

All Members of the Reading Standing
Advisory Council on Religious Education

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11 June 2013

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NOTICE OF MEETING - READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION -
19 JUNE 2013

A meeting of the Reading SACRE will be held on **Wednesday 19 June 2013 at 6.30 pm in
Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Reading.**

The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA

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**READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINUTES -
4 FEBRUARY 2013**

Present:

Rabbi Zvi Solomons	Jewish Faith (Group A)
Margaret Elcock	Church of England (Group B)
Jo Fageant	Church of England (Group B)
Bernard Eggleton	NASUWT (Group C)
Councillor Ballsdon	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor Ennis	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor O'Connell	Reading Borough Council (Group D)

Also in Attendance:

Bev Heslin	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Anne Cheeseman	Church of England
David McKnight	Berkshire Humanists
Jamie Honell	Berkshire Humanist
Jan Lever	RE Consultant
Richard Woodford	Reading Borough Council

Apologies:

Mustafa Chaudhary	Islam (Group A)
Maureen Meatcher	RC Diocese of Portsmouth (Group A)
Vera Bodman	NUT (Group C)
Councillor Eastwood	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor McElligott	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Michael Freeman	ATL

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

AGREED: That the appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair be deferred to the next meeting of the SACRE, the first in the Municipal Year 2013/14, and Rabbi Solomons be appointed as Chair for this meeting.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Further to Minute 9 of the last meeting, Other Business - DVD: Who am I ?, it was suggested that the DVD should be made available to all schools and academies in the Borough possibly through a meeting and presentation for teachers.

Further to Minute 9 of the last meeting, Other Business - Welcome Days for Schools, it was suggested that the SACRE could work with the Faith Forum to roll out welcome days for other places of worship. The next Welcome Day at the Reading Synagogue would take place on 12 February 2013 from 10.00 am until 2.00 pm.

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4. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

Further to Minute 8 of the last meeting, Jan Lever informed the SACRE that the Annual Report was complete but did not include the RE examination results as they were proving difficult to obtain primarily because of the difficulty in obtaining examination results from academy schools; a problem that was common throughout the country. Jan told the SACRE that she would ask secondary RE leaders to provide feedback at the Network Meeting for Secondary Schools in Reading and Wokingham that would take place on 6 March 2013 and once the results had been received they would be analysed and included in the report. Jan suggested that at this stage there were two options, as follows:

- Send the Annual Report to NASACRE without the RE examination results;
- Wait until the RE examination results had been supplied by the secondary RE leaders and then submit the report to NASACRE.

The SACRE discussed the options and agreed that the Annual Report should be sent to NASACRE without the RE examination results and with an explanation in the relevant section as to why the results could not be provided and that a complete copy be sent when the examination results were available.

AGREED: That the Annual Report be submitted to NASACRE without the RE examination results with an explanation as to why the results could not be provided and a complete copy of the report be submitted to NASACRE when the results had been made available.

5. MEMBERSHIP - APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

The SACRE discussed the current membership and vacancies and agreed that once potential members had been nominated by the body they would represent they would be appointed as members of the SACRE.

The Chair reminded SACRE members that inline with the SACRE Constitution 2013 was the last year of their three year appointment and that a letter of confirmation would be required from the bodies they represented stating that they were happy for them to continue as their representative on the SACRE.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Further to Minute 7 of the last meeting Jan Lever submitted a copy of the SACRE Development Plan for 2012/13.

The SACRE discussed the Development Plan and in particular the action that members of the SACRE should present aspects of their faith/beliefs to the SACRE to inform members. Jan explained that the presentations could be based on a theme, a relevant topic, a festival/occasion or an update of what was happening currently in each community. The SACRE discussed festivals which could form the basis of presentations including Candlemass, Tu Bishvat and Purim.

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AGREED: That the position be noted.

7. DIRECTORY OF SPEAKERS FOR SCHOOLS

Jan Lever told the SACRE that feedback from teachers had shown that the one thing that would help them the most would be to have a directory of speakers from faith/belief communities who could go into schools for RE lessons and enter into a dialogue with the children about their faith. Teachers had also asked that the directory should include details of the age group the speakers would be appropriate for and what themes they could speak about so that it could tie-in with the syllabus. The aim was to have the directory finished and collated by the end of May 2013 so that it could be launched in June 2013 and teachers could use it to plan their lessons from September 2013. Training would be needed so that the speakers understood the syllabus.

It was suggested that the directory should be put together with the faith forums and RE Inspired.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

8. RE NETWORKS MEETINGS - FEEDBACK

Jan Lever informed the SACRE that the next Network Meeting for Primary Schools in the Borough would take place on 13 February 2013 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Meadway, Reading. Ten teachers had attended the last meeting and it was hoped that more teachers would take part this time. The meeting would include an element of training on the new syllabus.

The next Network Meeting for Secondary Schools in Reading and Wokingham would take place on 6 March 2013 at the Forest School in Winnersh.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

9. RE NATIONAL UPDATE

Jan Lever informed the SACRE that the RE Council (REC) RE Subject Review was going into phase two and the REC was looking for people to be part of the phase two working group; the main report from the review would be available in summer 2013. The Phase One report was available on the REC website.

Jo Fageant informed the SACRE that the All Party Parliamentary Group that had been set up to look at RE had been considering the supply of RE teachers and that the Department for Education had been lobbied to redefine what was meant by an RE teacher as currently this was anyone who taught RE for an hour a week. The Group had been collecting evidence and had requested evidence from SACREs by the end of December 2012 and although the deadline had past it was still possible to submit evidence on the APPG website. The APPG final report was expected to be published in March 2013.

Jo Fageant told the SACRE that the NASACRE AGM would take place on 23 May 2013 at the Council House in Birmingham and that it would cost £85 per person to

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attend. This would be the twentieth AGM and would reflect on 20 years of NASACRE history. Mark Chater, who had written a chapter about SACREs in his book 'Does RE Have a Future?', would speak at the AGM in the afternoon.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

10. THE WESTHILL/NASACRE AWARDS 2013/14

Jan Lever submitted a copy of a letter, briefing notes and application form in respect of The Westhill/NASACRE Awards 2013/14.

Jan suggested that even though the application made in the previous year had not been successful that another application should be submitted in 2013 and said that she would seek ideas from teachers at the network meetings. She would then put together a project plan for submission. The deadline for applications was 30 March 2013.

The SACRE discussed possible applications including a Faith Trail in Reading with a downloadable audio tour that would include commentary from representatives of faith groups and would involve young people in its planning and making.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Focus on Family History

Bev Heslin informed the SACRE that the Focus on Family History open day would take place on 6 July 2013 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Meadway, Reading, and would be a free event for everyone who was interested in learning about genealogy.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the dates of the meetings in the 2013/14 Municipal Year would be sent out as soon as the diary for the next Municipal Year had been agreed.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.28 pm).

SACRE Membership 2013/14

Bev Heslin	Free Churches (Group A)
Maureen Meatcher	RC Diocese of Portsmouth (Group A)
<i>Vacancy</i>	Buddhism (Group A)
Askok Khare	Hindu Faith (Group A)
Mustafa Chaudhary	Islam (Group A)
Leanne Campbell	Islam (Group A)
Rabbi Zvi Solomons	Jewish Faith (Group A)
<i>Vacancy</i>	Sikhism (Group A)
Jo Fageant	Church of England (Group B)
Margaret Elcock	Church of England (Group B)
Anne Cheeseman	Church of England (Group B)
Robin Sharples	Church of England (Group B)
Michael Freeman	ATL (Group C)
<i>Vacancy</i>	NAHT (Group C)
<i>Vacancy</i>	NASUWT(Group C)
Vera Bodman	NUT (Group C)
<i>Vacancy</i>	SHA (Group C)
Cllr Ennis	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Cllr Hopper	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Cllr McElligott	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Cllr O'Connell	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
<i>Vacancy</i>	Grant Maintained Schools (non-voting)
<i>(no longer any grant maintained schools in Reading)</i>	
Jamie Howell, Humanist	Co-opted member (non-voting)
<i>Vacancy</i>	Co-opted member (non-voting)

Note - Humanists can't be included in Gp A, even if the constitution was changed. Baha'I (former co-opted members) could be, humanists would have to be co-opted member.



RE: THE TRUTH UNMASKED

The supply of and support
for Religious Education teachers

An Inquiry by
The All Party
Parliamentary
Group on Religious
Education



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FOREWORD

Stephen Lloyd MP



Very few issues matter more than education. Our hardworking teachers not only impart information, they also help shape the views of the next generation. The importance of mutual respect and understanding, for faiths and belief, is crucial in a society where there are now many different religions and cultures. This is why I believe religious education is so important. It should never be about telling young people what to believe, it should be about informing them what others believe.

Despite religious education being more important than ever before, our group were informed that the subject was often marginalised in schools, and teachers undermined by the dismantling of the RE frameworks and support structures. There appeared to be fewer subject specialists now than in previous years. This is why the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education has conducted this inquiry into the 'Supply of and Support for Religious Education Teachers'.

We have consulted with a range of individuals and organisations, with direct experience of teaching religious education, and accredited experts. We reached out to over 430 schools and have heard from

statisticians from the Department for Education and academia. I would like to thank all of those who have contributed through submitting written evidence, or who came along to listen or give evidence at our two parliamentary meetings. In particular I would like to thank Dr Barbara Wintersgill for all her hard work in helping us conduct this inquiry. I have personally learned a great deal from reading through the evidence and listening to contributors at the meetings. I am now even more determined to do everything I can so that every pupil is taught religious education to a high standard.

We hope that the Department for Education find this report useful, and incorporate our recommendations into Government policy on RE.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Lloyd MP
Chair of the APPG on Religious
Education
March 2013



MAIN FINDINGS

1 Supply of primary RE teachers

- a) In over half of the 300 primary schools participating in this inquiry, some or all pupils were taught RE by someone other than their class teacher. In a quarter of these schools RE was taught by teaching assistants. This is unacceptable and in many cases this has a detrimental impact on the quality of RE.(2.2-2.5)
- b) About a half of primary teachers and trainee teachers lack confidence in teaching RE (2.6-2.10)
- c) About a half of subject leaders in primary schools lack the expertise or experience to undertake their role effectively (2.11-2.13)
- d) There is a wide variation in the extent of initial teacher training in RE and too many trainee teachers have little effective preparation for teaching the subject.(2.14-2.16)

2 Supply of secondary teachers

- a) Over 50% of teachers of RE in secondary schools have no qualification or appropriate expertise in the subject. This is unacceptable (3.1-3.6)
- b) The inclusion of non specialists in the total number of RE teachers given by the DfE gives the false impression that we have enough RE teachers and skews the statistics regarding the need to train more RE specialists (4.1-4.4)
- c) Secondary RE trainees on school based routes are not guaranteed places in schools where the RE staff have sufficient expertise to provide training (5.3-5.4)
- d) Applications for secondary RE teacher training courses are currently 143 down on the same time last year. The loss of bursaries for RE is among the reasons for this reduction in applicant numbers for 2013/14 (5.4-5.5)

3 Support for teachers of RE

- a) In nearly 40% of schools RE teachers have inadequate access to continuing professional development.(6.1-6.3)
- b) RE teachers, particularly non specialists, in schools without a religious character have particularly limited access to CPD (6.13-6.21)
- c) The ability of SACREs to provide support for teachers of RE at a local level has been dramatically reduced by local authority funding decisions and the impact of the academisation programme. (6.31-6.36)
- d) Teachers' access to CPD is a postcode lottery; it depends on the resources of their local SACRE or diocese, proximity to training and the priority given to RE in schools.

4 Contributory factors

- a) A range of government policies, notably those relating to the EBacc and GCSE short courses, are contributing to the lowering of the status of RE in some schools leading to a reduction in the demand for specialist teachers (4.5-4.11)
- b) Recent reductions and changes in teacher training have resulted in the closure of some outstanding university providers with a loss of opportunities for RE CPD. (5.1-5.3)
- c) The combined effect of inadequate supply and inadequate access to support is that whatever their level of commitment, many teachers struggle to reach the levels of subject competence expected in the DfE's own teaching standards.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The DfE should:

- revise the methods by which it gathers information about the number of RE teachers in secondary schools and present full time equivalent totals, and use these as the basis of the department's calculation of teacher training targets
- introduce a system which requires all secondary teachers to receive some training in any subject they teach
- restore bursaries for RE trainees
- restore the inclusion of results for the GCSE short course for RE to school league table points
- require academies to use the local agreed syllabus
- publish the outcomes of SACREs' monitoring of teacher supply and CPD
- ensure that SACREs have the resources to carry out their statutory responsibilities

All schools should:

- ensure that all teachers of RE meet the Teaching Standards in respect of the subject and develop their confidence and expertise in teaching RE
- make proper provision for continuing professional development for subject leaders, specialist teachers and others with responsibility for teaching RE in order to improve its quality

Primary schools should:

- review, where relevant, the widespread practice of using staff other than the classroom teacher to teach RE
- provide regular opportunities for RE subject leaders to train their colleagues in subject knowledge and planning and assessing RE

Secondary schools should:

- review as a priority, where relevant, the practice of using non specialist teachers to teach RE
- where non specialists are teaching RE;
 - ensure that the same few teachers teach the subject every year rather than fill timetable gaps with any teacher who is free at the time
 - ensure that all non specialists receive high quality subject-specific training

ITE training providers should:

- improve the quality of RE training for primary trainees to enable them to teach RE knowledgeably and confidently
- monitor carefully all secondary trainee RE placements to ensure that they provide high quality experiences

Local authorities should ensure sufficient resources are made available to enable SACREs to:

- provide high quality RE support for their schools
- monitor the quality of the provision and staffing of RE in schools
- develop networks to share good practice in RE in all schools in their local area.

Those involved in providing CPD for RE teachers should:

- consider providing an on-line subject knowledge booster course for primary RE subject leaders
- encourage teachers and school leaders to become better informed about the range of RE CPD opportunities available

Ofsted should:

- require inspectors to report on non-compliance with statutory requirements regarding RE
- continue monitor the quality of RE provision, including teaching and professional development, through subject inspections

The Teaching Agency should:

- review the capacity of training schools to provide subject specific training for RE in schools without the necessary subject expertise.



1. INTRODUCTION

RE in the curriculum

- 1.1 RE must be taught to all pupils, including those in the 6th form, with the exception of those withdrawn by their parents. It is up to schools to decide how to plan RE in the curriculum but the following are the most usual curriculum arrangements for RE.
- a) In most primary schools pupils have one lesson of RE a week. This is a departure from usual practice for similar subjects such as history and geography, which are generally taught in concentrated half-termly blocks rather than weekly lessons.
 - b) Secondary schools also generally teach RE on a weekly basis. In some secondary schools RE is taught at Key Stage 3 (11-14 year olds) as part of an integrated humanities course with other subjects.
 - c) There are varieties of practice in Key Stage 4 (15-16 year olds), most of which involve GCSE courses. The most common forms of provision are:
 - all pupils take the GCSE short course in religious studies OR
 - all pupils take the GCSE full course in religious studies OR
 - some pupils take the short course and others choose to take the full course OR
 - some pupils select the full course from a list of optional subjects and all pupils follow a non-examined course that combines RE with personal, social and health education (PSHE) and/or citizenship.
 - d) For 6th form students many schools offer AS and A Level courses in religious studies. In order to meet the statutory requirement schools include non-examination RE in a variety of ways, such as termly one day conferences or modules in general studies.

Consolidation and improvement

- 1.2 The last two decades have seen an overall gradual improvement in the provision for and quality of religious education (RE). Ofsted¹ has identified the following strengths:
- Examination entries in religious studies at GCSE and GCE A level have continued to rise each year since 2006.
 - Pupils' attitudes to RE have improved (Ofsted 2010:4)
 - RE makes a positive contribution to key aspects of pupils' personal development, most notably in relation to the understanding and appreciation of the diverse nature of our society.(Ofsted 2010:6)
 - A greater consensus exists about the nature and purpose of the subject, reflected in and encouraged by the publication of the Non-Statutory National Framework (NSNF) in 2004.
 - The National College of School Leadership has recently included RE in the list of designated specialisms for the position of Specialist Leader in Education with the college, having excluded it in earlier drafts. This means that it is now possible to have Religious Education Specialist Leaders, a position offering excellent professional development for RE teachers who see their future career within the subject rather than in school leadership generally.
 - There has been an enthusiastic response from schools to the RE Quality Mark (REQM). During the short time that it has been running as a pilot project 22 schools have received gold, 12 silver and 9 bronze awards.

Challenges in primary RE that need to be addressed

- 1.3 Despite the welcome improvements noted above, pupils' achievement in RE is very inconsistent. At the time of Ofsted's most recent report on RE (Ofsted 2010) primary school pupils' achievement in RE was good or outstanding in only 4 out of 10 schools. Ofsted identifies a number of contributory factors, which are

¹The sample of schools selected for Ofsted RE inspections represents a cross-section, including voluntary controlled schools, but does not include voluntary aided schools or academies with a religious designation.



pertinent to this inquiry:

- Primary teachers' lack of secure subject knowledge is 'a key factor limiting the amount of good and outstanding teaching in RE' (Ofsted 2007:7) . Three years later, in too many cases 'teachers lacked the knowledge and confidence to plan and teach high quality RE lessons' (Ofsted 2010:4).
- This lack of subject knowledge is blamed partly on primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses, which provide very little training about teaching RE (Ofsted 2007:7)
- A particular area of concern is the increasing use of teaching assistants to deliver RE instead of qualified teachers. Around a third of the primary schools visited deployed their teaching assistants in this way for at least part of the RE provision (Ofsted 2010:36).
- Later professional development does not compensate for the inadequacy of many teachers' initial training in RE (Ofsted 2007:7). Ofsted found 'very limited training for staff with little opportunity for the subject leader to support other teachers in planning RE'. In the primary schools visited, RE was rarely the focus of staff meetings or in-service training and teaching assistants who taught the subject were often not trained to do so (Ofsted 2010:36).

Challenges in secondary RE that need to be addressed

1.4 Pupils' achievement in RE in secondary schools shows a very mixed picture (Ofsted 2010:13). It was good or outstanding in 40 of the 89 schools visited, requiring improvement in 45 schools and inadequate in 14 schools. This could be explained at least in part by the following considerations.

- Too many pupils are taught RE by non specialist teachers (ibid:39).
- In many cases, non specialists are not given subject-related training and they have a negative impact on students' progress in RE (Ofsted 2010:39).
- Teachers do not have enough opportunities for professional development. 'The effectiveness of specialist staff training in RE was inadequate in four out of 10 of the schools visited. They were not giving sufficient time and resources to support teachers' professional development in the subject' (Ofsted 2010:6).
- In-service training in RE is not always matched closely enough to teachers' needs (ibid:39). Schools rarely evaluate its impact.

Recent challenges to RE

1.5 The improvements in RE provision and standards which, notwithstanding the challenges identified above, have been the overall trend in the last decade have been undermined by a series of severe blows since 2010. Many national sources of support have been abolished.

- Chief among these are the loss of a national adviser for RE at QCDA. In addition to analysing annual SACRE reports, this adviser had helped Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) perform their task knowledgeably and provided key information and curriculum materials on a level and with a consistency that could never be matched locally.
- For RE to keep abreast of other curriculum subjects its inclusion in the 2011-13 national curriculum review was essential. On 18 July 2010 the Secretary of State in reply to a question from Chris Bryant (Rhondda) gave his assurance that 'As part of our curriculum review later this year, we shall address...religious education'. However in the event RE was excluded from the review and no alternative measures were taken to ensure that, for the sake of schools, RE's place in the curriculum was considered alongside the other subjects to facilitate the school's overall planning.
- After 2014, short course GCSEs will not be recognised in the headline measures of a school's performance.
- In 2011 RE was excluded from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).
- Government targets for recruiting RE trainee teachers have been significantly reduced. As a result several university departments, including some outstanding providers, have closed. They had not only trained new RE teachers but also contributed to local RE through SACRE membership and by providing continuing professional development.
- From 2013 bursaries for RE trainee teachers have been withdrawn.
- All but the strongest SACREs are now struggling to meet their responsibilities. The extension of the academies programme together with local authority cut backs have resulted in the loss of funding and of time for advisers and consultants who provided professional support to SACREs. SACREs' role has been undermined by the decision to allow academies not to teach the locally agreed syllabus, or indeed any agreed syllabus.

1.6 In many of these cases RE has been the unintended victim of a combination of major policy changes rather than the subject of a deliberate attack. Nevertheless the combined impact of so many severe setbacks in such a short time has been to convey the message that even though it is a statutory subject, RE is of less value than other subjects.



Why is the focus of this inquiry on the supply of and support for teachers of RE?

Nothing makes more difference to the progress and attainment of any child or young person than good teachers and good teaching. (The government White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* 2010:43)

Nothing makes more difference to the progress and attainment of any child or young person than good teachers and good teaching. (The government White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* 2010:43)

1.7 The APPG inquiry has looked further into the issues raised by Ofsted and this report seeks to address these challenges and present solutions to halt the deterioration in the position of RE which has occurred over the last two years. The APPG's aims are:

- to promote the highest possible standards of RE in schools, colleges, universities and academies,
- to press for continuous improvement in RE,
- to promote a clear, positive image and public understanding of RE, and
- to advocate that every young person experiences a personally inspiring and academically rigorous education in religious and non religious worldviews.

The common factors influencing the achievement of these aims are teachers. The standards achieved by pupils in RE depend on their teachers' knowledge, teaching expertise and love of the subject; only teachers can bring about continuous improvement; the public image of RE is based on society's collective memory of the quality of RE lessons; only RE teachers can ensure that their pupils experience an inspiring and rigorous religious education.

