



Robin Walker MP
Member of Parliament for Worcester
The Guildhall
Worcester
WR1 2EY

Cllr. Mel Allcott
Cherry Lea
9 Bevere Close
Worcester
WR3 7QH

25 September 2023

Dear Cllr. Allcott

Thank you for contacting me regarding the provision of religious education (RE) in the UK. Please let me apologise for the significant delay in responding to you as, due to a filing error, this response was not sent when it was first put together.

I agree that we must recognise the importance of RE for developing pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of faiths and communities in Britain and other countries, in order to ensure our young people are able to understand each other in wider society. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why RE is a statutory part of the curriculum. Crucially, we remain committed to continuing support for providing RE to pupils.

To support high standards of RE teaching in all schools, the Department for Education is continuing offer eight-week subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses. Candidates have the option to access an SKE bursary of £175 per week for supporting candidates whilst completing their courses. Currently for RE, there are 19 institutions providing short-term courses of 8 to 12 weeks covering the required subject knowledge to provide excellent teaching to our children.

Additionally, the Department welcomed the publication of OFSTED's research review into RE in May 2021, particularly given that it sought to identify factors that contribute to high quality RE curricula and teaching in schools. It noted that UK teachers were able to access the professional development tools to build their knowledge, and that nationally adequate time is given to RE to allow leaders to deliver an ambitious curriculum. As you know, RE curricula are designed and delivered at a local level, including in decisions about how much time a school devotes to RE or another other given subject.

In recognition of the importance of RE provision, I would be happy to write to the Department for Education to share your proposal for a PGCE bursary for RE teachers, and further to that I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the topic further.

Yours sincerely

Robin Walker MP

LONDON OFFICE

Telephone: 020 7219 7196

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

Telephone: 01905 22401

Email address: robin.walker.mp@parliament.uk