Religious Pluralism and Theology</i> Michelle Philip – <i>God is an illusion and the result of wish fulfilment</i> Siobhan Deeney – <i>Different religious views on gender identity.</i> 			
2.45 pm	Closing remarks and evaluation cards – Chris Giles (South Bromsgrove High School)			Urwin Lecture

Presented and supported by



DEEPER THINKING: DEEPER LEARNING

Secondary RE conference 2019

Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Supporting better teaching and learning in RE

Tuesday 25 June 2019

SPEAKERS:

Stephen Pett is a national adviser with RE Today, editor of over 30 books for secondary teachers. He led the development of RE Today's Understanding Christianity resource, is leading work on Understanding Islam, and is currently working on RE materials for Kent Uni's major research project, Understanding Unbelief.

Angela Hill is a national adviser at RE Today. An experienced RE teacher, examiner and trainer for a GCSE exam board, she led a two-year national project promoting Philosophy for Children in schools across Wales.

Venue: Puckrup Hall Hotel, GL20 6EL

9.00 am–3.30 pm (registration and refreshments from 8.30 am)

8.30	Registration and refreshments
9.00 – 10.00	<p>Session 1 Better thinking, better writing for GCSE <i>Angela Hill</i></p> <p>The reformed GCSE specifications make much greater demands on students not only in terms of increased content, but also in terms of the skills needed to analyse, evaluate and write at length. We will explore some practical strategies for encouraging better writing and deeper thinking that will help enhance students' GCSE performance.</p>
10.00 – 11.00	<p>Session 2 Deeper thinking in Islam: contexts and case studies <i>Stephen Pett</i></p> <p>Trying out some practical ways of deepening engagement at KS3, to take students beyond 'essentialised' pictures of Islam into richer and more nuanced understandings.</p>
11.30 – 12.30	<p>Session 3 Getting students thinking: enquiry-based learning in RE <i>Angela Hill</i></p> <p>This session will explore ways of tapping into your learners' natural curiosity to raise engagement and to foster the delivery of high impact lessons and better outcomes in RE. Practical philosophy in RE means encouraging students to think and speak like philosophers, engaging in enquiry with others. Explore activities, techniques and resources that promote deeper thinking, and the development of essential 'soft skills' for engaging effectively in critical discussion and debate. We will consider the benefits and potential challenges of introducing and developing philosophical approaches in RE lessons.</p>
1.30 – 2.30	<p>Session 4 Exploring and handling the diversity of non-religious worldviews <i>Stephen Pett</i></p> <p>In the light of new research from Understanding Unbelief, a major international research project from the University of Kent, this session will explore practical ideas for examining diverse non-religious worldviews and ways of engaging with non-religious students in your classes.</p>
2.30 – 3.15	<p>Session 5 TeachMeet</p> <p>Five-minute slots to share practical and relevant ideas for your classroom. Sign up overleaf to offer an idea that works!</p>
3.15	Evaluations and close

DEEPER THINKING: DEEPER LEARNING

Secondary RE conference 2019

Last year's conference was rated **EXCELLENT** by 100% of delegates!

Representative comments include:

- Great quality as ever – content of presentations and discussions based on these. Great use and examples of resources to immediately use and/or adapt.
CH Wycliffe College
- Really good day. The morning sessions were especially useful. I always look forward to these conferences. Lat and Stephen are inspirational. *KP Maidenhill*
- It is so refreshing to come to a conference which is inspiring, gives you ideas that you put into practice, and makes you think. Brilliant! *MC Waddesdon*
- It is always good to meet people who share your passion for the most valuable subject on our curriculum. Being given resources that will excite and engage our young students is so valuable. Great value for money. Challenging and thought-provoking. A must for all secondary school teachers.
LBa Bishops Hereford
- I found all the presentations engaging and will leave with a lot of practical ways to improve our RE – maybe even some whole-school improvement! *LE Ribston*
- Thought-provoking. Lots of ideas to take away. Useful to network with other teachers.
CG St Egwin's Middle School
- An inspirational refresher. A reminder of why I teach this subject with excellent ideas to take home.
AR Bristol Free School
- Excellent, generous sharing from Lat and Stephen. Always good to meet up with the RE community. *RD Uni of Worcs*
- Excellent. Now just need time to put it into practice. *JN Cleeve*
- Always makes me stop and think. Developing ideas and revisiting old ideas are all relevant. Sharing ideas is essential. The conference allows all of this to happen. *LC Bewdley*
- Excellent as ever. *JE Fairfield.*
- Lots of ideas to take back to school. I'd like to hear more about current research and what they may look like in RE. *JR Chelt Ladies College*
- Brilliant and practical ideas. *MD Pittville.*
- A really helpful, thought-provoking and useful (resources) day! Definitely come again!
FF St Benedicts Alcester
- Great day – so many ideas to go on with. Useful to engage with colleagues; to be encouraged that what we're doing is good and that there are ways to constantly improve. *JH Stroud High*