This report will focus on an analysis of teacher supply, an examination of the support available to RE teachers from SACREs and other sources and will offer recommendations on ways of improving provision.

A well trained and confident workforce is crucial in ensuring good quality RE. (DfE2010:27)



2. THE SUPPLY OF TEACHERS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

2.1 One of the key questions for this inquiry was 'Do we have enough teachers of religious education?' There is no simple answer to this question, partly because the term 'teacher of religious education' is open to a range of interpretations. In particular the term has very different meanings in primary and secondary schools. This inquiry into the provision of teachers of RE is not just concerned with numbers. Our interest is in the provision of good teachers, which should be our young people's entitlement. The levels of subject expertise required by all teachers are set out in the new standards for teachers:

These are among the standards expected of all RE teachers.

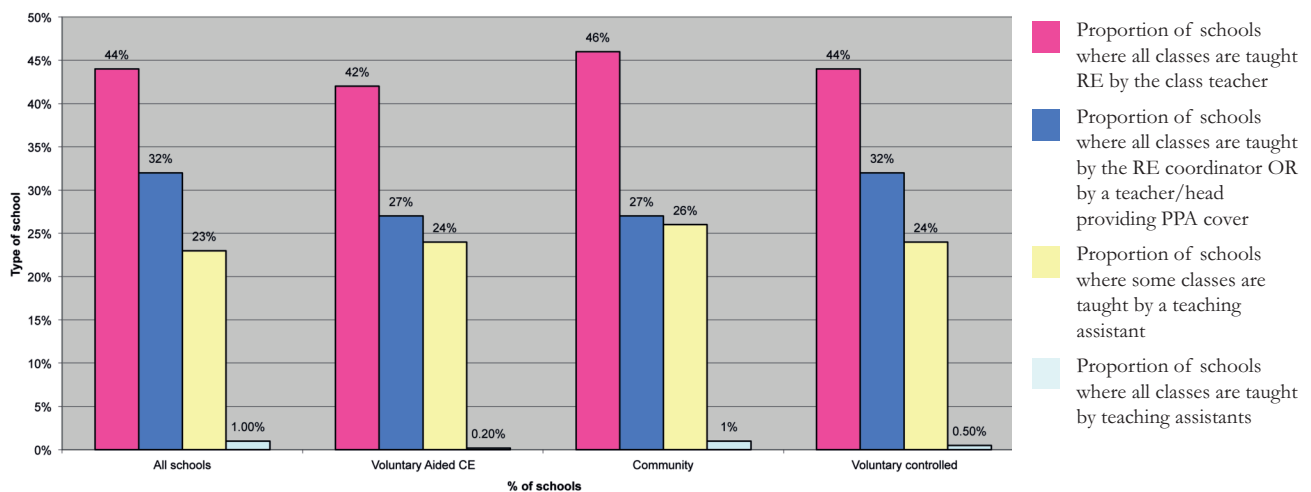
Who teaches RE in primary schools?

2.2 It is general practice in primary schools for class teachers to teach all subjects to their classes. Occasionally pairs of teachers may agree to exchange subjects in order that more children have the opportunity to be taught by a teacher with specialist expertise in the case of, for example music, modern foreign languages (MFL) and PE. On this principle all primary school teachers are potential teachers of RE. In practice this is far from being the case.

A teacher must:

- Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
- Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
- Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
 - have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
 - demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
- Plan and teach well structured lessons
 - impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
 - contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s). (Teachers' Standards. DfE May 2012)

CHART 1: Who teaches RE in Primary Schools



- 2.3 Chart 1 relates to the 300 primary schools responding to the APPG inquiry 'call for evidence'. In only 44% of these schools were all pupils taught RE by their class teacher, a similar figure to that reported by Ofsted (HMI reporting to the APPG).
- 2.4 In the majority of cases where the class teacher did not teach RE, the subject was taught by someone else during the class teacher's planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. Class teachers use their RE lesson time for PPA more than they use other subject time. Ofsted evidence indicates this trend is growing.

In 50% of schools that we visited some or all of the RE is taught in this preparation, planning and assessment time by someone other than the class teacher. Sometimes that is a cover teacher; sometimes it is an RE specialist in primary; often it is the HLTA or a TA. The problem with that is it isolates RE from the rest of the curriculum, which is being taught by a different teacher. We think that impacts on the quality of what is happening with the subject. (Alan Brine HMI: oral evidence to the APPG)

- 2.5 In 24% of schools in the APPG survey RE was taught to some children by higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs); indeed Ofsted estimates this figure as high as a third (Ofsted 2010:36). This practice almost unknown in foundation subjects such as history, geography and design and technology.

'Common practice is for the class teacher to teach history as the norm with TAs and HLTAs in support. It is extremely rare to come across a school where history is not taught by the class teacher' (Michael Maddison HMI. National Adviser for history)

The extensive use of teaching assistants to teach RE was generally consistent irrespective of school type. The outcome is not always negative and Ofsted has reported that in the few occasions 'where the teaching assistants were very carefully supported, managed and monitored, their enthusiasm and interest in the subject could have a very positive impact on pupils' learning' (Ofsted 2010:36). BUT generally the practice is not good and reflects the low status of RE in many schools. The effects of this policy go beyond the negative impact on pupils and class teachers. They also affect trainee teachers in Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

The use of teaching assistants to teach RE has a detrimental effect on pupils' perceptions of the subject. It implies that RE isn't as important as other subjects. It also impacts on my students' attitudes towards RE and reduces their opportunities for teaching and being observed by experienced teachers who can help them develop their teaching strategies. (Linda Whitworth. Middlesex University)

The use of people who are not qualified teachers to teach lessons, the majority being teaching assistants, is extensive in RE. This practice has a negative impact on pupils' attitudes and standards.

Why are so many children taught RE by someone other than their class teacher?

- 2.6 Some teachers responding to the APPG explained why PPA time was so often taken during RE lessons. In some schools the reason was strategic: the practice of teaching RE once a week rather than in half termly blocks, as in the case of history and geography, provided a useful one hour slot for PPA. Ofsted has reported (Ofsted 2010) that the practice of teaching RE in weekly slots was often because teachers lacked confidence and this timetabling arrangement enabled them to pass the RE on to another person.
- 2.7 In a few cases the class teacher was replaced for a positive reason, by a colleague with a higher qualification in RE, for example a degree in theology or a BEd/BA with RE as a specialist subject.
- 2.8 A primary initial teacher educator carrying out research among her students was one of many who suggested that lack confidence in RE was the main reason why so many teachers avoided teaching it. This lack of confidence first took root during teacher training.

Approximately 50% of students have concerns about teaching RE, in particular fear of causing offence, not being accurate about religions and concerns about how to manage their own beliefs and attitudes in a multicultural classroom. (Linda Whitworth: Middlesex University).



2.9 Particularly detailed information has been presented by Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln, which carried out a survey of 824 primary trainees' attitudes to RE over 7 years. Trainees were asked 'How do you feel about teaching RE?' They responded as follows:

Reaction/comments	Total %
Positive about RE	26%
Negative about RE	4%
OK about teaching it	20%
Confident about teaching it	21%
Cautious/ lacking in confidence*	50%

The most encouraging discovery here is the tiny number of trainees who were negative about teaching RE. Trainees gave the following reasons for caution/lack of confidence:

- Lack of subject knowledge
- Fear of bias (especially those of faith)
- Feeling of unpreparedness/ lack of experience
- Fear about pronunciations
- Fear of offending
- Unsure of the RE curriculum
- Fear of teaching controversial topics
- Uncertainty about its place in the curriculum

2.10 Ofsted has found that much of this uncertainty relates specifically to teaching about Christianity: 'Primary schools in particular were often uncertain about whether Christian material should be investigated in its own right, as part of understanding the religion, or whether it should be used to consider moral or social themes out of the context of the religion'(Ofsted

2010:33). The cumulative effect of this uncertainty is that in primary schools standards in RE are not high enough. Since the quality of RE provision relies heavily on the quality of the leadership and management of the subject, this suggests that the wider question is, 'Are primary RE subject leaders adequately prepared for their role?'

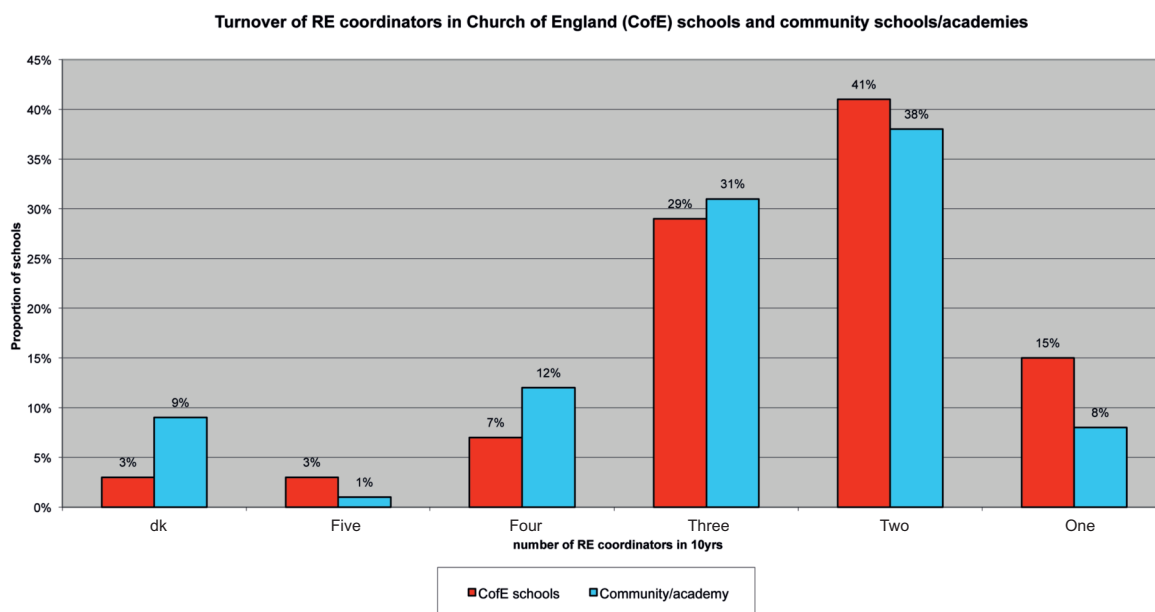
Research at two universities indicates that the main reason why so many primary teachers avoid teaching RE is not dislike of the subject but lack of confidence, in particular fear of causing offence. This is particularly the case with trainees whose subject knowledge is poor.

Are primary subject leaders adequately prepared for leading and managing RE?

2.11 All but two schools responding to the APPG had a named RE leader whose role was to lead and manage RE in the school by, for example, ensuring that every teacher knew what their class had to learn each lesson. In over 80% of these schools there was a regular turnover of RE leaders, most holding the post for between one and three years.

2.12 In 2010 Ofsted found that 'the leadership and management of RE were good or outstanding in just over half the primary schools visited', the same proportion reported in 2007 (Ofsted 2010:35), compared to 74% in history over the same period. Ofsted reported that a number of features of the

CHART 2: number of RE leaders in primary schools over a ten year period



leadership and management of RE in primary schools were weak, undermining the effectiveness of the subject. These included weak monitoring and self-evaluation and narrowly focused development planning, which paid insufficient attention to improving the quality of provision and raising pupils' attainment.

2.13 Very few primary RE subject leaders in responding schools had qualifications in RE above GCSE/O Level.

An analysis of the qualifications of leaders indicates that RE appears to be taken more seriously in schools with a religious character than in community schools. In community schools a far higher proportion of leaders had no qualification at all in RE while in schools with a religious character more leaders had GCSE, A Level, a degree or even a higher degree in Theology or Religious Studies. However, the lack of formal qualification is not unique to RE and is also a feature of history subject leaders (Ofsted 2007a:20), although not to the same extent.

The subject is disadvantaged by the movement of experienced and successful primary RE co-ordinators to more 'prestigious' areas, such as numeracy or literacy. (Wendy Harrison. SACRE consultant)

CHART 3: The highest qualification of primary RE leaders - all schools

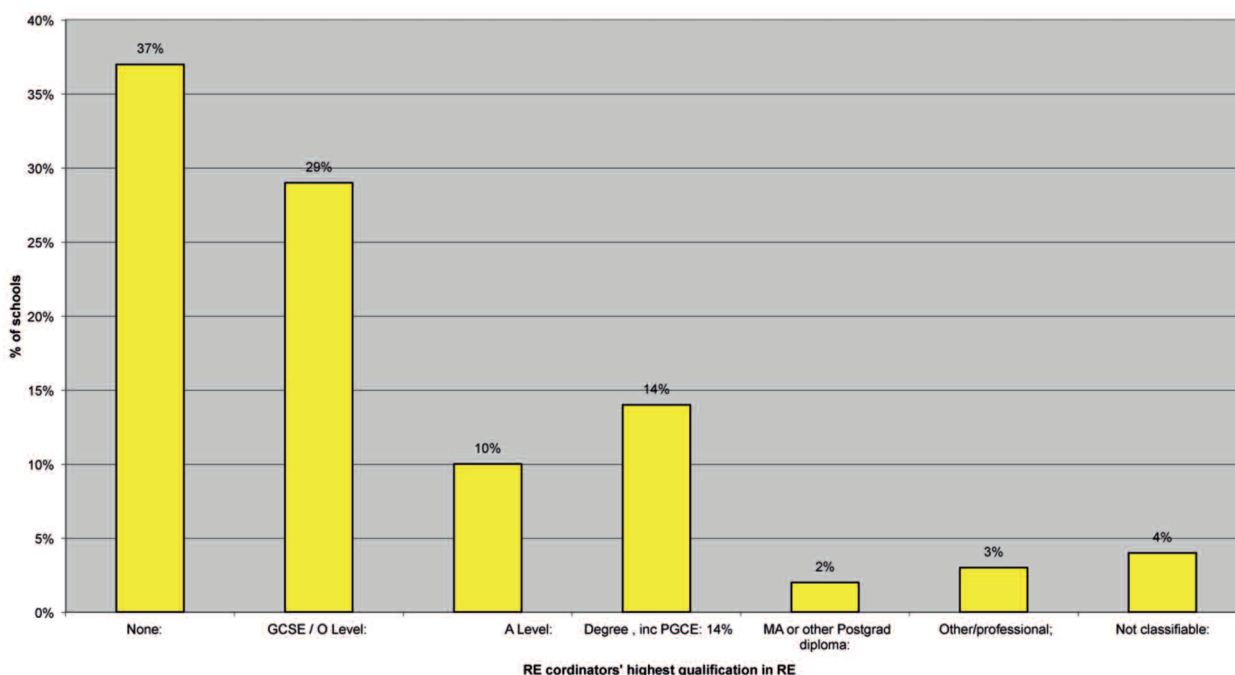
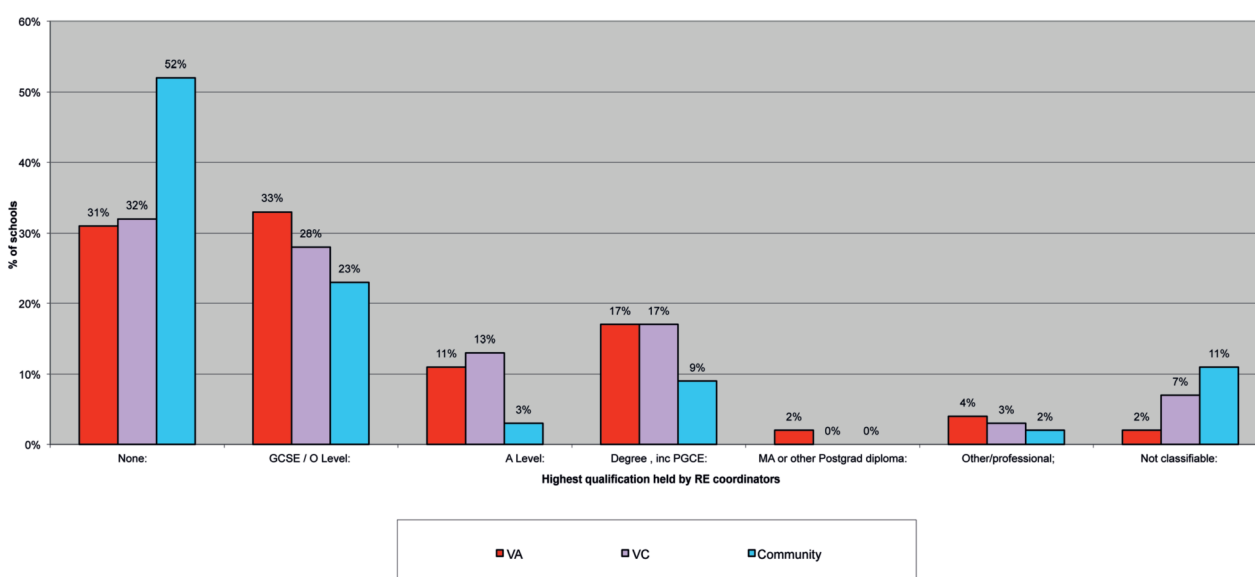


CHART 4: The highest RE qualification of primary RE leaders - Church of England and community schools



Very few RE leaders in primary schools had qualifications in RE. Nearly 40% did not even have GCSE/O Level.

RE and Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

2.14 There are several ways in which a primary teacher might have been prepared to teach RE during their initial teacher training. A minority (see chart 4) study theology/religious studies as the whole or part of a BA or PGCE qualification. But the vast majority have some, usually minimal, encounter with RE during their general primary training, which includes school experience.

2.15 Chart 5 represents an approximation of the information given by respondents, showing that they had a wide variety of experiences of RE during their teacher training. Most of those teachers who had devoted over 20 hours to RE in their teacher training years described it as their main subject, or a special focus. About half of the teachers surveyed had no more than 15 hours of training in RE. 15% of subject leaders had no training in RE. This wide variation in training is confirmed by the Association of University Lecturers in RE (AULRE) whose 2013 data indicate that students on BA(QT) courses can spend as little as 4 and even at best 26 hours on RE; those on PGCE courses had between 2 and 18 hours. Ofsted found that 'Primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses provide very little training about teaching RE'(Ofsted 2007:7).

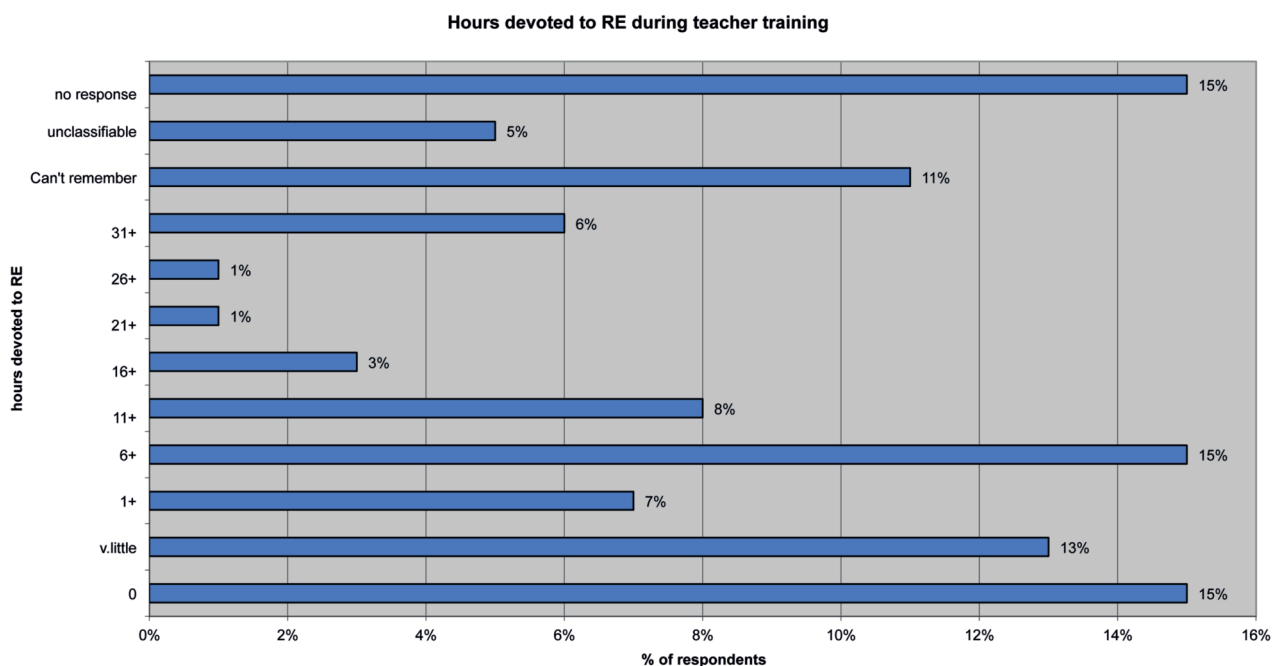
2.16 Given the small number of teachers with post GCSE qualifications in RE and the minimal time devoted to the subject in initial teacher training, is not surprising that Ofsted can conclude that even where schools take RE seriously 'in too many cases, teachers lacked the knowledge and confidence to plan and teach high quality RE lessons' (Ofsted 2010:4).

I've learned more about RE today than in all my teacher training. (Evaluation from a teacher on a one day RE course)

The great majority of trainee primary teachers do not receive sufficient training in RE for them to be able to teach the subject effectively.