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for Education

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Chair, NASACRE

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Email enquiry form:

www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df

Date: 22 March 2019

Dear Paul

Compliance with the duty to teach Religious Education

As discussed when we last met, I have spoken to a few representatives of SACREs over recent months about what can be done about schools that are failing to meet their obligations to teach RE – whether that is in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus or, in the case of academies and free schools, in line with their funding agreements.

I thought it might be helpful if I set out what we expect of state funded schools and the steps to follow if these expectations aren't met.

The requirement to teach RE

SACRE members will be familiar with the requirements on maintained schools, including the duty on those without a religious designation and voluntary controlled schools to follow the local Agreed Syllabus.

Under the terms of their Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State, all academies (including free schools) must provide RE for all their registered pupils from age 5 to 18, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal. Each academy's funding agreement should be published on its website, but can also be found on DfE's '[Compare Schools](#)' website (once you've found the school, select the 'workforce and finance' option and scroll down to the funding agreement. The requirement to teach RE is set out in the 'supplementary funding agreement' for each school and also in newer 'master funding agreements' at multi-academy trust level).

Generally speaking, academies with a religious designation (except ex-voluntary controlled schools) must teach within the tenets of the faith specified in their designation. They may, in addition, provide RE that is in line with a locally agreed syllabus and teach about other faiths if they choose. Academies with no religious designation must teach RE that '*reflects 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*'. Academies are free to follow a locally agreed syllabus if they choose to.

Unlike an agreed syllabus, funding agreements do not provide further detail of the RE to be taught. However, we would expect that all schools provide pupils with a curriculum that is high quality and promotes progression through the key stages, including in RE. The non-

statutory guidance for RE (2010) also states that head teachers should ensure that *‘the subject is well led and effectively managed, and that standards and achievement in RE, and the quality of the provision, are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation.’*

Agreed syllabuses and requiring schools to teach an accredited qualification

The issue of requiring schools to teach an accredited Religious Studies qualification is one that has come up recently and, if this is a requirement of an agreed syllabus, it’s important that wording is carefully chosen. For example, I’ve seen variations of the following text in agreed syllabuses: *‘It is a legal requirement and an entitlement that all students (other than those withdrawn by parental request) study RE at Key Stage 4 through an accredited course....’*

This wording implies that it is a legal requirement to teach a RS qualification – whereas, in my view, the law does not directly state this ie. legislation *doesn’t* specifically require schools to teach RS. Neither does it require each agreed syllabus to specify that schools must teach a full or short course RS GCSE or other accredited qualification. However, the law does require relevant schools to follow the agreed syllabus. So, if an area’s syllabus says that an accredited RS qualification must be taught, then a school may be in breach of *that* statutory duty (ie. to follow the agreed syllabus) if it doesn’t do so.

It is also the case that, if a school is required by the agreed syllabus to teach a RS qualification at key stage 4, and enters its pupils for this at the end of Year 10, it should still be teaching RE in Year 11. Otherwise, it does not meet the duty to provide RE as part of its curriculum to *‘all registered pupils at the school’*.

Handling reports that a school is not meeting its duty to teach RE

Where a school appears to be failing to meet its obligations – either to comply with the agreed syllabus or to meet funding agreement requirements to teach RE – we would expect the LA or SACRE to follow this up; and to refer the case to DfE if it cannot be resolved locally.

I’d recommend starting by contacting the school, outlining details of concerns and asking for comments. This allows the school an opportunity to correct misconceptions, provide clarifying information, or to resolve an issue. I’m also aware of cases where an LA officer or SACRE member has visited a school to discuss an issue in person to help them assess whether it is complying with the agreed syllabus.

If talking to the school hasn’t resolved the issue, the LA or SACRE should refer the case or any queries to my team via CurriculumSupport.TEAM@education.gov.uk , providing details of the issue and with copies of any related correspondence or emails between them and the school.

I hope that this is helpful.

Best wishes

Neil Lawson