2.17 This inquiry has established that in primary schools RE is taught by a variety of people: classroom teachers, teaching assistants and sometimes even clergy and other community representatives. This is a more diverse group of people than those teaching any other subject. The common denominator is that only a tiny proportion of them have had the training they need to teach RE effectively. Many of those responsible for RE are ill prepared for the task of teaching RE let alone leading it. We shall see in section 6 that this lack of initial training is in no way redressed by continuing professional development and many teachers and RE subject leaders are left to muddle through as best they

CHART 5: RE in initial teacher training (primary)



can with little more than the internet as a guide. **There is almost no chance that they can meet the DfE Teachers' Standards under such circumstances.** This is one of the key factors contributing to Ofsted's finding that standards in RE required improvement in more than half of primary schools. Given the data about the level of training provided it is perhaps surprising that only half are in this position.



3. THE PROVISION OF TEACHERS OF RE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

3.1 Parents might reasonably expect their children in secondary schools to be taught by specialists with the expertise to teach their subjects effectively. This principle is recognised by the current Secretary of State for Education, who has argued that the quality of teachers is central to the task of raising standards in schools (DfE 2010), pointing out that pupil attainment is affected “above all other factors” by the quality of their teachers (DfE 2011:4). Furthermore, financial incentives in the form of training bursaries are now offered to graduates with good degrees - varying from £0 to £20,000 according to subject - in order to attract them into teaching (DfE 2012). The message is clear: the knowledge and qualifications that teachers have is vitally important to the prospects of pupils and this is reflected in the DfE's Teaching Standards.

What proportion of secondary teachers of RE are appropriately qualified?

- 3.2 Given the current government's emphasis on the subject knowledge and qualifications of teachers, what is the situation in RE?
- 3.3 There are two ways of asking this question:
- (i) How many secondary RE teachers have appropriate qualifications to teach RE?
 - (ii) What proportion of RE lessons are taught in a typical week by appropriately qualified teachers?
- 3.4 The answer to (i), provided by the DfE workforce survey, is that 55% of those teaching RE have no post-A Level subject qualification compared to only 28% of history and 33% of geography teachers. This figure includes many teachers who teach RE for only a few lessons a week.

CHART 6:

Hours taught in a typical week in 2011 to pupils in years 7 to 13 by post A-level qualifications of the teacher teaching the lesson.						
SUBJECT	Degree or higher %	Bachelor of Education %	Postgraduate Certificate of Education %	Other qualifications %	Any relevant post A-Level qualification %	No relevant post A-Level qualification %
Mathematics	52.6	7.4	21.7	2.3	84.0	16.0
English	71.8	4.5	9.7	1.6	87.5	12.5
Physics	65.1	3.2	6.9	0.8	75.9	24.1
Chemistry	73.0	2.6	5.8	0.6	82.1	17.9
Biology	79.2	3.9	5.1	0.8	89.0	11.0
History	75.6	3.2	7.7	0.9	87.4	12.6
Geography	71.6	3.6	7.5	1.0	83.7	16.3
French	55.2	4.6	18.6	1.3	79.8	20.2
German	59.8	2.3	11.7	1.4	75.2	24.8
Spanish	43.1	2.0	13.3	1.4	59.8	40.2
Religious Education	54.3	4.9	12.4	1.4	72.9	27.1
2010	52.9	4.7	13.6	1.5	72.8	27.2

Source: School Workforce Census Base: 150,852 secondary level teachers (unweighted head count)



'The heavy reliance on non specialist teachers in RE has been raised frequently in previous reports and remains a matter of concern. (Ofsted 2010:39).

3.5 The answer to (ii) again according to the DfE workforce survey, is that 27.1% of RE lessons in a typical week are taught by teachers with no post-A Level qualification in the subject. Chart 6 shows that this is a far higher proportion in comparison with history and geography and in comparison with most national curriculum subjects.

These findings (chart 6) were confirmed by the APPG survey which found that in nearly a quarter of schools over 25% of pupils were taught by non specialists.

3.6 The Department for Education argues that pupil attainment is affected “above all other factors” by the quality of their teachers. The crucial question then is why are teachers with no RE subject qualifications accepted to the point where they make up over half the RE workforce?

Too many teachers of RE in secondary schools lack the appropriate level of subject expertise to teach the subject effectively

What is the impact of non specialist teachers of RE on their pupils' standards of work?

3.7 Non specialists can be effective when they receive training and are well supported by subject specialists. What follows applies particularly to the large number of non specialists who find themselves teaching RE purely because they have gaps in their timetables. These teachers have little opportunity to build up their level of subject expertise. This is a particular issue in schools which deploy different non specialists year after year to cover RE classes.

3.8 The greatest challenge to any non specialist teacher of RE is the extensive body of subject knowledge needed to teach the subject confidently and well.

The quality of teachers' qualifications and training will greatly affect the quality of RE delivered in the classroom. Teachers need confidence, skills, and knowledge in their subject area to ensure effective learning takes place. They require not just solid teaching techniques but subject specific knowledge. (British Humanist Association)

3.9 Teachers with weak subject knowledge will struggle with other aspects of teaching, such as identifying accurate resources or having the confidence to move beyond the predictability of a text book or work sheet. For example, a head of department arrived at a school to find the subject dominated by non specialists and textbooks. She remarked, 'The non specialists felt safer with text books, which the kids didn't like. They kept going from week to week by going from one page of the book to the next' (Warwick 2010:173) . The same research demonstrates the inadequacy of many of these text books and their capacity to mislead non specialists.

Following a subject inspection, Ofsted made the following judgement on teaching by non specialists in a secondary school.

Non specialist teachers, while possessing good teaching skills, lacked the subject expertise to answer the pupils' questions correctly, intervene effectively to extend their learning, or re-direct the lesson when it was taking a wrong course. As a result pupils sometimes never recovered from mistakes made early in their lessons.

This illustrates the contradiction between the Teachers' Standards on the one hand and the classroom reality on the other and flies in the face of the government's own declarations about the 'importance of teachers'.

3.10 Several respondents to the APPG's call for evidence drew attention to the impact of non specialists on examination results. Devon SACRE expressed concerns about performance in RE where departments were led and supported by non specialists. In one school surveyed 33% of pupils at Key Stage 4 were taught by several non specialists, resulting in 'massive variation in student enjoyment between groups'. Groups taught by non specialists have suffered from lower grades than those taught by specialists. This is confirmed by Ofsted:

Achievement in the ... short GCSE course was extremely variable. Success was affected by a number of factors, including...whether the subject was taught by specialists or non specialists' (Ofsted 2010:14).

Overall 15% of schools surveyed reported the negative impact of non specialists on standards and on pupils' attitudes to RE.



I am now the only specialist RE teacher in the school. We rely on one non specialist to teach with me, which is detrimental to the subject. Poor achievement in GCSE last year was given as the reason to remove Key Stage 4 RE as a compulsory subject. (Evidence from the 2012 NATRE survey) .

- 3.11 Concern about the confidence of some non specialists was raised by a number of schools in the survey. Respondents noted that non specialists often lacked confidence when it came to lesson planning and assessment and found that other commitments made attendance at departmental meetings difficult.

Over a half of teachers of RE in secondary schools lack the appropriate level of subject expertise to teach the subject effectively and this has a negative impact on standards and pupils' examination results.

Secondary schools continue to expect non specialists to teach a large proportion of RE lessons without the necessary preparation, even though for less than £200 a non specialist can take a subject knowledge booster course in RE that will help them provide a better quality religious education for their pupils.



4. PROVISION OF TEACHERS OF RE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A QUESTION OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Are there enough secondary teachers of RE?

4.1 The supply of teachers in schools is determined by the DfE, which sets annual teacher training targets in response to demand. If the demand for RE teachers remains stable, then the recruitment targets are also likely to remain stable. But if demand falls, then recruitment targets will fall. Demand is sometimes determined by forces beyond the school. For example, the Secretary of State introduced the EBacc in order to bring about an increase in the number of pupils taking history, geography and modern languages for GCSE. This stimulated the demand for teachers of these subjects and consequently training targets were adjusted to reflect this demand and bursaries given to encourage good graduate applicants.

4.2 The annual targets for the recruitment of RE trainee teachers have been dropping very rapidly over the last 2 years.

Chart 9: RE trainee recruitment targets

DfE Targets and Total Recruited to become New RE teachers

Year	DfE Target	Total Recruited	% Recruited to Target
2008/09	740	935	126%
2009/10	695	850	122%
2010/11	655	841	128%
2011/12	460	469	102%
2012/13	450	470	104%

Source: Teaching Agency ITT Census. Figures presented correct at census date, and include forecast contribution from EBITT provision.

Audrey Brown (DfE) in her oral testimony to the APPG identified three possible reasons for this reduction:

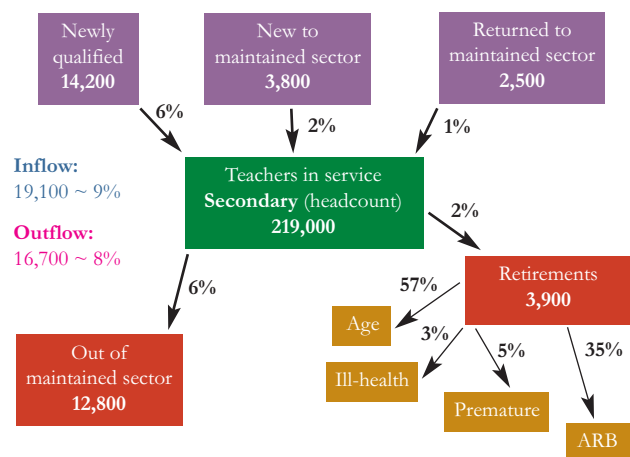
- falling rolls in secondary schools, which have led to a general reduction in secondary targets for teacher training
- recent decreased demand for RE staff at Key Stage 4 following the announcement regarding the EBacc
- over-recruitment from 2008/9 - 2010/11 which was believed to have resulted in 600 teachers over target.

4.3 The School Workforce Survey for 2011 (secondary), on which current Department for Education (DfE) targets are based, records that there are just over 16,000 secondary teachers of RE. 'Teacher of RE' here includes any teacher who teaches RE for one lesson per week in a secondary school. This includes all non specialists, who as already noted above constitute over 50% of the RE workforce.

4.4 The DfE targets are based on numbers entering and leaving the profession each year. Chart 10 shows how the DfE calculates targets for all secondary teachers. If such a chart were available for RE, the figure in the green box would be about 16,000.

Chart 10: how the DfE calculates recruitment targets

Secondary Teacher Flows in England



Source: Database of Teacher Records (2007-08)



DfE figures show that over 50% of this 16,000 are non specialists (3.4 above). This is the central problem. The number of teachers available appears to be sufficient because of the inappropriate definition of a 'teacher of RE' used by the workforce survey, which includes all non specialists. Because we do not know how much RE is taught by these non specialists it is not possible to calculate how many specialists would be needed to replace them. It would be more helpful if the DfE would re-phrase the relevant question in the workforce survey in terms of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) RE teachers and their qualifications. This would make it easier to calculate precisely how many more specialists are needed.

4.5 The DfE has conducted precisely this analysis of the numbers of specialist teachers that would need to be recruited to teach the hours taught by non specialists in EBacc subjects. (DfE. 2013:C18). No such calculation has been made for RE, one of the subjects with the highest use of non specialists. The implication is that teaching 'in need of improvement' is only unacceptable in EBacc subjects.

The DfE mechanism for calculating the demand for RE teachers is flawed because it fails to take account the high percentage of lessons taught by non specialists. This masks the real 'demand' for qualified RE teachers.

What has been the impact of recent government initiatives on the demand for RE teachers?

4.6 In 2012 the Secretary of State for education made two announcements that had the potential to reduce schools' demand for RE specialists. The announcement that the 'humanities' category of the new EBacc would exclude RS was met with widespread concern. Alongside the EBacc was the EBC, a new qualification to replace GCSEs in the core academic areas of English, mathematics, the sciences, languages and a humanities subject (history or geography). In February 2013 the Secretary of State announced that GCSEs would be reformed rather than abolished and that the plans for the EBC would not be pursued. From 2017 the key measure of school performance would not be the number of pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades at GCSE (including English and maths) as at present. Instead school performance would be judged by a 'performance 8' valued added measure where the 'average point score' of students' best eight GCSEs

would become the headline school performance figure. The eight would include English and mathematics, three EBacc subjects (e.g. three sciences, or - say - geography, history and a foreign language), and three others, one of which could be RS.

4.7 The APPG welcomes the Department for Education's decision to listen to its members, amongst others, during the consultation period. It welcomes the replacement of the EBacc with the 'Best8' measure and only wonders why the EBacc has not been formally abolished, since it has no further use.

4.8 The EBacc history illustrates the damage that can be done to schools and to pupils' learning when headteachers are too quick to reorganise their staffing during a consultation period for significant policy change. There is mounting evidence that the 5 A* - C EBacc measure has already had a detrimental effect on the provision of high quality teaching of Religious Studies across the country. The demand for RE teachers is in proportion to the number of RE classes taught. The APPG inquiry and the 2012 NATRE survey found that where schools have experienced a decline in the number of students taking GCSE RE courses or a change in the provision of RE at Key Stage 4, the EBacc was the main reason.

4.9 Some schools are adopting a range of strategies in order to create time for EBacc subjects by taking it from RE.

- The EBacc has extended the group of compulsory subjects, giving pupils fewer choices from among the other subjects. As a result, many RE departments that previously taught two or three RE exam groups three times a week each, now only teach one, or even none.

Since the introduction of the EBacc I have not had a full course group. (APPG school response)

- In order to create time for EBacc subjects some schools have cut all RE in years 10 and 11 except for full course examination groups. These schools are breaking the law. The statutory status of RE does not mean that it is in practice protected at Key Stage 4
- In other schools pupils taking the EBacc do not take RE: another illegal practice that reduces the demand for RE teachers.
- Other schools are teaching the GCSE short course to all pupils in Years 9 and 10 rather than years 10 and 11 as was intended. As a result there is no RE in Year 11. This practice was reported by Ofsted (Ofsted 2010:30) and may be growing.



My school begins short course in year 9 as with other GCSE courses; however the Head has removed year 11 from curriculum time to give the time to EBacc subjects - he is fully aware he is breaking the law. (APPG school response)

Plans for an EBacc, now revised, which excluded RE have already in many schools led to fewer pupils taking RS² GCSE, full course, even though (national entries remain buoyant), less time devoted to RE in years 10 and 11, a reduction in RE specialists and increasing use of non specialists.

4.10 It is too early to tell what will be the impact of the decision not to include short course results in the league table points for schools. The GCSE short course in RE was introduced in recognition of the distinctive statutory position of RE, as an incentive for head teachers to meet statutory requirements and to motivate pupils by providing accreditation for an interesting and high quality course. This was a successful strategy and Ofsted has found consistently that in most secondary schools pupils could see the value of RE. RE is statutory at Key Stage 4 and prior to the introduction of the short course there was widespread non-compliance since neither pupils nor schools were motivated to follow a course that was not certificated. The short course has been enormously successful and at its peak in 2008 around 275,000 pupils gained the award. So successful has it been that some schools have begun to extend GCSE entry for the full course to all pupils. In 2012 over 350,000 pupils were awarded a GCSE full or short course in RE. Ofsted has reported that standards are highest at Key Stage 4 where pupils are preparing for a GCSE examination. The introduction of the EBacc must be one of the only occasions when the Department for Education has brought in a policy knowing that the result would be to depress standards.

More schools have introduced the GCSE short course as a means of meeting statutory requirements and to motivate pupils. Non-compliance in Key Stage 4 is much reduced, compared with five years ago. (Ofsted Subject Reports 1999-2000)

² See Glossary

³ With the sole exception of Spanish, which is nonetheless taught by modern languages teachers'

4.11 The lesson learnt is that the status of a subject can be enhanced when promoted by the government and its agencies. Unfortunately the reverse is also true. With the removal of the 'carrot' of league table points coupled with greater calls on curriculum time than ever before, schools are likely to respond in one of two ways. Those wishing to maintain RE for the added value it gives to young people's education will teach the RE full course to all pupils but in one hour a week rather than three, possibly beginning in Year 9. Those who do not value the subject will teach RE only to the few who select it, abolish it altogether or offer a reduced time strategy such as teaching a whole day of RE periodically. These alternatives are not speculative; they are already happening.

The head of RE – who has since left with no replacement – was informed that RE will no longer be offered as a subject by September. Instead, there will be a one day conference a term organised by the geography department. (University of Cumbria research)³

The government's decision not to include short course results in the league table points for schools is already leading to a reduction in the number of schools entering all pupils for a GCSE exam and to increased non-compliance at Key Stage 4.

Does the status of religious education in schools have an impact on the provision of teachers of RE?

4.12 The high proportion of non specialists, together with the culture that permits their use beyond what is acceptable in any other subject, masks the crucial question, 'How many RE teachers need to be trained to secure high quality RE?' The extent of the EBacc's

Since the introduction of the EBacc there has been a notable trend to appoint other humanities teachers as Heads of RE. In 2010 – 2011, after the publication of the White Paper all Head of RE positions were filled by historians even where there were qualified RE teachers applying for those posts. There is no evidence to show that this trend has changed at the moment. (Cornwall SACRE evidence to the APPG)



negative impact on RE depends on the value placed on RE by head teachers and governing bodies. Many schools will have to appoint new history and geography teachers to teach the EBacc. This is often at the expense of the RE department, whose staff are not replaced when they move on or retire.

- 4.13 School managers have to make the choice as to whether to deploy non specialists to teach RE or to teach another subject; and in what situations to decide not to appoint a specialist on the grounds that the school can 'fill up' a timetable with non specialists. In 43 of the 130 responding secondary schools over 40% of RE lessons were being taught by non specialists. This level of cover, or even a considerably lower one, warrants the appointment of a part-time member of staff. Contrasting responses to the APPG illustrate how the variation in the priority given to RE between schools determines the extent to which non specialists are sometimes deployed without any concern for compliance with legal requirements, standards or the quality of teaching.

The Senior Leadership Team feels that RS GCSE is as valuable as any other and have no plans to change its status. (APPG school response)

A historian was appointed to teach RE. Senior management argued that he had plenty of experience teaching history and would be able to pick up RE easily as long as there were books, Power Points and schemes of work to use. (APPG school response)

- 4.14 The status and success of RE in individual schools reflects the attitude of the head teacher and the governing body. Many schools provide high quality RE and comply with legal requirements. However, it has always been the case that in schools where RE is not valued, little provision has been made beyond Year 9, even to the point of non-compliance. The EBacc has provided an excuse for schools that want to minimise

The 1988 Act does not specify proportions of time but there is a very strong recommendation that it should be given equal status with other subjects in the curriculum... The attitude taken by heads of schools is absolutely critical in such affairs. If the head of a school gives priority to the subject, there is a will to make it happen. Where there is a will to make it happen, it happens. Baroness Blatch

RE provision to do so in the knowledge that Ofsted is unlikely to notice or comment on the fact, even where schools admit that legal requirements are infringed. The role of head teachers in ensuring the provision of high quality RE for their pupils, or their failure to do so, was recognised nearly 20 years ago; in a debate in the House of Lords about specialist teachers of RE.

The extent of the damage done by initiatives such as the EBacc is determined partly by the status given to RE in individual schools.

- 4.15 Consequently RE is caught in a pincer movement between schools and the DfE. Too many schools are allowing their pupils to be taught RE by teachers with no qualifications or expertise in the subject, even where evidence shows that this practice has a detrimental affect on pupils' attitudes and standards. The DfE meanwhile is undermining RE by giving tacit approval to the extensive use of non specialists by including them in its workforce data about RE teachers. Although DfE evidence clearly shows that more non specialists are used in RE than in any similar subject, no pressure is put on schools to reform. Repeated calls for change by Ofsted have been consistently ignored.



5. CHANGES IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE) AND THE SUPPLY OF SECONDARY RE SPECIALISTS

Why are changes in ITE adding to concerns about the supply of RE specialists in the future?

5.1 The future supply of specialist RE teachers depends on the quantity and quality of trainees. Compared to history and geography, a relatively high percentage of RE trainees are still located in higher education. Consequently any changes to HE training routes are particularly relevant to RE.

Chart 11: Allocations of trainees 2013/14 by Teacher Preparation Route (Howson 2012)

SUBJECT	Salaried School Direct	Non-salaried School Direct	University based
History	15%	26%	59%
Geography	10%	24%	66%
RE	5%	22%	73%

Respondents raised five particular concerns regarding the future supply of RE teachers.

- i. RE recruitment has been hit particularly hard by the recent reduction in HE places that has affected most subjects.
- ii. The closure of outstanding providers has deprived the profession of teachers trained to the highest standards.
- iii. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church are particularly apprehensive about the loss of ITE places in the church foundation universities, which place a special emphasis on teaching about Christianity
- iv. The high number of non specialists teaching RE has a detrimental impact on initial teacher training because it leads to a dearth of training expertise within schools.
- v. From September 2013, those training to teach RE will no longer be entitled to bursaries that offset their tuition fees and this is already adversely affecting

recruitment numbers.

5.2 RE recruitment has been hit particularly hard by the recent reduction in HE places that has affected most subjects. Chart 12 overleaf shows that recruitment is currently 145 below the figure for the same time last year, yet the DfE target is only 10 below (see Chart 9).

The reduction in numbers nationally has been applied to individual HE providers of RE training with the result that the number of providers was cut from 40 in 2011-2012 to 33 in 2012-2013. The cuts have also adversely affected the overall quality of training as at least two of the providers, Hull and Warwick, both judged by Ofsted to be outstanding, were unable to sustain their courses on the basis of their low allocations and have closed their PGCE provision.

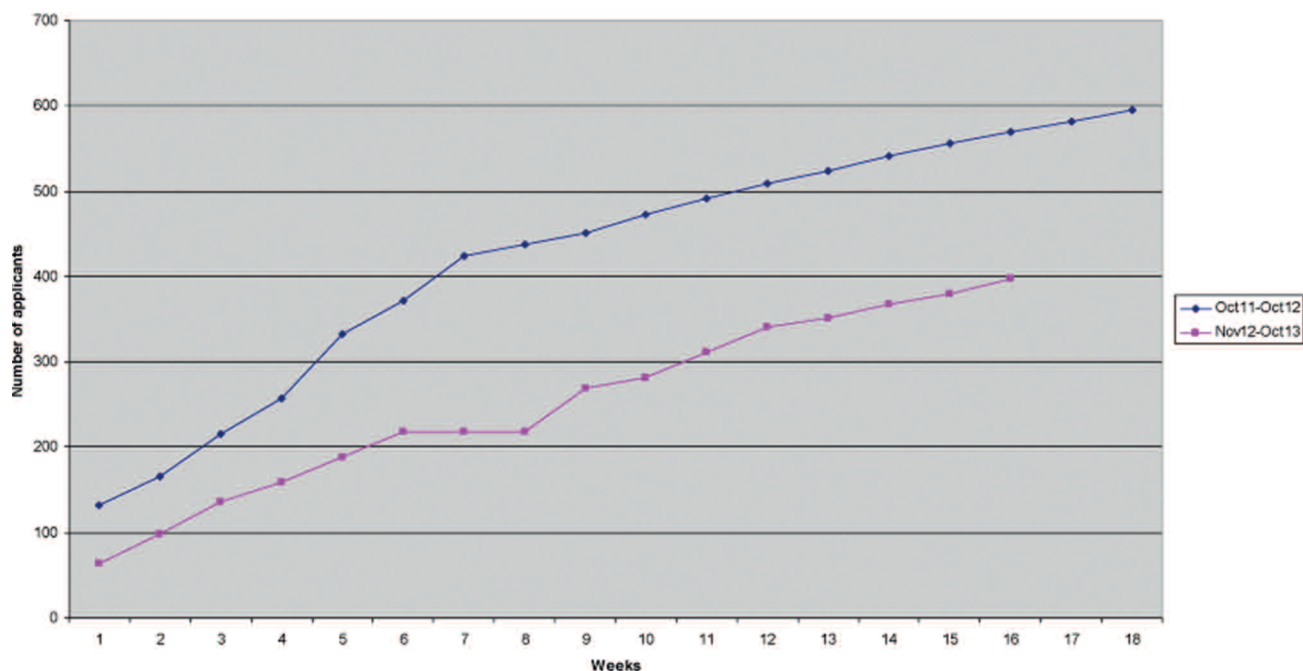
In 2011 12 the University of Warwick, an outstanding provider, was allocated seven PGCE places, so the fact the Ofsted report on this institution shows it to be outstanding seems to have no bearing on the way the Teaching Agency allocates the places. (Mike Castelli: oral evidence to the APPG)

Further closures are expected in 2013-14 when 17 more providers have been allocated fewer than 10 places, the number generally regarded as the threshold for sustainability. In particular danger are the 10 of these 17 providers allocated under 6 places.

The loss of outstanding providers has deprived the profession of teachers trained to the highest standard. It also undermines the capacity of such providers to support wider professional development for teachers and to give important support for SACREs.



Chart 12: applications for PGCE courses 07/11 - 02/13



5.3 The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church are apprehensive about the loss of ITE places, particularly in the church foundation universities (Cathedrals Group). Church of England schools draw from the same general pool of teachers as community schools. As already seen (Chart 7 above) church schools tend to employ more specialists than do community schools and 'may well have an overt stress on RE as an important and core subject' (Rev'd Janina Ainsworth). The Cathedrals Group places a very strong focus on understanding Christianity and the loss of places and of some courses is a matter of deep concern for appropriate teacher recruitment in both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

The spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church also voiced his concern over the reduction in the allocation of teacher training places, for example on PGCE RE courses at the former Catholic teacher training colleges and also the disappearance of bursaries for training RE teachers (Fr Tim Gardner, Catholic Education Service).

5.4 The high number of non specialists teaching RE has a detrimental impact on initial teacher training. There are now several routes to becoming a teacher, which all depend on finding schools with high quality RE departments, where trainees can learn from the best practitioners. Even university-based trainees rarely benefit from school placements in RE departments with several specialists who between them provide a range of wisdom and experience from which trainees can learn. Several respondents voiced concerns about the suitability of school based training programmes, such as Teach First, for RE trainees. This was not an attack on the principle of school based training as much as concern over the likelihood of trainees finding themselves in a training school where there is little or no expertise. There is a significant difference in opportunity between a science trainee working in a department of six specialists, each with different strengths, and an RE trainee in a department of one specialist already managing several non specialists.

An analysis of a sample of Teach First schools found some with good RE provision. However, mediocre GCSE results and/or low numbers of GCSE entrants in 40% of these schools raised questions as to whether they had the capacity to train an RE teacher effectively. (Deborah Weston: oral evidence to the APPG).

There is potentially a vicious circle developing here. Poor quality RE in schools, particularly at GCSE, reduces your pool going through to A-level. The A-level is not supported and you are reducing your recruitment to Theology and Religious Studies in the higher education institutions and potentially continuing to reduce the pool of high quality RE teachers...RE is critical and essential for students and is part of their general education. We share the anxiety about shifting ITE into schools: if there is poor quality RE in the schools how are we to develop good quality RE teachers? The effect of shutting RE out of the Baccalaureate and the pressure on what we have been able to offer so far means that we share with everybody else a deep anxiety about what is happening to RE. (Rev'd Janina Ainsworth: oral evidence to the APPG)



One of my Teach First participants is the only RE specialist in the school and is responsible for teaching and providing lesson plans and resources for all the RE teaching in the school - it is a large London school and he teaches over 500 pupils per week. RE is taught at GCSE but the Senior Leadership Team are not overly supportive. (Teach First RE tutor, evidence to the APPG)

The increasing use of non specialists to teach RE is limiting the number of RE departments that can be used as placements where trainees can learn from well qualified and experienced specialists.

This is in sharp contrast to the selection of schools by universities, many of which have a close relationship with the provider forged over many years. University tutors select for their RE trainees only schools with strong RE departments. Under school-based routes training schools are identified irrespective of the quality of their RE department.

All our schools have excellent RE departments and our students are blessed to be able to observe really strong practice and to be informed by this and supported by this. Also we don't re-use any schools which don't provide best practice. We visit new schools before placing students and so we can be fairly sure of the quality of the RE experience we are providing. (Kings College London: evidence to the APPG inquiry).

5.5 From 2013, those training to teach RE will no longer be entitled to bursaries that offset their tuition fees. Bursaries are available for trainee teachers of physics, chemistry, maths, English, geography, history, computer science, MFL (including Latin and Greek!) music, biology, physical education and computer science. For example, a trainee with a 1st class honours degree in physics, chemistry, maths and modern languages will receive a bursary of £20K while an RE trainee with a 1st will receive nothing. All the ITE providers responding to the APPG inquiry reported a steep decline in applications for RE in 2013. This is not surprising considering the cost of becoming an RE teacher. It is difficult to see the logic behind this decision and its strangest repercussion, that a trainee can get a bursary for training to teach Ancient Greek, very much a minority subject, but not for teaching RE,

which is a statutory requirement for all pupils.

Cost of training to be an RE teacher	
£27,000 borrowed for degree	£27,000 borrowed for degree £9,000 PGCE fees
With bursary	£9,000 PGCE fees
£27,000 = total borrowed	£36,000 = total borrowed
£50,000+ to be repaid	£90,000+ to be repaid

Repayment rate RPI+3% variable

Source for repayments - Directgov calculator

Data provided for the APPG by Prof John Howson

Without a bursary, RE teachers will have to repay £90,000 on the loans for their degree and professional training. This is a clear disincentive to anyone considering RE teaching as a career, apart from the very wealthy.

Any one of the above developments would be enough to raise questions about the future supply of RE teachers. But taken together

- the reduction in training places,
- the loss of several training providers, including some outstanding ones
- the uncertain quality of RE departments in school based training placements and
- the loss of the bursary

create uncertainties about the supply of well qualified and expertly trained RE teachers of the future.

A paradox

5.6 The Secretary of State for education has called for a raising of the bar on entry to the teaching profession and given a reaffirmation of the fact that teachers are 'responsible for the most important thing in our country, which is safeguarding its intellectual life'. He encourages teachers to spend time deepening their subject knowledge and, if they want to, acquiring masters level qualifications .

5.7 Teacher training providers are required to accept trainees with the best subject qualifications. However, there is no



such requirement on schools in England and Wales, which can employ or deploy teachers to teach any subject, regardless of qualifications, in contravention of the Teaching Standards. In other European countries it is taken for granted that teachers must have qualifications in the subjects they teach and is indeed a formal requirement of their employment (Dr Peter Schreiner, President of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School). This is the least that parents and children should expect.

We will never have a world class education system until the mismatch between training and teaching requirements is addressed. It is a nonsense that trainee teachers need a minimum level of knowledge to train in a subject, but then anyone, even those with no knowledge or training, can teach the subject, even up to 'A;' level. There may be some 'natural' teachers, but even they should possess a required minimum of subject knowledge.
Professor John Howson



6. SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and headteacher should also make sure that those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD (DfE 2010:27)

One of the weakest aspects of RE was the provision of continuing professional development, which was inadequate in nearly four in 10 schools visited. It was good or better in only three in 10 schools. (Ofsted 2010:25)

- 6.1 'Support' for teachers has two broad meanings:
- continuing professional development (CPD) that builds on and extends initial teacher training and
 - general everyday support, such as help and advice for a newly appointed subject leader who is not familiar with the local agreed syllabus.

Why is CPD essential to maintaining standards in education?

- 6.2 The House of Commons Education Committee report Great teachers: attracting, training and retaining the best (2012), received unanimous calls for improvements to teachers' professional development opportunities.

Successive education ministers have neglected continuing professional development (CPD) and focused overly much on initial teacher training—at most, four years of a teacher's career, compared with a potential 40 or more thereafter— (DfE 2012:94)

The committee found that although professional development was rated highly by teachers, the 'proportion of teacher time devoted to CPD in England is lower than in the best-performing school systems' and called on the government to 'consult on the quality, range, scope and content of a high-level strategy for teachers' CPD, and with an aim of introducing an entitlement for all teaching staff as soon as feasible' (DfE 2012:99).

- 6.3 Within this national context of under provision for CPD generally, RE teachers fare particularly badly.

Ofsted reported that in schools where training was inadequate there was:

- no systematic analysis of the specific training needs of RE teachers
- a lack of access to local training or advice that would support the implementation of the locally agreed syllabus
- insufficient training in RE for all primary teachers and teaching assistants who taught the subject
- little consideration in secondary schools to providing training for non specialist teachers.

Evidence from SACREs responding to the APPG indicates that provision of CPD has deteriorated still further since 2010 due to the steep decline in local authorities' ability to provide it. Although this deterioration is widespread, a few local authorities continue to resource CPD for RE. A teacher's chance of finding CPD locally is a postcode lottery.

In 60% of schools (excluding VA) pupils' achievement and teaching are not good enough. Teaching is not good enough because of weaknesses in teachers' understanding of the subject, poor and fragmented curriculum planning, very weak assessment, ineffective patterns of monitoring, and limited access to effective training. (HMI: oral evidence to the APPG)

Teachers of RE do not have sufficient access to CPD. This means that they cannot keep up to date with the tools they need to teach the subject in an engaging way that will help their pupils achieve high standards.



What are the training needs of RE subject leaders?

- 6.4 The continuing training of subject leaders is central to improving RE provision. Subject leaders are responsible for leadership and management: they set the standard for RE throughout the school.
- 6.5 Ofsted has identified specific weaknesses in both primary and secondary subject leadership and management. A summary of the key weaknesses shows that there is a need in all key stages for training that will enable RE subject leaders to:
- evaluate accurately the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of RE in the school; in particular answering the questions 'Are standards in RE high enough?' and 'Is RE teaching good enough?'
 - plan for the development of RE in the school with a focus on raising standards and improving teaching.
- 6.6 In addition to training in monitoring, most primary RE leaders have more basic needs. Many come to the role with the very limited background in the subject that typifies so many primary teachers of RE. In recognition of this situation, when asked to identify the foci of training that would best equip them for the role of subject leader they named:
- how to assess pupils' learning
 - help with implementing a new agreed syllabus
 - improving their knowledge of world religions.
- 6.7 Secondary respondents expressed a need for two types of support that could be provided within the school:
- i. Subject-specific support from the diocesan or LA RE adviser or SLE. The adviser's visits might include a demonstration lesson, support for a new RE co-ordinator or tutoring on a specific topic, such as assessment or planning an RE curriculum. The involvement of all teachers of RE in the training would provide a foundation for further development.
 - ii. Generic middle-management training for all heads of department in, for example, strategies for monitoring pupils' progress and techniques for evaluating the quality of provision.
- 6.8 Most secondary subject leaders responding to the APPG identified external courses rather than in-house training as their key need. The explanation for this lies partly in the isolation of the sole secondary RE specialist who has no RE colleagues with whom to follow up in house-training. External courses give RE specialists access to information about such priorities as curriculum change, new resources and local faith community contacts. Courses also provide invaluable opportunities to meet and exchange experiences with

subject specialists from other schools.

RE subject leaders in primary and secondary schools need both in-school CPD to develop their generic teaching, leadership and management skills and also RE-specific CPD to develop their subject expertise. For subject leaders without specialist colleagues external courses are a particularly important form of CPD.

What do we know about the range of CPD available for RE leaders?

- 6.9 Most of the support identified by respondents took the form of out-of-school RE specific courses. They identified three main types of event:
- Local support groups
 - Day/half day courses
 - Working groups

The main providers they identified were as follows:

- Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) offer a wide range of courses. In 2012/13 DBE training on RE and collective worship was accessed by 2937 Church of England schools and 3116 non faith schools, which equates to 66% of CofE schools and 27% of other schools. However, in percentage terms this is a relatively small proportion of community schools and diocesan support for non CofE schools is not evenly distributed across the country.

Some dioceses operate across into community schools on an extensive scale. When we asked London Diocese to quantify what they were offering for us they said 'It is too many to count'. They operate among many of the London boroughs being 'the deliverer' of RE support to all schools. But other dioceses are also finding that there is great enthusiasm and interest from community schools; in some cases that is formalised in, for example, diocesan staff being also on the LEA payroll, so there are a number of dioceses where the Diocesan Advisor is both the Local Authority Advisor and the Diocesan Advisor. (Rev'd Janina Ainsworth: oral evidence to the APPG).

- Local authority (LA) training was also attended by subject leaders from community, voluntary aided (VA) and voluntary controlled (VC) schools. The training foci were far narrower than those offered by the dioceses, by far the most common being the



launch of a new agreed syllabus or scheme of work. However, a few local authorities provided a wide range of exciting courses, designed to challenge subject leaders. In recent years the volume of provision offered by local authorities has shrunk in line with reduced budgets available to support this kind of work.⁴

- Secondary teachers most frequently accessed training provided by the examination boards, which provided courses attended by 35% of responding schools. In these courses the focus was very specifically on meeting examination requirements rather than the broader development of subject expertise. From September 2013 many of these courses will cease.
- Independent training companies provided courses on a commercial basis on popular themes such as assessment.
- Charitable trusts provide a range of opportunities. For example, Culham St Gabriel's provides an on-line subject knowledge booster course for primary and secondary non specialists that can be completed in a few months. The St Luke's Foundation provides funding for RE teachers studying for higher degrees. RE Today Services provides CPD (e.g. one-day courses; local and national conferences; sustained

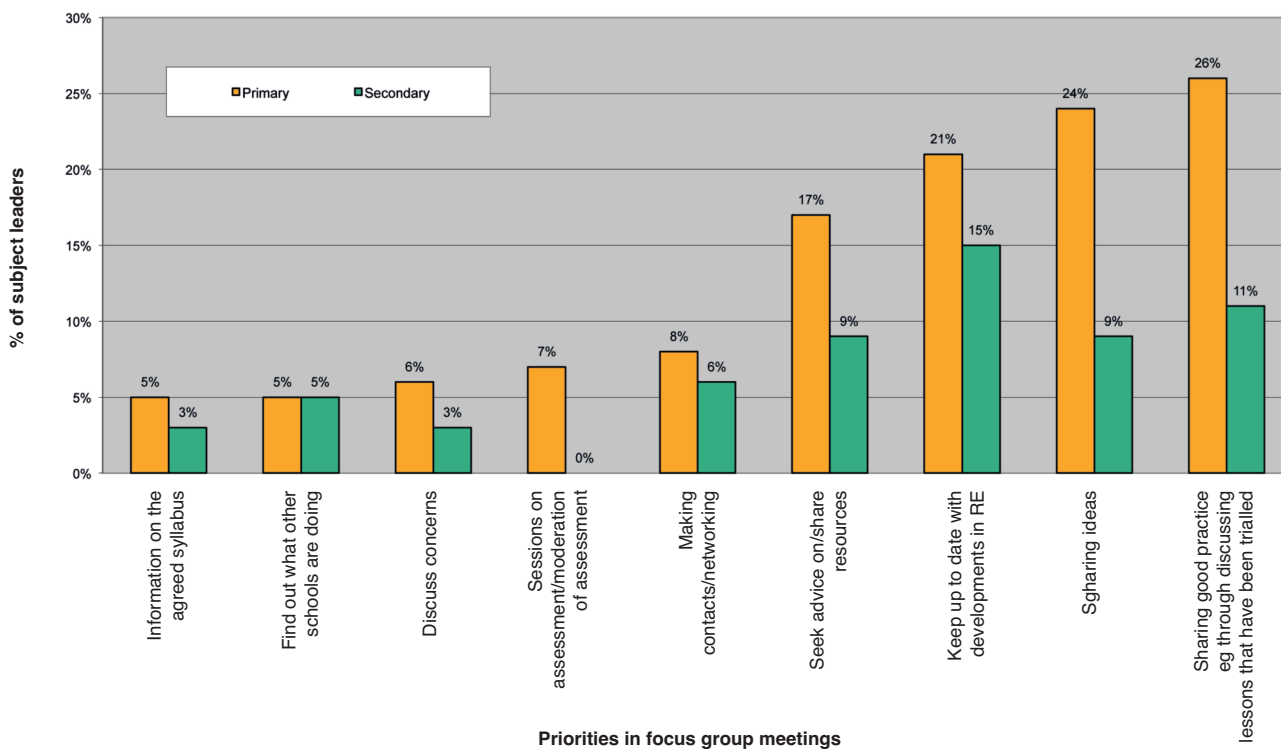
CPD projects, often delivered through Dioceses, LAs and school groups) for up to 6,000 teachers a year. It also publishes termly teaching resources.

- National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) is the professional association for teachers of RE. NATRE provides a range of CPD, often working in collaboration with RE Today. It publishes *REsource*, its professional journal, maintains a website with up to date news and downloadable resources, and promotes the cause of RE.
- New forms of CPD in RE are emerging as schools and their partners in HE and local authorities address teachers' current identified training needs. For example, in the south-west peninsula, 12 teachers are being trained as project lead teachers of RE who will run local learning hubs, sharing this training with teachers and HLTAs.

Local support networks

6.10 Many dioceses and local authorities, sometimes working together, provide local support groups for RE subject leaders. 160 of these local groups are affiliated to NATRE. Typically these meetings are held once or

CHART 13: Features of support groups perceived to improve the effectiveness of the RE subject leader, according to responding schools



⁴ See 6.35



twice a term after school and for many subject leaders in LA schools and academies they constitute the only available training. Sometimes these meetings are organised and managed by an adviser/consultant and at other times by one of the subject leaders. As a result the quality of support is variable, depending on the level of expertise available.

6.11 Chart 13 identifies the key foci at local RE support groups which, according to responding subject leaders, improved their confidence and effectiveness.

Practical ideas for teaching and for finding new resources are priorities. Particular importance is ascribed to 'sharing good practice' and 'sharing ideas' and this illustrates the value of these meetings as opportunities for subject leaders and teachers to learn from each other's experience rather than as formal CPD opportunities.

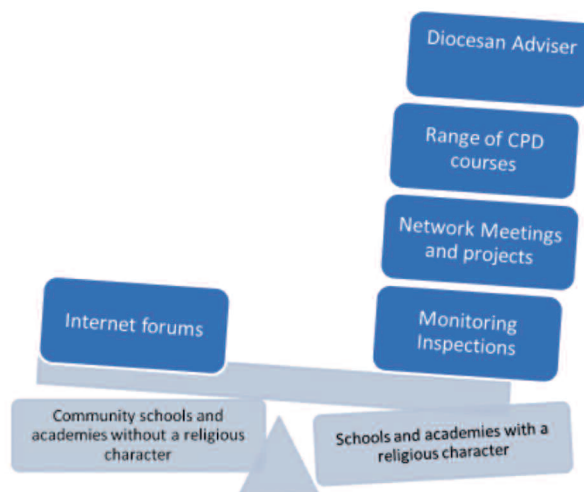
6.12 Particularly valued by primary subject leaders is the 'sharing of lesson plans' that have 'worked well'. These are also priorities for all teachers of RE and these rather basic requirements should be priorities for any teacher of RE and are evidence of many subject leaders' lack of prior training and limited vision of their role. Most of the priorities identified by subject leaders do not refer specifically to learning or raising standards or methods for monitoring the subject across the school or developing leadership and management skills.

Training for RE subject leaders in schools with and without a religious character - an unequal playing field

6.13 In gaining access to CPD, teachers of RE in community schools are generally the poor relations compared to their counterparts in schools with a religious character (based on the data collected for the APPG inquiry). Joy Schmack from Liverpool Hope University summarised for the second APPG meeting the disparity of CPD opportunities in the North West for RE teachers between schools and academies with a religious character compared to those in community schools.

6.14 Responses from subject leaders to this inquiry confirm the limited range of training opportunities. Chart 14 below shows the number of CPD opportunities taken by primary RE subject leaders in different types of school over a three year period. The large majority (in the central column) only attended between one and three CPD events over a three year period. Given that most primary RE subject leaders are only in post for about three years, many of them will only experience one CPD session at most. For a teaching population

Development opportunities



Diocesan schools had a range of CPD courses ...For those within local authority schools and community Schools, there were no such references any more. The vast majority referred to what I would say are unmonitored internet forums as their methods of support now. (Joy Schmack: Oral evidence to the APPG)

with minimal initial training in RE, poor subject knowledge and little subject confidence, this level of support will not give them the tools they need to provide sufficient subject leadership to support their colleagues.

Chart 14 (overleaf) confirms the disparity in provision of CPD opportunities in community schools compared with VA schools, where more than half of the subject leaders had a higher level of CPD.

6.15 Chart 15 overleaf shows the number of CPD events attended by RE teachers in secondary departments, although in reality the subject leaders were the main beneficiaries. The stark reality again is that schools with a religious character had far more access to training.

It is apparent that:

- Diocesan education boards generally provide more training opportunities for RE subject leaders than do most local authorities, although over a quarter of subject leaders even in C of E schools responding to the inquiry had little or no CPD.
- Local authority provision, which used to be extensive, is now minimal in most parts of the country as many local authority RE adviser posts have been cut and the pool of subject specialists is



CHART 14: The number of CPD opportunities attended by the RE subject leader (primary) between 2009-2012

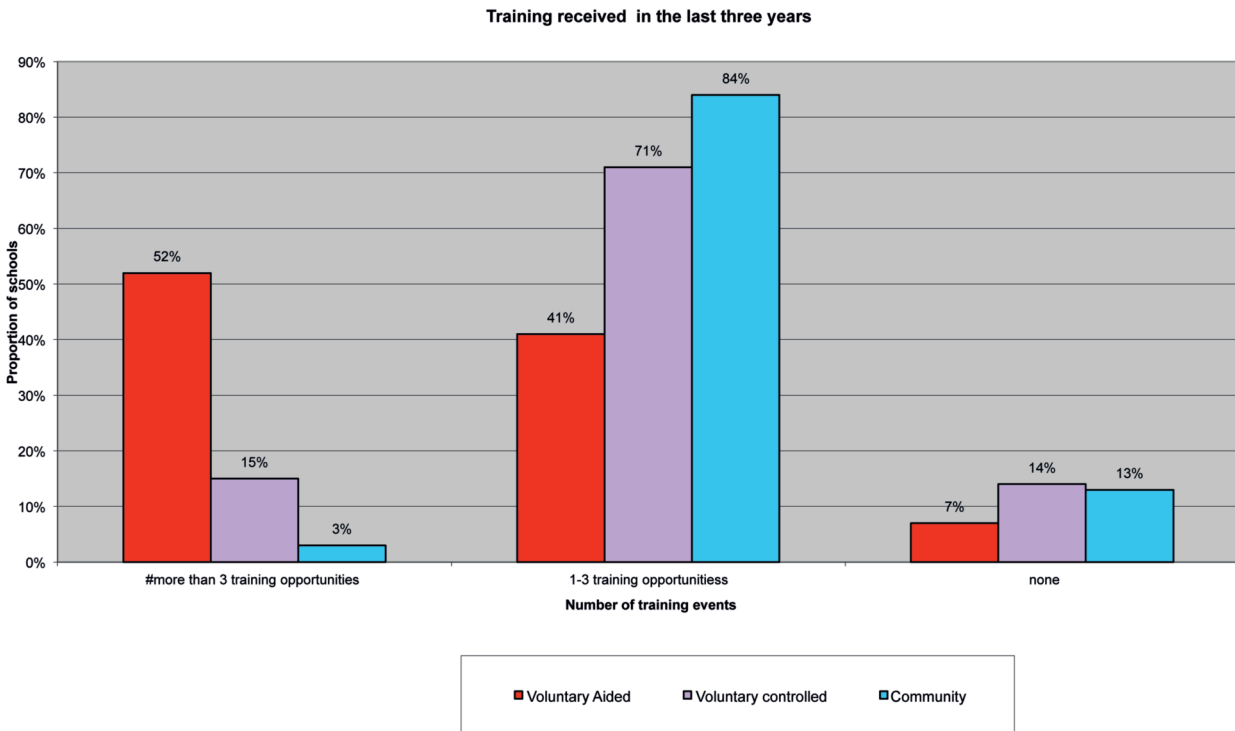
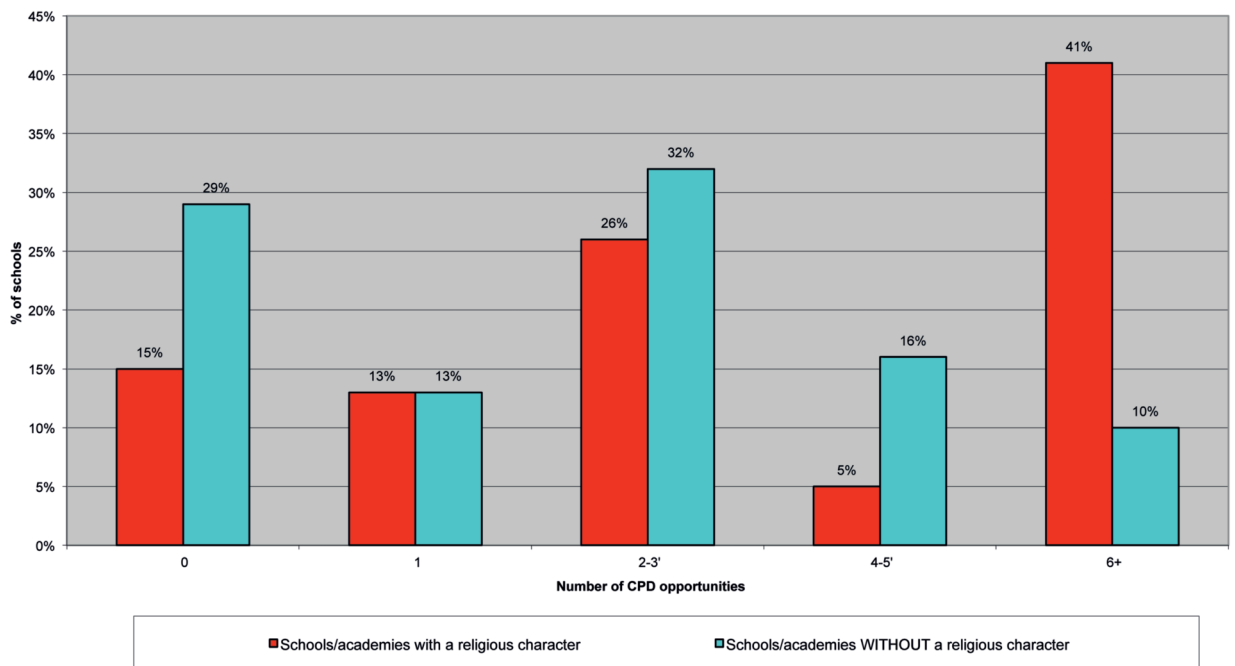


CHART 15: number of CPD opportunities for the secondary RE department between 2009-2012



diminishing as older members retire and are not replaced. There is some provision by external consultants who are employed on a contractual basis to provide support for RE.

- RE leaders in schools with a religious character generally benefitted from more regular subject based professional development than those in other schools
- RE subject leaders in community schools generally had the fewest opportunities for professional development and had a narrower range of options to choose from.
- 27 out of 300 primary RE leaders responding to the APPG and 33 out of 130 secondary ones had received no RE-specific CPD in the last three years.



This is a cause for deep concern when combined with the fact that so many primary teachers had insufficient initial training in the subject

The responses from schools highlight the inconsistency and inequality that results nationally when subject leaders have no entitlement to subject-specific training.

RE subject leaders in primary and secondary schools may benefit from a range of patterns of support to address their various training needs but access to this support is patchy and inconsistent, depending on the type of school they teach in, the status of RE in the school, the presence of a local adviser and the availability of local training. In short RE teachers' access to CPD is a postcode lottery.

What do we know about the training provided for all RE teachers?

A non specialist teacher, or a primary teacher who has had perhaps only a couple of hours on RE during their PGCE year, has a very limited take on the purpose of religious education. What Ofsted is now finding is that, if you do not have clarity about the purpose of what you are doing, it makes you much less secure and confident as a teacher in the classroom. (Dr Mark Chater: oral evidence to the APPG).

6.16 It has been established that that many primary school teachers are lacking both subject knowledge and confidence in RE and that minimal time is spent on RE in initial teacher training. Also in secondary schools over 50% of those who teach RE have no qualifications or training in the subject. If pupils are to receive the high quality RE that they are entitled to, then the in-service training of these teachers should be a priority. But unfortunately this is not always the case.

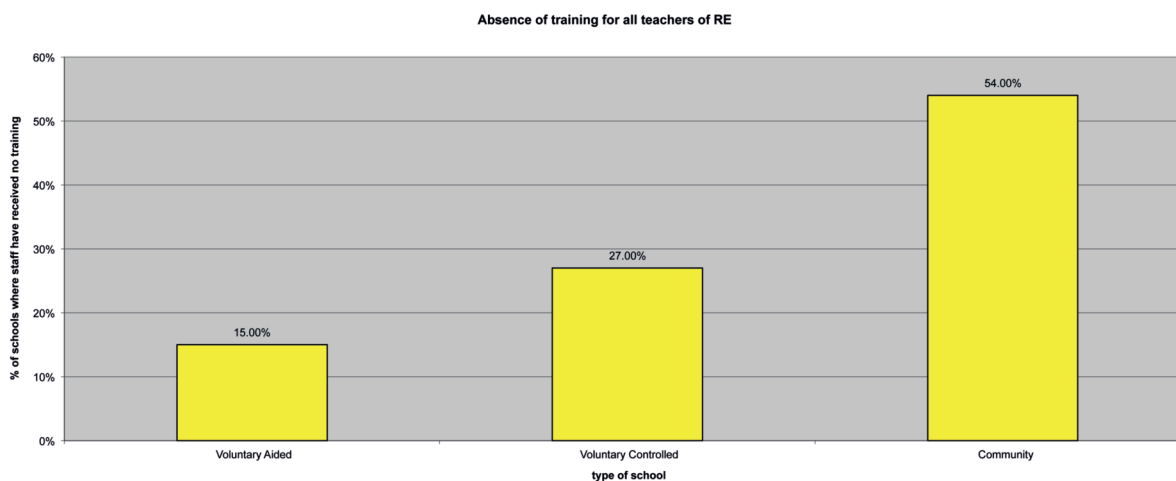
6.17 Where training is provided for all primary teachers of RE the most common provision is through sessions after school where the subject leader 'cascades' a course that they attended. The frequency of such sessions is decided by the school leadership. The most common topics covered in these sessions are assessment, the curriculum and in particular changes to the agreed or diocesan syllabus/scheme of work. This system is entirely dependent on the subject leader having opportunities for CPD and the school leadership team allocating staff meeting time for RE training. It would be rare for this to happen as often as once a year in community schools.

6.18 The differences identified between the professional development of RE subject **leaders** in different types of school becomes more pronounced when applied to all **teachers** of RE, as chart 16 demonstrates.

Half of those teaching RE in community primary schools receive no professional development in the subject at all. This has been confirmed by Ofsted.

In the primary schools visited, RE was rarely the focus of staff meetings or in-service training and teaching assistants who taught the subject were often not trained to do so. (Ofsted 2010:39)

CHART 16: Primary teachers of RE receiving no CPD



- 6.19 The situation in schools with a religious character is very different from that in community schools. In VA schools it is not uncommon to find other staff in addition to the subject leader attending diocesan training days and the diocesan adviser frequently leading whole staff training in school. For example, one VA school reported a one day RE school conference every two years, with workshops led by national leaders in the subject, as well as three staff meetings dedicated to RE over every 18 month period led by the diocesan adviser.
- 6.20 There is evidence that in community schools 'there is a clear correlation between the access to training in RE and the overall effectiveness of the subject, particularly in primary schools. In the majority of cases this was directly linked to the ability of the local authority to provide such training and support. Where such support was not available, in nearly every case, this had a direct negative effect on the effectiveness of the teaching and subject leadership'.(HMI evidence to the APPG)
- 6.21 Ofsted found that 'where good provision had been made for training, the use of non specialists had enriched rather than weakened the quality of provision for RE' (Ofsted 2010:39). However, for the majority of non specialists no training is provided and their negative impact on students' progress is allowed to continue.

Provision of CPD in RE for both subject leaders and teachers is very patchy and frequently absent.

Why do many RE teachers not take up existing CPD opportunities?

- 6.22 In spite of teachers' apparent enthusiasm for all forms of CPD, many of them do not take the opportunities that are available.

Respondents identified four main restrictions on RE teachers' access to CPD:

- Educational priorities: schools focus their funding where it is most likely to make a positive difference to the outcome of inspection or to the school points scores and place in the league tables. RE is rarely a priority and as one secondary subject leader put it, 'RE does not feature on the school development plan'.
- Logistical issues: In several responding schools the rule of 'no more than two teachers out on any given day' led to RE staff being told to cancel courses to

make way for other subjects.

- Work pressures: specialist RE teachers in secondary schools can in the worst cases teach up to 800 pupils a week, creating a huge work load in terms of lesson preparation and marking. In addition many specialists have non specialists to manage and support. Some have given this as a reason for the lack of take-up of opportunities. The St Luke's Foundation is one of a number of Church College Trusts offering bursaries for higher degrees. Trustees responding to the APPG expressed concern at the absence of applications for awards from RE teachers.
- Geographical: it is difficult for some schools to find RE-specific training locally and hence travel imposes constraints of time and money.

RE teachers find it difficult to access training unless it is related to examination changes (Cornwall SACRE)

- 6.23 The lack of training for secondary non specialists remains one of the greatest concerns in RE. Some respondents have suggested that non specialists receive no subject specific CPD because the school does not know whether it will continue to expect them to teach RE in the future and therefore training is not thought of as cost-effective. The same argument applies to non specialists themselves. They are more likely to take their CPD in a subject or management area in which they see their career developing than in a subject which they might teach twice a week.
- 6.24 Training for non specialists is easier to manage where schools do not to deploy staff randomly to 'fill the gaps' in the RE timetable but use a smaller number of teachers with an interest in the subject over a sustained period to make subject training worthwhile for them and the school.

Where do RE subject leaders go for informal subject-related help and advice?

- 6.25 Subject leaders were asked where they went for help with problems relating to RE. Several secondary respondents commented that they rarely needed help with RE outside the department. Charts 17 and 18 below show that primary RE leaders were far more likely to seek help than their secondary counterparts. This reflects the widespread lack of confidence and expertise among primary RE leaders. For both primary and secondary subject leaders, diocesan and local authority advisers were recognised as the most



important authorities on RE to whom most appeals for support were addressed. Many respondents noted with regret and concern the recent and rapid disappearance of local authority advisers (see below 6.35ff).

pronounced among primary subject leaders than secondary. Again this reflects the lack of confidence among primary subject leaders.

Community schools and academies had least access to help and advice, by a considerable margin, with nearly one fifth of community schools having no access to support at all.

Summary

6.26 The need for help with subject matters was more

6.27 Many young people in this country are for some of the time taught by teachers with no relevant qualifications or training, and there is more non specialist teaching in RE than in any other subject. This makes teachers'

CHART 17: Main sources of support for RE accessed by primary RE subject leaders

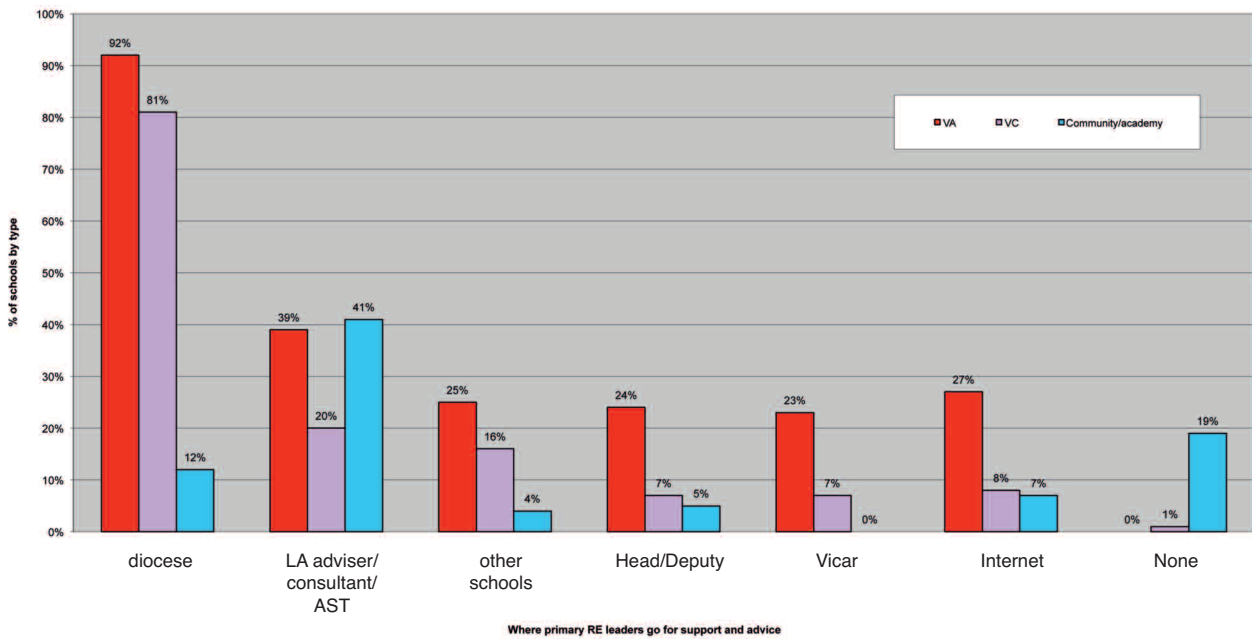
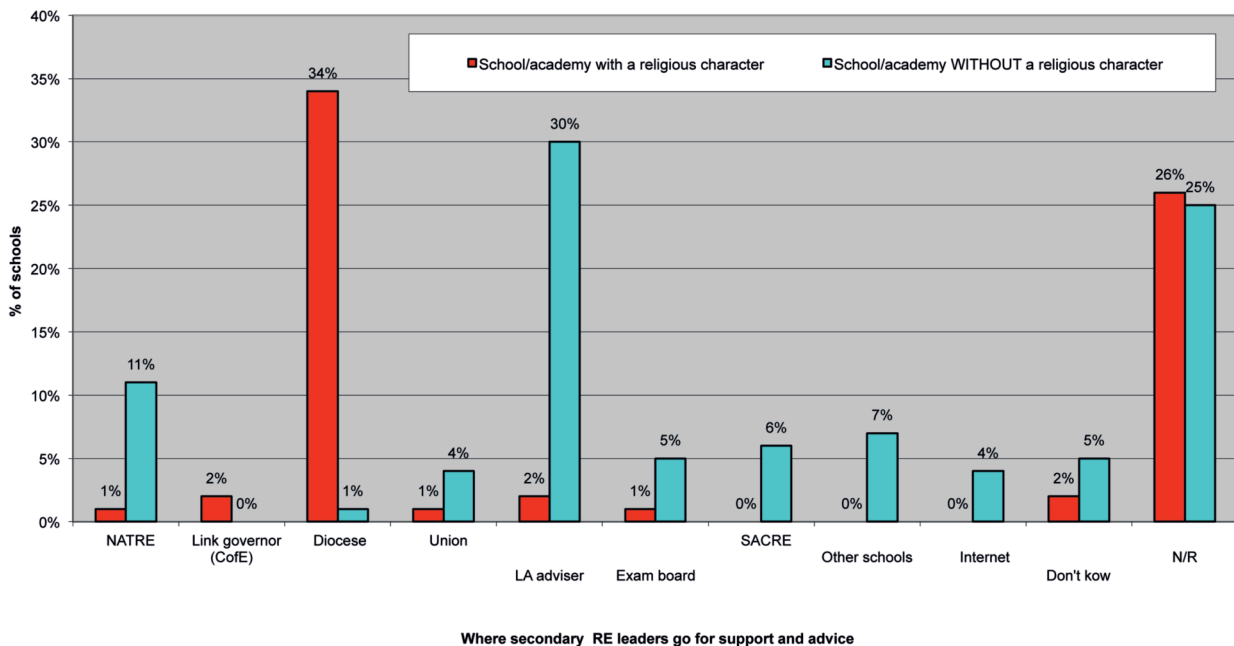


CHART 18: Main sources of support for RE accessed by secondary RE subject leaders



access to CPD even more important in RE, yet opportunities for this are fewer and are diminishing. This reflects the absence of any obligation on schools to match staff deployment to new subject areas with appropriate training.

- 6.28 This state of affairs that appears to permit, even encourage an element of mediocrity in teaching mystifies educationalists abroad. Peter Schreiner from the Council of Europe wrote to the APPG:

While many European states are now giving close attention to qualified teacher training in RE, the UK government seems to be neglecting it through eroding support for teacher training and in service training of teachers. At this time it seems particularly ironic that European educators are heavily inspired by research in RE carried out in recent years in the UK, while the subject itself in England is in decline through lack of specialist staff, teacher training resources, specialist advice and declining status.

Do SACREs and RE advisers still have the resources to provide support for teachers of RE?

The function of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (SACREs)

- 6.29 Every Local Authority (LA) is required by law to have a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. A SACRE's main function is 'to advise the authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus'. (See section 391 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the paragraph 94 of Schedule 30 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

By law, every local authority is required to have a SACRE. We have members in four different groups...members of the Church of England; members of other faiths and Christian denominations; teachers from schools; and also local councillors. In that way SACREs have a real sense of ownership when they are working well on RE in their local area. (Lesley Prior: oral evidence to the APPG)

- 6.30 The responsibilities of a SACRE relevant to this inquiry

are that it must:

- provide advice to the LA on all aspects of its provision for RE in its schools (this does not include voluntary aided roof schools or academies)
- decide whether the LA's Agreed Syllabus for RE needs to be reviewed
- advise on matters relating to training for teachers in RE

SACREs also respond to matters referred to it by the LA, which include:

- methods of teaching
- the choice of teaching material
- the provision of teacher training

The capacity of SACREs to carry out their statutory responsibilities.

- 6.31 In 2004 Ofsted published an evaluation of the work of SACREs, which cast doubt on the capacity of SACREs to carry out these functions without professional assistance from a subject specialist.

Six years later Ofsted could not report any improvement, finding that 'many local authorities did not ensure that their Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education had sufficient capacity to fulfil their responsibilities effectively' (Ofsted 2010:51).

Legislation describes the responsibilities of SACREs as though SACREs can discharge those obligations independently of professional advice. This is not the case. With the exception of the teachers and representatives of diocesan education boards, few members of SACREs have the professional expertise to advise either the LEA or schools on RE in relation to curriculum, pedagogy, assessment or training. (Ofsted 2004. Para 25)

- 6.32 Each local authority (working through the SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference) produces a locally agreed syllabus and often also accompanying guidance and teaching materials. These are tasks requiring professional expertise in RE and therefore pivotal to their success is the LA adviser or consultant employed to support the SACRE. The effectiveness of advisers and consultants lies in their dual role of advising the SACRE and schools. This enables them to provide SACRE with first hand information about what support schools need in relation to RE.
- 6.33 According to a survey carried out by NASACRE in 2012, there were wide variations in the resources available to SACREs. The amount of consultant time varied widely between SACREs from fewer than five



SACREs are unlikely to be able to fulfil their statutory functions without access to a specialist consultant/adviser to co-ordinate the development of the agreed syllabus and to provide accompanying guidance and teaching materials.

to 30 or more days a year. SACREs' funding varied from £90K to nil. For RE teachers relying on SACRE and the LA for support and training, this is the 'postcode lottery' referred to earlier. The system can work in a large authority with a big budget and high level of staffing, but not in a small authority without such resources. For example, RE teachers in Birmingham, where SACRE has an annual budget of £90K, have access to a 0.75fte RE/SACRE adviser and to the city's RE website, which provides lesson plans, filmed material for use in the classrooms and interactive games. This SACRE also has close contacts with academics from local universities who can be called on for advice. SACREs that have only modest resources can do little for teachers. Many LAs are just too small to carry out their SACRE functions effectively.

Northamptonshire reports a two thirds cut in staffing to a level which 'does not allow for sufficient LA Officer time to do anything but the bare minimum of preparation for meetings, analysis of exam results and preparation of the Annual Report. The projects that SACRE had planned, including monitoring standards and supporting schools to improve RE, have had either be put on hold or now rely on SACRE members to drive them forwards'.

The government continues to insist that RE is a local matter and that all forms of support for RE are local responsibilities. This system is not working because:

- some LAs are too small to do this effectively and that has been the case since local government reorganization in 1997
- the recent programme of reductions to local authority funding has meant that such frontline support has been cut drastically and the great majority of SACREs no longer have the capacity to provide more than minimal support for schools and teachers.

Ofsted's inspections of RE

- 6.34 The DfE frequently reiterates the argument that RE teaching in schools is safeguarded because it remains statutory for all pupils. Ministers and officials state that inspection will check that RE is being taught and report non-compliance when it occurs.

Because Ofsted rarely reports on non-compliance SACREs have no means of finding out which schools teach RE to all pupils, including those in the 6th form. Since SACREs do not have this information they are not in a position to help schools find ways to meet requirements.

The academy factor

- 6.35 Academies have to teach RE to their pupils but they are not required to teach in accordance with their local agreed syllabus, or indeed any agreed syllabus. This effectively removes academies from the responsibility of the local SACRE and weakens the capacity of LAs to support teachers of RE. For example.

For the last 3 years the university put on highly successful sixth form conferences as part of statutory provision for RE for all year 12 students in the LA. Now all but one of the secondary schools have become academies, the LA can no longer fund this provision.(University of Bath Spa)

Some SACREs are producing agreed syllabuses, as required by law⁶, in local authorities that no longer have any secondary schools. This means they have to spend their very limited resources on carrying out a statutory function, yet there is no requirement that any school will use such a syllabus once it is produced.

The negative impact of the Academies Act is twofold: it leads to the isolation of teachers in academies and it reduces the capacity of local authorities to provide support for RE.

⁶ Technically an agreed syllabus is produced or 'adopted' by an Agreed Syllabus Conference(ASC). In most cases there is no difference in membership between the ASC and the SACRE.



Summary

6.36 For the SACRE system to work, professional support is needed and this has been cut drastically in recent years so that most LAs can provide little more than the barest minimum in terms of funding the development of an agreed syllabus. There is no equality or fairness in access to CPD for RE teachers in community schools, as this depends on the LA's capacity to provide support for RE and the inclination of school managements to release and finance RE staff for training. The academisation programme further undermines the notion of local accountability. Consequently it is time that the government recognised that the system can no longer work as is set out in legislation because the infrastructure that the system requires is well along the path of disintegration and is set to disappear altogether unless action is taken to reverse this.



7. EPILOGUE

- 7.1 Too many people are teaching RE without any qualifications or expertise in the subject; some of them are not even qualified teachers; there are insufficient opportunities for CPD to put this right; teaching is not as good as it should be; as a result standards in RE are not as high as they should be; RE teacher training numbers are being reduced; SACREs being underfunded. Why does it matter?
- 7.2 It matters because our young people are entitled to good teaching, whatever the subject. Every lesson counts.
- 7.3 There appears to be a contradiction in the DfE's position on RE. In spite of the department's claim that 'A well-trained and confident workforce is crucial in ensuring good-quality RE'⁷ non specialists are counted as 'teachers of RE' along with specialists, even though they are unlikely to meet the teaching standards for the subject. Bursaries have been withdrawn from RE specialists applying to be RE teachers, with the result that the number of applicants is now considerably below that for previous years. The short course GCSE, which for so many years has provided motivation and accreditation, has been undermined. Academisation has pulled the rug - certainly the agreed syllabus - from under SACREs' feet.
- 7.4 The Department for Education often looks to international comparisons - Finland, Singapore, Hong Kong - and finds the schools system in this country wanting. Yet the structure of RE in England and Wales wins international acclaim because it provides a broad and inclusive education for young people in any and every type of school.

It deserves to be acknowledged just how highly the English and Welsh model for RE is regarded internationally. (Professor Brian Gates MBE)

The international perspective highlights a tragic element to the fortunes of RE: it is being undermined by current policies just at the time when the subject as it exists in England is gaining international recognition.

I am personally involved in a European RE network. What we do in SACREs, where we have all these people from very different backgrounds working together, is looked at with wonder and fascination and is seen as an excellent model of good practice in community cohesion, bringing people together and sharing what is on offer. (Lesley Prior: oral evidence to the APPG).

- 7.5 The world is changing: new technologies are transforming the global labour markets, and the diversity of national populations is intensifying through patterns of migration and cultural change. The results of the 2011 Census give a picture of increasing differences in the beliefs and values that we hold as a society. There are more people of minority faiths, and more people who profess no affiliation. For educators there is a clear imperative: understanding others. Yousif al-Khoei speaking to the APPG emphasised the importance of RE in helping young people to develop mutual understanding.
- 7.6 Religious literacy matters for everyone. Religious Education has a vital and powerful contribution to make in equipping young people, whatever their backgrounds and personal beliefs with the skills to understand and thrive in a diverse and shifting world. The value of this contribution has not been widely recognised by policy makers. A raft of recent policies have had the effect of downgrading RE in status on the school curriculum, and the subject is now under threat as never before, just at the moment when it is needed most. This report sets out those threats, along with urgent proposals for meeting them head on.

⁷ (DfE2010:27)



APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Academy	A school which operates independently of its local authority and is funded directly by the Department for Education. Academies may or may not be partly sponsored or governed by another organisation, whose character, whether religious or otherwise, may be part of the school ethos.	HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant. A role with some additional responsibilities to being a TA such as some whole class teaching and covering staff absences or PPA time.
Adviser	Local authorities employed subject advisers in the past, but increasingly such advisers are working on a freelance basis providing consultancy on subject matters. Most C of E and RC dioceses employ an adviser with responsibility for RE.	HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectors; Lead inspectors employed by Ofsted to carry out inspection work.
AULRE	The Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education.	INSET	'In service' training or CPD for teachers.
BHA	British Humanist Association	ITE	Initial Teacher Education; The first phase of a teacher's training, often in the past a PGCE at a university. Sometimes also referred to as ITT (initial teacher training).
Community school	A state funded school with no religious character and no involvement from another trust or foundation.	ITT	Initial Teacher Training; see ITE.
CPD	Continuing professional development	Key Stage	A unit for grouping different years/stages in schools, In the primary phase, Key Stage 1 covers ages years 1 - 2, and Key Stage 2 covers years 3 - 6. At secondary level, Key Stage 3 covers years 7 - 9, Key Stage 4 includes years 10 - 11, and Key Stage 5 covers years 12 - 13.
Diocese	An area under the supervision of a bishop.	NASACRE	The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE.
English Baccalaureate	A measure of school accountability which recognises a pupil's success in obtaining a GCSE A* - C pass in all the following subjects: English, Mathematics, two Science subjects, a Modern Foreign Language and History or Geography.	NATRE	The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education
Free School	A new school set up and run independently of the local authority and funded directly by the Department for Education.	Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills; inspects and regulates services independently of government.
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme enabling trainee teachers to begin their initial training directly in a school rather than in a university education department; the GTP will end after the school year 2012-13	PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education. Until recently the most common way for graduates to train as teachers in either the primary or secondary phase, it being subject specific for the latter.
		PPA time	Non-teaching time for classroom teachers to carry out planning, preparation and assessment.



PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education.
REC	The Religious Education Council of England and Wales.
RE specialist	A teacher who holds a qualification from higher education specifically in Religious Education.
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. Each Local Authority is required to provide for a SACRE, composed of councillors, teachers and faith representatives, whose remit is to support and advise on Religious Education in the area.
School Direct	A new way of allowing schools to train their own new teachers in ITT, in partnership with an established provider, but with the possibility of becoming an accredited provider in their own right.
School with religious character	A school is designated at the DfE in a relation to its particular denominational or faith foundation.
TA	Teaching assistant. A role supporting teachers in the classroom, but with no whole class teaching responsibilities.
Teaching Agency	The organisation responsible for administering the recruitment, supply, quality and conduct of teachers, under the auspices of the Department for Education. Due to merge with the National College for School Leadership in April 2013, with the new name as yet undecided.
Voluntary Aided School (VA)	A school whose running costs are funded by the state but which has a trust or foundation (usually the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church or another religious body) substantially involved in its governance. A VA school teaches RE in accordance with its foundation.
Voluntary Controlled School (VC)	Constitutionally similar to a voluntary aided School, but with less involvement from the trust or foundation and more from the state. VC schools teach RE according to the local agreed syllabus.



APPENDIX 2: RESPONSES TO THE APPG INQUIRY

1. School questionnaires

Central to this inquiry is the need to understand what is happening in schools. Two separate questionnaires were written, one for primary RE subject leaders and one for secondary heads of department. Both asked questions about the structure of RE in the curriculum, the number and qualifications of those teaching RE and sources/regularity of support and training for RE teachers. In order to get the questionnaires out quickly and directly to the right people, advisers were asked to forward them through their email contacts. In order to get a good geographical spread, schools were targeted in the Southwest, the Midlands and the Northeast of England.

The APPG received over 300 completed primary questionnaires and 130 secondary ones. These have provided valuable statistical data.

2. Oral testimonies

Twelve people, most of them representing national organisations, have presented oral evidence at specially convened meetings of the APPG. The first was chaired by Stephen Lloyd MP and the second by Fiona Bruce MP.

Rev Janina Ainsworth	National Society (CofE)
Audrey Brown CBE	Department for Education
Alan Brine HMI	Ofsted
Mike Castelli	Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education
Dr Mark Chater	Culham St Gabriel's
Fr Tim Gardner	Catholic Education Service
Prof John Howson	Data for Education
John Keast OBE	Religious Education Council
Lesley Prior	National Association of SACREs
Joy Schmack	Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants
Deborah Weston	National Association of Teachers of RE
Linda Whitworth	Middlesex University

3. Call for evidence

A general call for evidence was publicised on all major RE websites and through all the key national RE organisations. 65 responses were received to date as follows:

CORPORATE

Mark Plater	Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln
Judith Bainbridge MBE	Durham SACRE
Dr David Benzie	St Luke's College Foundation
Dr Berry Billingsley	LASAR (Learning about Science and Religion)
Dr. Bob Bowie	Canterbury Christ Church University
Professor Joy Carter	The Cathedrals Group



Dr Mark Chater
 Robert Cheesman
 Kate Christopher
 Geraldine Cooper
 Reverend Philip Davies
 Elisabeth Drage
 Bruce Gill
 David Hampshire
 Helen Harrison
 Sarah Harris
 Canon Dr Ann Holt OBE
 Guy Hordern
 Sue Holmes
 Chris Hudson
 Derek J Humphrey
 Sion Humphreys
 Imam Monawar Hussain
 Steve Illingworth
 Stephen Inglis
 Rev'd Ken Johnson
 Graham Langtree/Ed Pawson
 Mary Myatt
 Jill Stolberg
 Bill Moore
 Carrie Mercier
 Sara Passmore
 Rosemary Rivett
 Jane Savill
 Head of Humanities
 Katy Staples
 Karenza Passmore
 Dean Pusey
 Katy Staples
 Mark T Stephenson
 Lilian Weatherley
 The Rt Rev'd Humphrey Southern
 Dr Peter Schreiner.

Culham St Gabriels
 National Union of Teachers
 SE Essex RE Teachers' Network
 Bradford SACRE
 Rutland SACRE
 Northamptonshire SACRE
 National Association of SACREs
 Cornwall SACRE
 Lancashire SACRE
 Surrey SACRE
 The Bible Society
 Birmingham SACRE
 E Riding SACRE
 Barnabas in Schools Team
 Hockerill Educational Foundation
 National Association of Head Teachers
 The Oxford Foundation
 Salford SACRE
 S Tyneside Council
 Nottingham SACRE
 Devon SACRE
 Suffolk SACRE
 Sandwell SACRE
 Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire SACREs
 University of Cumbria
 British Humanist Association
 RE Today Services
 Institute of Education
 Lowton Church of England High School
 Bristol SACRE
 North East Religious Learning Resources Centre
 St Alban's Diocesan Youth Service
 Swindon SACRE
 Rastrick High School Academy
 E Sussex SACRE
 Bishop of Repton
 Council of Europe and President of the Intereuropean Commission
 on Church and School

INDIVIDUAL

Helen Boutle
 The Rev'd Jane Brooke
 Jane Chipperton
 Professor James C. Conroy
 Professor Denise Cush
 Roger Daniels
 Sarah Elliott
 Dr Judith Everington
 Dr. Marius C. Felderhof
 Mary Freeman
 Ron Gandolfo
 Professor Brian Gates
 Alison Greenfields
 Patricia Hannam
 Prof R Jackson

Jeff Laws
 Jonathan Marshall MBE
 Dr Janet Orchard
 Mr C Pickering
 Sabah Raza
 Joy Schmack
 Helen Sellers
 Geoff Teece
 Rosemary Walters
 Rev'd Mike Warren
 Linda Whitworth
 Becky Wood



APPENDIX 3: THE LEGAL CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in the sixth form, except to those withdrawn by their parents. This requirement does not apply to nursery classes in maintained schools. Religious education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. In all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it must be taught according to a locally agreed syllabus.

Each LEA must convene an ASC to produce a syllabus. Once adopted by the LEA, the programme of study of the agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught. The attainment levels set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages. The Education Act 1996 states that an agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. Each LEA must have a SACRE. The SACRE may require a review of the agreed syllabus at any time. This is in addition to the requirement on LEAs to convene a conference to reconsider the agreed syllabus every five years .



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the witnesses who contributed oral evidence as well as the organisations and individuals that gave written submissions to the Inquiry. We are extremely grateful to the Parliamentary officers and members who supported this Inquiry and the the staff at the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.

Finally, we would like to give a special thank you to Dr Barbara Wintersgill to whom we are indebted for her dedicated work on putting this report together.



**THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY
GROUP FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**



SACRE networking meeting

11th March 2013

Winchester

Summary

(Minutes to follow)

15 SACRE members representing 11 SACRE's from the South East and the South West was present. The first hour of the meeting, saw each SACRE update the group on its work and current concerns. Across these SACRE's the picture is very varied, some SACRE's having little local authority support, others buying in consultant time to support their work and Hampshire maintaining its position with local authority advisors supporting the SACRE and the schools. Much commitment and enthusiasm for the role of SACRE's and RE work in schools was voiced even though some had considerable concerns.

Discussions followed about:

1. The need for a set protocol for both inviting and managing the process of new membership to SACRE's. Representatives compared their positions regarding co-opting members and discussed approaches some have received from organisations e.g. British Humanist association and church of Latter Day Saints.
2. The viability and potential for SACRE's across the region to share training sessions e.g. new member induction. These happen regularly in Hampshire and other SACRE's would be welcome to participate.
3. The possibility and benefits of holding a regional conference for SACRE's along the lines of the South West annual SACRE conference.

NASACRE

National Matters

1. The all party parliamentary group report on the supply and training of teachers of RE was discussed and concerns raised about the increasing number of children being taught RE by teaching assistants and the reduction of training opportunities and bursaries for people wishing to take specialist teacher RE training. The report is due out on Monday 18th March 2013.
2. Representatives discussed the growing number of academies and how SACRE's might work with them.
3. The OFSTED long report by the HMI, Alan Brine, is due out in May 2103. The national curriculum review document currently suggests that there must be RE at each key stage. Growing autonomy for schools may mean a variety of agreed syllabi maybe used across a local authority area.

The situation with the English Baccalaureate remains unclear in terms of the position for RE.

The RE council RE review has 10 recommendations (see notes for March 14 South West conference).

The meeting closed with consensus that these joint Wessex SACRE meetings are valuable and should continue on a termly basis (or at least two per year). The provisional date for the next meeting is Wednesday June 12th 2013 (tbc).

Jan Lever 17-03-13

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

NETWORK MEETING OF LOCAL SACREs

NOTES OF THE MEETING held on Monday 11 March 2013 at 10.00 am in the
Chute Room, Winchester

Present:

Bournemouth

Stephen Chappell (Chairman)
Lynda Ford-Horne (Vice-chairman)
Rubina Nassar (support officer)

Hampshire

Councillor Anna McNair Scott (Chairman) - in the Chair
Councillor Roz Chadd (Vice-chairman)
Patricia Hannam (support officer)
Sue Butler (clerk)

Isle of Wight

Ralph Hodd (SACRE member)
Harry Kirby (clerk)

Poole

Derek Holloway (Chairman)

Portsmouth

Peter Davies (Chairman)

Surrey

Peter Ward (SACRE member)

West Sussex

Nigel Bloodworth (support officer)

Wiltshire

Simone Kermode (clerk)
Jan Lever (adviser)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from David Cave (Isle of Wight), Margaret Hicks (Surrey), Derek James (West Sussex), Judith Lowndes (Hampshire), Pat Wood (Southampton), Sarah Long (Portsmouth), Sandra Wylie (West Berkshire), Zvi Solomons (Reading), Sarah Lawrence (Swindon)

Councillor Anna McNair Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly to the new representatives from Wiltshire and Surrey.

1. Notes of the Last Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 5 October 2012 were agreed, subject to the following amendments:

- Item 1 – Derek Holloway corrected the assertion the Poole has 3 support officers for RE; this should have been 3 support officers for education in general.
- Councillor Daunt had asked for an addition to his update - that he had also mentioned that Southampton SACRE had focussed on Living Difference and close links with Southampton Council of Faiths, and aimed in the future to focus on collective worship and working closely with a Christian Mission who run workshops in schools. He also asked for it to be clarified that whereas he had previously felt that networking could be adequately done remotely by email or phone, he now felt that there was a value in meeting in person.

2. Updates from each local authority's SACRE

Each local representative gave a short update on their SACRE and its work.

West Sussex

Nigel Bloodworth informed the group that SACRE was currently in limbo pending the forthcoming County Council elections in May and that Derek James was stepping down as Chairman. The revision of their Agreed Syllabus was on hold until the national picture for RE was clearer. They are still concerned about the lack of any subject support to schools from the County Council; however, RE, including Key Stage 4, is still doing well.

Surrey

Peter Ward had not been given an update to present, but noted that Surrey had not replaced their support officer yet.

Portsmouth

Peter Davies clarified that of the £6,500 budget he had mentioned at the previous meeting, £4,500 goes to pay for a member of staff. Another student enrichment conference was being held on 27 June 2013. Work is progressing on improving liaison with secondary schools, although only one of ten schools had replied to a recent questionnaire. Three or four secondary schools were planning to become academies. His view was that the picture was challenging, but not all negative.

Wiltshire

Simone Kermode told the group that Wiltshire SACRE was a strong one with about 20 members and they worked closely with the Salisbury diocese. They had introduced a new Agreed Syllabus in 2011. They did not have a set budget, but were usually successful in funding requests. Currently the Local Authority provided one day a week for RE support and for Jan Lever to support SACRE; but it was uncertain what the outcome for RE would be of a restructuring.

Poole/Dorset

Derek Holloway told the group that there was nothing to update them on for Poole. As part of his work for Dorset SACRE he mentioned a successful Holocaust Memorial event that had been held and highlighted a cross-phase RE conference that was being held on 24 June 2013.

Isle of Wight

Harry Kirby explained that there was some turmoil in the Local Authority at present; also that there was not consistent officer support at meetings. SACRE was now being pro-active in commissioning training since they had discovered that they have this role; a questionnaire to schools to identify training requirements had produced only a 25% response. They were aiming to hold events in the summer and autumn 2013. It was noted that the island is not very multi-cultural and to improve this links had been made with the Islamic School in Southampton.

Bournemouth

Lynda Ford-Horne indicated that Bournemouth SACRE was reasonably healthy. They had held a very positive RE conference on how art, poetry and literacy can be used to teach RE and were hoping to run another. She highlighted two very successful Holocaust Memorial Day events, which had seen over 800 people listening to a survivor's experiences. They had been given a Westhill Award of £2,000 in 2012 to enable Year 6 students to visit a variety of religious establishments, primarily in Southampton, and were putting in a similar bid this year. One spin off from this was that Southampton had approached them to visit a synagogue. All except 2 secondary schools were now academies; 6 primary schools had become academies, with a further 6 in the process; there are academy representatives on SACRE. Currently the Local Authority allocates one and a half days of officer time for RE and there is £5,000 set aside for SACRE activities. To keep all councillors informed of SACRE and its activities, they send their annual report to them. Members agreed that councillors needed to be reminded of their statutory duty to RE.

Hampshire

Patricia Hannam informed the group that RE was still thriving in Hampshire. She had presented Hampshire SACRE's annual report to the Children and Young People's Select Committee. The Local Authority was still providing good CPD and there were 3 providers of new RE teachers in the area. GCSE uptake was being maintained, with the boys' gap narrowing; the county's focus and priority for 2013/14 in GCSE RE was on vulnerable groups and children of military personnel, looking at the numbers opting for the subject and their achievement compared with other groups. The revision of Hampshire's Agreed Syllabus would begin in late 2014 and a mid-term questionnaire about it had been well responded to. The third meeting of Hampshire SACRE's Youth Voice had seen 27 students from 6 schools attending. A primary conference was being held on 24 May with Mark Chater as the main speaker. There was a close relationship with the Winchester and Portsmouth Dioceses and a successful meeting had taken place between the new Bishop of Winchester and the Hampshire Chairman, Patricia Hannam and Tony Blackshaw, a Church of England representative on SACRE.

Hampshire had recently set up a procedure for new admissions following the application of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints to join Group A and asked for comments from the group. There had been concerns that the Church saw membership of SACRE as a means of raising their profile; not all the SACREs present had representatives from the Church, but Jan Lever indicated that Reading SACRE had a very supportive co-opted member from the Church. Members discussed their experiences and their approaches to the admission of new groups either as members of Group A or as co-opted members – Poole have an interview and presentation; West Sussex and Surrey

do not have a procedure, but invite groups to join dependent on the proportion of numbers belonging to the faith in the area. It was agreed that the proportion criteria was not applicable in all cases. It was noted that Humanists were present as co-opted members on most SACREs, although they, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, only attended Wiltshire SACRE as observers.

3. Meeting SACRE Members' training needs

There was discussion about whether the group should provide regional training since NASACRE had no capacity for training now. Derek Holloway told the group about the South West SACRE annual training conference, due to be held on 14 March, which was self-financing and provided good networking opportunities. It was generally agreed that the group could duplicate the format of the conference, and should cover a 'Wessex' region. It was felt that non-teaching members of SACREs would be the main target for the training, although it was commented that the role of an RE teacher is different from that of a SACRE member. It was agreed that the organisation of a joint training event should be on the agenda of the next meeting.

4. NASACRE matters

It was noted that the agenda for the AGM on 23 May was a challenging one.

5. Update and discussion on other national matters:

- APPG Group – Teaching Schools and supply of RE teachers

The APPG Group was due to publish its report by the end of March 2013. Concerns were raised about the long term vision for RE teacher training; provisions were being closed if there were less than 10 students and the government did not recognise that there was a shortage as their figures included non-specialist teachers who only taught one lesson a week. It was noted that of the 5 Teaching Schools in Hampshire, none had plans to take on a RE trainee as they had to be able to guarantee them a job. It was generally felt that there was a risk of a lack of consistency in the standards looked for in trainees as well as variation in the quality of training in the Teaching Schools. It was agreed that the withdrawal of bursaries for the RE PGCE would have a negative effect on recruitment; Derek Holloway mentioned that the Salisbury diocese had money to give for bursaries, but there was no institution in the diocese providing RE teacher training.

- Impact of Academy programme and amendments to English Baccalaureate in Secondary Schools on the role and responsibilities of SACREs

Patricia Hannam indicated that very few Hampshire primary schools had become academies, less than half of secondary schools had converted, and good contacts were currently being maintained with RE departments in those that had. The meeting was informed that the Roman Catholic Bishop of Portsmouth had expressed the view that catholic schools should seriously consider converting to academies; it was noted that this was not the national Roman Catholic view. The Catholic primary schools on the Isle of Wight were considering becoming a federated academy. Members agreed that SACREs needed to find a way of working effectively with academies to

enable them to continue their statutory duty. It was suggested that SACREs should look at the funding agreements with academies to determine the legal requirements for them to provide RE. Members were concerned that the compulsory nature of RE at Key Stage 4 and the single Locally Agreed Syllabus would be lost. There were also concerns about the loss of short course GCSE and that there was no RE review similar to that being undertaken for History and Geography. It was noted that Secondary School Accountability Consultation

<https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1882&external=no&menu=1> was ongoing, and that the future position of RE, as a consequence of changing the way Secondary schools will be judged, was complicated and unclear.

- RE Review by RE Council

Derek Holloway, a member of the RE Council steering group, told members about the three groups tasked to provide recommendations following on from the Phase 1 report, including the curriculum (core knowledge, teaching and assessment), structuring and sustaining the future of RE (building links with the DfE, influencing examination bodies to provide coherence, and lobbying for RE), and the possibility of writing of a document to replace the current non-statutory guidance and including updated guidance on pedagogy and the principles of good practice. The Phase 1 report and the Phase 2 group tasks would be circulated to members.

It was noted that the new national curriculum still required RE to be taught in all Key Stages, but does not specify how much. There were worries that RE could become centralised, most around the table preferring that RE remains locally determined and with a locally Agreed Syllabus. It was intended that the RE review would be completed at the same time as the National Curriculum review.

6. Plans for future meetings including dates, venues and matters for discussion

Councillor Anna McNair Scott indicated that Hampshire would be happy to continue to host the Joint meetings if this suited everyone and others did not feel they were being denied the opportunity to host. Members agreed to this as Hampshire was the most central place.

It was agreed that the group should meet at least twice a year, preferably once a term.

The date of the next meeting was set as **Wednesday 12 June 2013 at 10.00 am** in the Wellington Room, Elizabeth II Court South.

7. Any Other Business

Simone Kermode asked whether other SACREs were encouraging schools to apply for the National Quality Mark for RE; West Sussex reported that they were doing this, the Isle of Wight has an assessor, however, one school in Hampshire, which was encouraged to apply had found the application process too daunting.

Working together to strengthen the provision of religious education in schools, colleges and universities

7^h June 2013

Dear Colleagues,

RE Council RE Subject Review, England, Phase 2 Draft Programme of Study for RE

Thank you for your interest in this significant project concerning the future of RE in schools in England. Further information about the project as a whole is available on the [RE Subject review](#) section of the REC website.

Phase 2 of the review is currently entering an important stage of consultation and we invite you to read the draft programme of study that has been proposed for RE based on extensive work by Task Group 1 for the RE review and the project's Steering Group.

May I make a few points to help you place the draft programme of study into context.

Background

1. This programme of study has been prepared in the light of recommendations made in the Phase 1 Expert Panel Report, which was ratified by the REC Board in January 2013 after receiving widespread approval during the public consultation exercise conducted in November – December 2012.
2. It has been agreed by the REC's Steering Group for the project. A wider Reference Group, including members from all the REC member bodies, considered an earlier draft of the purpose of study statement, aims and attainment targets for RE at a meeting in May.

Wider public consultation procedure

1. Please print or download the draft programme of study for RE
2. We invite public responses to this in writing in one of 2 formats:
 - a. By letter, addressed to me as Chair of the Steering Group of the RE Subject Review for England, via the REC office.
 - b. By questionnaire, following this link to [Survey Monkey](#)

There is considerable pressure of time on the RE review process, due in large part to the financial constraints within which the REC is working. The REC has been entirely dependent upon voluntary donations to support the process as it has received no government funding.

Wider public consultation will therefore take place electronically during a four week period only from Friday 7th June – Friday 5th July 2013. We hope that you and/or any organisation to which you belong will contribute your responses to the draft proposals. Please play your part by inviting others, including pupils and students studying RE, to make their contribution.

Thank you in anticipation for your attention and response to the RE review process.

Yours sincerely,

M. J. Castelli

Mike Castelli
Chair of Steering Group
RE Subject Review, England



**SUBJECT REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
IN ENGLAND**

PHASE 1

REPORT OF THE EXPERT PANEL

16 January, 2013

RE Expert Panel Members

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Acknowledgements

This report represents the collective findings and recommendations of the RE Expert Panel. The members of this panel would like to acknowledge the contributions made by:

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- Dr Sarah Smalley, REC Executive Officer, who, amongst other things, showed a remarkable gift in minute-taking during the two long, face-to-face meetings of the panel; and
- each of the expert witnesses who submitted detailed notes and comments and/or who provided oral evidence.

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Introduction

The origin of this report

Under the present coalition government, an extensive review of the National Curriculum is taking place. As changes in curriculum and assessment arrangements for other subjects have implications for religious education (RE), this provides an opportunity to clarify RE's distinctive place within the wider school curriculum. As part of its Strategic Plan, the RE Council (REC) has undertaken to carry out a review of RE, following a similar pattern to that adopted by the National Curriculum Review. There was support from the Department for Education (DfE) in that ministers affirmed that the REC was 'well placed' to carry out such a review.¹

A scoping exercise was commissioned in preparation for this process. The subsequent report, published on the REC website in June 2012, declared that: 'in the midst of an apparently threatening, divisive and destructive situation, the RE community has a unique opportunity through the leadership of the REC, to build on the considerable achievements of the last two decades'.²

The Subject Review of RE in England stemmed from the scoping report and Dr Janet Orchard was appointed manager of a project consisting of two phases. During phase 1, an expert panel of four members would meet to review key documentation and submissions by expert witnesses with two purposes in mind. First, to identify strengths and weaknesses in current RE provision in schools in England; second, to make recommendations for future action in phase 2 of the review and beyond related to four particular foci. These foci were identified by the scoping report and agreed by the REC Board and set the boundaries for the panel's work. They are: aims, curriculum, exemplification of good practice, and qualifications and assessment.

The members of the expert panel, chaired by Dr Bill Gent, began their work of reviewing key documentation and expert witness submissions in July 2012. Their primary tasks were, through a careful and sensitive reading, to present a summary of points raised in the documents and submissions, and to make a judgement on the implications of this evidence for the future of RE. They met twice, once in London in August and once in Birmingham in September 2012. A first draft of the panel's report was presented to the project's steering group at the end of October 2012.

The REC is committed to wide consultation among all of the various stakeholders with a direct interest in RE and beyond. Hence, a second draft of the phase 1 report was considered in early November 2012 by an Extraordinary General Meeting of the REC which represents the views of its 59 member bodies, including professional and faith-

¹ Letter from Nick Gibb, DfE, to John Keast, Chair of the REC, 25 January 2012.

² This sense of urgency was reflected in many of the written submissions made to the expert panel. It is clear that many members of the RE community believe that RE's undoubted gains in recent decades across a wide age range are currently threatened and in jeopardy. As such, this review of RE - in the words of one expert witness - 'is a precious opportunity and I hope that we do not waste it'.

based groups. A third draft of the report was placed in the public domain for a period of three weeks in November and December 2012 for general consideration and comment. This document is the final revision of the report drawing on ideas and suggestions that were made during these soundings. It has been ratified by the REC Board.

The report's style, layout and length

The Expert Panel was asked to produce a report which would have credibility amongst the professional RE community and would be free of technical jargon to ensure its accessibility by a wide public audience. For example, footnotes have been used – mainly to identify key documentation and sources of further information – but sparingly. Acronyms cannot be avoided entirely but they have been explained in full when they appear first.

The panel agreed that the key element of the report is its recommendations of which it has made nine. Seven relate directly to the four specific foci of the review and two further recommendations follow. These form the executive summary to be found at the beginning of the report.

Each of the four main sections of the report, based around the four foci, begins with the recommendations for that section. The text that follows each recommendation provides commentary to support it that falls into three parts: background, main strengths, and main weaknesses.

The expert panel was asked to produce a report of about 10,000 words in length. It has succeeded in doing this but one of the consequences was that it left little room for detailed information about particular points made. Nonetheless, the purpose of the report was always to provide a general overview of the English RE scene, including its 'highs' and 'lows', in order to provide a basis for further, more detailed work later in the review process.

Underlying principles of the panel's work

As they engaged in their deliberations, certain principles informed the panel's work. These have been captured in the following brief statement:

1. The RE Subject Review for England should defend and enhance the place of RE in the curriculum of English schools.
2. The RE Curriculum in schools in England should take account of wider educational aims, including the aims of the new National Curriculum. It should respect the principles of freedom, responsibility and fairness, and show commitment to raising expectations of the quality of RE received by all children and young people.
3. Local determination of the curriculum has been recognised in the statutory arrangements for RE over many years. The Expert Panel has worked on the assumption that any new guidelines for the subject must continue to balance the value to RE of wide national compatibility with that of vesting power in local communities.

4. The Expert Panel is committed to diverse forms of high quality RE; its members recognise that the subject, like religion itself, is contested. Plural traditions of RE in England have integrity and value, and their practice should be encouraged and developed. Common to these traditions is a widely shared commitment to being educative rather than coercive, each in their own way.
5. At the same time, Religious Educators need to be much clearer about the reasons which make the plural aims of RE legitimate and how these might be reconciled (where possible) to form a coherent and compelling rationale and purpose for the subject.
6. RE's place in the curriculum will be strengthened if its role and importance are communicated as widely, effectively and meaningfully as possible to all interested parties and persons.
7. RE in England compares favourably with equivalent curricula in high performing jurisdictions around the world³ and the Expert Panel has regarded it a privilege to reflect on some of the best collective wisdom about how children learn in RE and what they should know.
8. Any RE Curriculum should embody rigour, high standards and coherence. There are diverse interpretations of high standards and rigour in RE but one key element is the opportunity all children should have to acquire core knowledge and understanding particular to this curriculum area.
9. This requires a well-trained workforce of teachers with continuing professional development to support them and adequate time in which to teach the subject.
10. RE continues to be a statutory requirement for maintained schools and should remain a national benchmark of excellence for any school. Any school aspiring to be a good school should aspire to offer good RE.
11. The Expert Panel seeks to work in a spirit of generosity towards all those who teach and care about RE. Contributions to the RE Subject Review from many perspectives have been wholly welcome and gladly received. It has summarised and synthesised that expertise for the good of RE, based on a careful reading of documentation in relation to the four foci identified.

³ The following examples have been suggested: Hamburg in Germany, Religion (sic) Education in South Africa, Culture and Religion in Quebec.

Executive summary

Having considered a range of key documentation as well as submissions by a significant number of expert witnesses - a number of whom were met face-to-face - the RE Subject Review Expert Panel agreed that the following nine recommendations should be put before the REC Board for further consideration and action:

1. **that clear and cogent aims for RE, applicable across the range of school settings, are proposed, as well as ways of communicating them to different stakeholders;**
2. **that a clear analysis is produced of the place and role of core knowledge in RE (appropriate to pupils in particular age groups and stages), without compromising the central importance of developing, for example, understanding and skills. ;**
3. **that guidance on pedagogy and learning methods in RE are developed for teachers and curriculum-shapers, that promote high quality teaching and learning in RE while allowing for diversity;**
4. **that evaluative principles are developed and published that enable teachers to make sound professional judgements about what constitutes good professional practice, promoting high standards of learning in RE;**
5. **that strategies are explored through which the collective wisdom and resources of the RE community in England can become better known and more effectively used for the benefit of the subject and those children and young people using it. ;**
6. **that new instruments for describing achievement in RE are created that teachers can use working alongside the DfE's new descriptions of achievement in subjects like English, mathematics and science;**
7. **that maximum influence is sought with the relevant examination Awarding Bodies in order to promote:**
 - a) **coherence and progression between 4-14 programmes and public examinations used at 14-19;**
 - b) **the study of religions in religious studies⁴ qualifications 14-19, in appropriate relation to studies of, for example, ethics and philosophy;**
 - c) **discussion of the importance and viability of adding an RE / SMSC⁵ element to future vocational qualifications;**
8. **that the 2004 *Non-Statutory National Framework* for RE is reviewed and replaced with an updated and recast document;**

⁴ At public examination level, RE is referred to as religious studies (RS).

⁵ SMSC refers to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the provision of which remains central to the Ofsted framework for school inspection.

9. **that increasingly influential links are built and used with the DfE (and other relevant government agencies) in order to promote RE in all schools, in line with the REC subject review's work and recommendations (above), challenging and encouraging government to act to improve RE.**

Focus 1: The Aims of RE

Recommendation 1

That clear and cogent aims for RE, applicable across the range of school settings, are proposed, as well as ways of communicating them to different stakeholders.

Aims: Background

- 1.1 The nature and purpose of RE are not easy to define in straightforward, unequivocal ways. The reasons for this are many. People's ideas about the role of both 'religion' and 'education' in society have changed over time. Moreover, religion itself is a complex concept, fundamental to the lives of some citizens whilst highly problematic for others, so that the issue of whether religion has a part to play in a nation's public education system at all is contested.
- 1.2 A consistent feature in many of the submissions that the Expert Panel received was a strong perception that, despite the considerable amount written on the nature, purpose and aims of RE in all kinds of documentation, many people still don't 'get it'.⁶ That this was often linked to a sense of persistent frustration on the part of members of the RE community was demonstrated well in the document reporting a meeting of key members of the RE community that took place in late 2011: 'A lack of consensus on the rationale and purpose of RE, and a failure to find a simple accessible way of explaining RE to the public, media and government, struck many present as the most serious weakness'.⁷
- 1.3 A strong feeling persists, therefore, that both the purpose of RE as well as its aims need further articulation in ways and forms that people of all backgrounds can better understand and relate to. ('The issues are not in the aims themselves', said one expert witness, 'but in the communication of them'.) Is the RE community itself partly to blame for the confusion that exists? A recent major research project, *Does RE Work?* concluded bluntly that RE has tried to do too much⁸, re-inventing itself to include within its brief additional whole-school priorities – 'community cohesion', for example – and seeking to provide social, moral and values education so that the sense of a substantive core or essence of the subject has been eroded.
- 1.4 There is some concern about the title of the subject itself. At a national level, the term 'religious education' has been enshrined in legislation since 1988 (superseding the term 'religious instruction' used in the 1944 Education Act). Some secondary school departments in particular have been experimenting with alternative titles which they

⁶ See, for example: IPPR (2004) *What is Religious Education for? Getting the National Framework Right*.

⁷ St Gabriel's (2011) *RE Community Conference 2011*, 16.

⁸ See: www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/research/currentresearchprojects/doesreligiouseducationwork/

judge to be more appealing to the pupils they teach. These new titles (such as 'Beliefs and Values', 'Philosophy and Ethics' and 'Religion and Belief') reflect the increasing emphasis on the study of philosophy and ethics in secondary school RE in recent times.

- 1.5 The publication of the *NSNF* for RE in 2004 was a milestone in the history of English RE. In particular, its statement on 'the importance of RE'⁹ was an attempt to provide coherence for the subject at a national level while respecting the value of the subject's adaptability to local needs and requirements without inappropriate and unhelpful levels of prescription. There have been criticisms of the *NSNF*; some, for example, have suggested that, no matter how 'educational' such guidelines are, there is still the assumption that it is better to be religious than not. Others criticise the *NSNF* for encouraging a single view of RE and undermining the independence of local determination. Nonetheless, the *NSNF* was ground-breaking because it gained the broad agreement across the full range of professional RE associations and faith communities. About 150 local agreed syllabuses have followed the *NSNF* or the adapted versions of the framework – for secondary (2008) and primary (2010) – in varying ways.¹⁰
- 1.6 Although RE is a statutory requirement for all state schools, in schools with a religious character the understanding of the nature and purpose of RE might be promoted in slightly different ways from those in a community school. At worst – as one expert witness pointed out – this can lead to a kind of 'us and them' mentality with the underlying assumption that the only 'proper' RE is that which takes place in schools without a religious character. However, members of the expert panel agree that diversity of provision has considerable advantages; the purpose and aims of RE can be expressed in ways that respect the varied integrities of RE practice in different schools and different contexts.

⁹*NSNF*, 7.

¹⁰ The expert panel is aware of less than 10 local authorities and SACREs that have chosen not to use the *NSNF* to support the development of their locally agreed syllabus.

Aims: Main strengths

- 1.7 A tradition of inclusive and multi-faith RE has developed over time in England so that it is held in high esteem internationally. An expert witness with strong international links pointed out that, 'Specialists in religion and education from many countries appreciate the attempts in England, Wales and Scotland to have an *inclusive* form of religious education, which is 'open'. They also appreciate the fact that Britain ... has regarded religion as a legitimate subject for public discussion, including within education'.
- 1.8 The wide acceptance of the 2004 NSNF indicates some broad agreement about the nature of RE in schools. As one expert witness commented: 'Remarkably, it did provide an agreed reference point intended to be relevant not only for LA ASCs [Local Authority Agreed Syllabus Conferences] and SACREs [Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education] but also for those responsible for shaping RE in schools of a religious character'.
- 1.9 Teachers of RE have often made a strong contribution to the delivery of whole-school policies, including community cohesion and respect for all, critical thinking and citizenship. In its long subject report of 2010, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) identified the contribution of RE to the promotion of community cohesion as a strength of the subject in most of the schools that had been visited.¹¹
- 1.10 The existence of a widely based professional 'RE community' consisting of RE practitioners including teachers, advisers and consultants, professional bodies and interested faith community groups. Such groups and individuals represent a diverse group of people and organisations whose common bond is a commitment to supporting and promoting the educational aims of RE.
- 1.11 The legislative requirement that each local authority determines its own agreed syllabus for RE is considered a strength by some expert witnesses. At its best, this has meant that local groups of educational professionals, faith, and community representatives have thought through the purpose and aims of RE together and reached agreements about the best possible curriculum for children and young people in their particular areas. However, there is a need to take stock of localism and the increasing autonomy available to schools, and the impact of these policies on the local determination of RE.

¹¹ Ofsted (2010) Transforming religious education, 47-49.

Aims: Main Weaknesses

- 1.12 There is still widespread public uncertainty about the nature and purpose of RE. This is evident among a significant number of teachers¹² as well as the wider public. Some expert witnesses judged there to be too much diversity, complexity and variation in articulating the aims of RE. They went on to argue that this became more confusing still in aims statements that failed to distinguish between general aims of schooling, to which RE made a contribution, and particular aims specific to RE.
- 1.13 There is a lack of confidence and subject knowledge¹³ among a significant number of teachers and practitioners. In increasing numbers of primary schools Higher Level Teaching Assistants are teaching and leading RE rather than teachers: their capacity to operate as fully functioning teaching professionals in the subject is severely limited. Furthermore, a lack of continuing professional opportunities in RE for all teachers and practitioners limits the scope for them to further develop their practice.
- 1.14 There is evidence of agreement that the development of knowledge and understanding of religion and belief is a core element of RE, and a widespread concern that pupils' knowledge and understanding is increasingly insecure. This point was made very strongly in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) / Warwick University report on *Materials Used to Teach About World Religions* (ref) and commented on frequently by expert witnesses.
- 1.15 Though the NSNF was a milestone in the development of RE in England and Wales, it now needs to be updated and its usefulness extended in order to take account of the many changes that have taken place since 2004¹⁴, both within RE and the wider educational scene. Furthermore, its statement about the 'importance of RE' in particular is not yet sufficiently clear or direct to be fully fit for purpose.
- 1.16 The locally determined nature of the RE curriculum is regarded as a weakness by some commentators. For them, this is a matter of urgency; they believe that the future well-being of RE is dependent upon radical reform of the legislation governing RE. The need to review this issue is heightened by recent radical revisions of local authority control over education. With increasing numbers of schools moving to academy status, thus outside local authority control and the requirement to follow the local agreed syllabus for RE, the future viability of SACREs is under threat, particularly in smaller districts and areas.

¹² See, for instance: Ofsted (2010) *Transforming religious education*, 51, n147.

¹³ As one of the expert witnesses pointed out, this would include 'pedagogical knowledge' – that is, an understanding of why and how I am teaching RE so that pupils make progress.

¹⁴ Including subsequent key projects and documents from Government and its agencies which largely follow the settlement that the framework achieved.

Focus 2: The RE Curriculum

Recommendation 2

That clear accounts that re-evaluate the core knowledge and understanding in RE, appropriate to pupils in particular age groups and stages, are produced.

Recommendation 3

That guidance on pedagogy and learning methods in RE are developed for teachers and curriculum-shapers, that promote high quality teaching and learning in RE while allowing for diversity.

Curriculum: Background

- 2.1 As a result of progress made in recent decades, many parents and teachers now think of RE as a 'subject', alongside other subjects of the curriculum. However, questions remain about what *is* and what *ought to be* taught in the RE curriculum. On the one hand, there appears to be a relatively widespread expectation that the key focus of a subject called 'RE' will be on studying 'religion/s', particularly Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (usually named as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism). On the other, a further relatively well-established expectation is that the RE children receive in school will equip them for living in a plural society made up of people who, to a lesser or greater extent, follow one or other of the many patterns of religion and belief. Beyond this, agreement is less certain. Hence the various meanings of 'religious education' and its associated concepts have been the legitimate subject of often intense debate within the RE community and beyond. This was apparent in many of the key documents and submissions received from expert witnesses.
- 2.2 Sometimes, these debates reflect wider concerns about how to structure learning and teaching which affect the curriculum as a whole. For instance, the need for a school curriculum to be organised around traditional 'subjects' has been challenged at the level of principle¹⁵ as anachronistic, and in practice because it leads to needless repetition of certain topics which do not fit neatly into any one subject's schemes of work. Experienced primary school teachers who began their careers using a 'theme'- or 'topic'-based model to plan the curriculum, were then later encouraged to focus on 'subjects'. Later still, they were encouraged to use more 'creative' styles of planning which, in spite of official rhetoric to the contrary, seemed

¹⁵ See: White, J (2004), Wright, A (2004), and material related to the 2008 New Secondary Curriculum.

to some to be a reintroduction of topics and themes, albeit under another name and to be 'delivered' with more 'rigour'.

- 2.3 Within RE, the idea that the principal focus of teachers should be on the RE 'curriculum' has been challenged on a number of levels. Some have pointed to an undue emphasis on subject content resulting in 'curriculum overload'. A number of expert witnesses were of the view that there has been too much emphasis on 'curriculum' at the expense of 'pedagogy'. This begs the questions, of course, as to what both the words 'curriculum' and 'pedagogy' mean and their relationship, there being evidence that there is often a lack of clarity in the use of both of these terms.¹⁶
- 2.4 There is strong evidence that, particularly since the publication of the *NSNF* in 2004, there has been a greater uniformity across local agreed syllabuses for RE – in their adoption, for instance, of the notion that the dynamic of RE is bound up with the twin processes of 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion which provides a basis for describing pupils' 'levels of attainment' across their school careers. However, there is still substantial variation across local agreed syllabuses with a small number of notable examples which enshrine a very particular or original approach to RE: that, in essence, for example, RE aims at the development of individuals and of society across a range of 'dispositions'.¹⁷ In another example, RE is framed as an exploration of the question, 'what does it mean to be human?'¹⁸
- 2.5 Even when the assumption that RE is primarily concerned with the study of 'religion and belief' is broadly agreed, both the meaning of the concept of 'religion' and the most fruitful way of studying it are hotly contested. Within the English RE community, there has been an on-going debate between those academics who regard 'religions' as 'substantial social facts' and those who regard 'religion' as a flawed, outmoded concept. Those of the former view regard the concept of 'religion' as helpful in discussing such things as religious truth claims. Those of the latter view are wary of the term in that they think that it encourages people to think of 'religions' as fixed entities disregarding real life evidence that 'religions' are changing, internally diverse and have blurred boundaries.¹⁹
- 2.6 It follows from the identification of the principal religions to be included in RE (see 2.1 above), that there will be some dissatisfied by apparent exclusion. Members of religious communities that are globally significant, but have small numbers of members in the UK would like to see study of their faith traditions included in the curriculum. Atheists and agnostics – of whom those in the British Humanist Association (BHA) are the most visibly well-organised – draw attention to the fact that religious practice in the UK is a minority occupation, with many or most living as

¹⁶ One expert witness suggested that the title of Michael Grimmitt's well-known book, *Pedagogies of Religious Education* (Great Woking: McCrimmons, 2000), was really about 'methods' rather than 'pedagogies'.

¹⁷ See the 2007 Birmingham agreed syllabus: www.faithmakesadifference.co.uk

¹⁸ See the 2011 Lancashire agreed syllabus: www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/re/index.php?category_id=136

¹⁹ See: Wright (2008) & Jackson, R (2008).

practically non-religious, and urge the more focused study of, for example, non-religious ways of living and arguments for atheism in the classroom.

- 2.7 In terms of the historical and social phenomenon of 'religion', the once common Western idea that religion will gradually 'die out' has been increasingly challenged by research into what has been called 'the persistence of faith'.²⁰ In its place, religion is increasingly seen as a key global phenomenon which is expressed in many and varied ways. A number of key documents²¹ and expert witnesses expressed concern that the concept of religion as used in RE has not kept pace with such developments.
- 2.8 In addition to the challenges to any simple notion of a straightforward RE 'curriculum' already highlighted, contemporary changes (or emerging changes) in the national educational field need to be taken into account: the insistence of the DfE 2010-2012 that schools should have greater freedom to innovate and to devise their own curricula at school and community level, for instance. Expert witnesses commented that not only may a subject such as RE be left to wither in some schools, but also, the very idea of organising the curriculum into subjects will be set aside by others. So RE in the future will have to rely less on being a mandatory subject for all pupils by legislation, and much more on the *intrinsic worth of the learning opportunities it offers*. For example, academies will need to be convinced of the merit of the locally agreed syllabus if they are to choose to use it. The RE subject review should take these radical insights seriously.

²⁰ See: Sachs, J (1990) *The Persistence of Faith* (London: Continuum).

²¹ See, for instance: Ofsted (2007) *Making Sense of Religion*, 7.

Curriculum: Main strengths

- 2.9 The 2004 *NSNF* provides an outline of the RE curriculum in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills to which most RE professionals could consent and from which almost all local agreed syllabus conferences have drawn in devising their own agreed syllabuses. Really weak agreed syllabuses appear less common, post-*NSNF*, than they were before.
- 2.10 Though the continuing usefulness of the terms ‘learning about’ and ‘learning from’ religions has been challenged²², they have nevertheless become embedded in the thinking of many primary and secondary teachers who, as a result, understand that RE consists of more than just ‘content’. This recognition of the need for balance is particularly significant in the context of the current national emphasis on the need for the identification of ‘bodies of core knowledge’ within subjects.
- 2.11 Evidence suggests that, since Ofsted began inspecting RE in 1994, more and better RE is being taught in more primary schools. Provision remains patchy, but inspection reports suggest a decline in the once common total neglect of the subject in many schools, and this improvement may have been helped by the five-yearly cycle of agreed syllabus review.
- 2.12 One way the strength of the RE teaching force has been developed and shown is through the 2008-2010 RE contribution to the New Secondary Curriculum through which 1016 secondary schools, involving over 1500 teachers, received professional development from 25 regional RE subject advisers.

²² See, for example: Ofsted (2007), 38

Curriculum: Main Weaknesses

- 2.13 The lack of curriculum time made available to RE in many schools combined with the use of ‘creative curriculum planning’. In some primary schools, for instance, teaching assistants²³ (or Higher Level Teaching Assistants) have been used to teach RE, sometimes in PPA time²⁴, lowering the status and the probable impact of RE in the school (REC 2007, p. ?). Many teachers have identified a lack of understanding of, and support for, RE among senior school leaders and policy-makers as a significant cause of weakness in RE provision.
- 2.14 Within the secondary phase, the recent decision of the DfE not to include RE as one of the humanities subjects of the ‘English Baccalaureate’ (‘EBacc’) may have compromised the future of RE in secondary schooling. A series of National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) surveys of English secondary school RE departments²⁵ revealed widespread unsettlement, reporting a general feeling that RE had been unfairly ‘downgraded’ within the school curriculum as a result. The October 2012 Ipsos Mori report on *The Effects of the English Baccalaureate* reported that, ‘Almost all case study schools questioned the exclusion of RE as an EBacc subject’.²⁶
- 2.15 The limited opportunities for teachers and other practitioners to increase their professional knowledge, understanding and expertise through RE-specific initial and continuing professional development. Many local authorities and SACREs no longer make any provision for continuing professional development in RE, due to reduced resources and/or a lack of subject-based advisory support.
- 2.16 The frequent misrepresentation of religion in both teaching and the literature produced to support RE in schools.²⁷ There is often concern with ‘coverage of religions’, noted one expert witness, ‘rather than a commitment to understanding and impact’. Another pointed to the tendency to ‘sanitise’ religions leading to an avoidance of diversity and controversy.

²³ REC (2007) Religious Education Teaching and Training in England: current provision and future improvement, p35, identified a need for training for teaching assistants in RE.

²⁴ The Workload Agreement guarantees teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales ten per cent of their timetabled teaching to be set aside as preparation, planning and assessment (PPA) time during the school day.

²⁵ See NATRE website: www.natre.org.uk.

²⁶ DfE (September 2012) *The effects of the English Baccalaureate*, 19.

²⁷ See, in particular: DCSF/Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (2010) *Materials used to Teach about World Religions in Schools in England*.

Focus 3: Exemplification of good RE

Recommendation 4

That evaluative principles are developed and published that enable teachers to make sound professional judgements about what constitutes good professional practice, promoting high standards of learning in RE.

Recommendation 5

That strategies are explored through which the collective efforts and wisdom of the individuals and groups which make up the RE community can be brought together and made known effectively for the benefit of the subject and the young people studying it.

Exemplification: Background

- 3.1 Good quality RE grows when best practice is identified, widely shared and understood. The term 'exemplification of good practice' is far-reaching, however, and the panel therefore took a broad view of what this category required it to address. With more time, the panel would have attempted to define the field more tightly.
- 3.2 Primary teachers have often looked to local SACREs and agreed syllabuses as well as commercially-published resources for their classroom approaches; notions of good practice have often been drawn from practice in other subjects. At the same time, poor subject knowledge and understanding and low confidence have often undermined the quality of primary RE practice.
- 3.3 Secondary teachers, in those schools in which teachers with other specialisms are in a majority, can be more influenced than they realise by the quest for parity with history and geography at both Key Stages 3 (11-14) and 4 (14-16). Advantages and disadvantages stem from these comparisons. Secondary schools have generally been less concerned than primary schools to implement their local agreed syllabus. In the case of new-style academies, the link with local arrangements for RE (including resources) is currently loosely defined.
- 3.4 In the last eight years, guidance produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)²⁸ has been widely used, though this has improved good practice less than would have been wished. The marginal position of RE within the curriculum and small amounts of curriculum time account for much of the weakness of teaching and learning which HMI observe in RE.

²⁸ Such as the New Secondary Curriculum Initiative and work on Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) in Foundation Subjects to define and exemplify levels.

- 3.5 There are many national projects which provide high-quality exemplification, some originating in research, some funded and supported by RE's major donors, funders and agencies. Various REC member bodies have also produced exemplification material, such as the Islamic Council of Britain's package for learning about Islam, the BHA's 'Humanism for Schools' website, and the Jewish Way of Life exhibition. In general, these are less well known than they deserve and probably lack widespread impact, even where they would meet needs widely.
- 3.6 An increasing amount of material is available digitally via the internet and, in the context of increased globalisation, from a wide range of international sources. However, such material is unregulated and raises issues – particularly for those lacking subject knowledge or confidence – about resource selection, balance and quality. Furthermore, best practice would suggest that such material has to be tailored to the particular situation in which it is going to be applied; an exercise that requires professional judgement, flair and expertise.
- 3.7 RE has relied on agencies of government for exemplification of good practice. Key examples include HMI, QCDA, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa). Local agencies – SACREs being the key example – have also often made a contribution to exemplification. Following the closure of some of these agencies²⁹ and in view of the current austerities which affect many (though not all) SACREs, the RE community must look to other sources for the support of exemplification of good practice.
- 3.8 One particularly significant factor has been the reduction in the number and availability of 'experts' (including specialist RE advisers, advisory teachers and advanced skills teachers³⁰) to support teachers and schools. Where they continue to exist, local subject-specific groups of teachers have been a lifeline for many with meetings often focused on sharing examples of good practice. Some faith communities, such as Roman Catholic and Anglican dioceses, have continued to offer support to their own networks, sometimes beyond. However, many teachers of RE do report feeling isolated.
- 3.9 Some 'pull factors' have been having a good impact, but usually only on schools numbered in their hundreds at best.³¹ These include quality marks and awards (such as the RE Quality Mark³² and the Hockerill/NATRE prize for Innovation in RE Teaching³³); competitions (such as those associated with 'Spirited Arts'³⁴); and

²⁹ BECTa, for example, was closed down on 31 March 2011.

³⁰ See recent NASACRE Survey of Local Authority Support for SACREs, www.nasacre.org.uk.

³¹ The evaluation report on the RESilience Project, for example, noted that, 'The number of English schools that chose to participate was disappointing. This was due in part to external factors but the final number fell far short of the revised aspirational target of 400'. *An Evaluation of Resilience/At Gyfnerthu 2009-2011*, 25.

³² A recently introduced award aimed at 'recognising outstanding learning in religious education'. See: www.regm.org

³³ Now in its third year. See: www.hockerillfoundation.org.uk/Prize.aspx

projects and initiatives (such as the Celebrating RE Month held in March 2011³⁵ and developing students as ‘ambassadors of faith and belief’³⁶). These initiatives, which require opting into, often feature schools who already exhibit good practice in RE.

- 3.10 Many schools and teachers, lacking trust in their own ability to be curriculum innovators and evaluators, turn to commercially published schemes of planning and resources. While some of these provide professional guidance ‘on tap’, others are insufficiently coherent to please faith community groups and insufficiently creative to please pupils.
- 3.11 Published research projects into RE-specific learning methods and pedagogy have been influential. These methods, based on enquiry, ethnography, interpretation, religious literacy, experiential approaches, conceptual development and the quest for human meaning, are all used in some classrooms; at best, each is effective largely in relation to its own version of RE’s aims. Many teachers make eclectic use of these learning methods, often driven by the desire to make RE lively or relevant. The quest for ‘relevance’ in RE is sometimes pursued superficially, however: featuring a story of a Muslim boxer or a Christian pop star may in itself do little, if anything, to improve the quality of learning.

³⁴Including ‘Art in Heaven’, an annual art competition which, since 2004, has involved 250,000 pupils. See: www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts/

³⁵ See: www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/blogcategory/51/81/

³⁶ See, for example: <http://www.save-glasbury.org/aims.php>

Exemplification: Main strengths

- 3.12 There has never been a 'golden age' for RE, and it is a reasonable conjecture that there is a much stronger base of practice at a sound standard than ever before in both primary and secondary school RE. In a significant number of schools – primary, secondary and special – RE is identified by HMI as a subject which makes an important contribution to whole school priorities.
- 3.13 The capacity - despite a sense of being marginalised by central government decisions and a persistent belief that the subject is under-funded relative to other subjects - for RE-related groups, locally and nationally, to organise innovative and exciting projects and initiatives which both promote and bring together a wide range of exemplary practice and material.
- 3.14 The number and range of professional associations and other organisations which have exemplified their vision of RE in accessible ways through resources from which schools and teachers can benefit. While sometimes these are for sale, others are heavily subsidised and some are freely available.
- 3.15 Though there is widespread concern about the diminishing amount of initial and continuing professional development opportunities available to teachers, where good quality subject-specific training does exist it is valued highly and can have an impact. A significant number (though not enough) of teachers benefit annually from this sort of provision from SACREs, professional associations and commercial providers.
- 3.16 Best practice in RE is simultaneously alert both to pupils' own interests and questions and to the academic disciplines of theology and religious studies (in some cases, biblical studies or philosophy). Linking these two poles through learning about spirituality, ethics and religion and belief enables learners in RE to get a strong sense of how the subject encourages them to think deeply about their own questions of identity, meaning and value and of what it means to be human.

Exemplification: Main Weaknesses

- 3.17 Even after 10-15 years of solid progress, there are still too many schools which do not take RE seriously; it may still be treated in tokenistic ways by school leaders who are unaware of (or unreceptive to) the potential of the subject. Too many schools continue to deliver RE from a sense of legal duty rather than an appreciation of its value. Such schools have never seen best practice exemplified in ways that might inspire them to seek to replicate it in their own setting.
- 3.18 Though researchers have contributed to the exemplification of good teaching and learning in RE, primary and secondary teachers have not always known about this and/or have had difficulty persuading others of its value. The circle of well-informed and practically skilled users of RE learning methods accruing from research is small.
- 3.19 Clear criteria by which to judge what makes RE practice or resources 'good' or 'outstanding' are not readily available either to many teachers of RE or other stakeholders.
- 3.20 The time allocated to beginning primary teachers during initial teacher education is too limited – in many cases this is less than five hours tuition or even self-study to prepare primary graduates for teaching RE. The move to locate initial teacher education in schools (in which there can be no guarantee that beginning teachers will see good practice in RE exemplified) is worrying.
- 3.21 Despite good take-up of those CPD opportunities which are available, overall the amount of subject-specialist professional development available to subject leaders and specialist RE teachers is inadequate.

Focus 4: Assessment (including Qualifications)³⁷

Recommendation 6

That new instruments for describing achievement in RE are created that teachers can use working alongside the DfE's new descriptions of achievement in subjects like English, mathematics and science.

Recommendation 7

that maximum influence is sought with the relevant examination Awarding Bodies in order to promote:

- a) coherence and progression between 4-14 programmes and public examinations used at 14-19;**
- b) the study of religions in religious studies qualifications 14-19, in appropriate relation to studies of, for example, ethics and philosophy;**
- c) discussion of the importance and viability of adding an RE / SMSC element to future vocational qualifications;**

Assessment: Background

4.1 There has been substantial work on assessment in RE in recent years, to which many expert witnesses have drawn attention. The most recent reference point is the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) assessment working group. The work of the HMI and of QCDA's Assessing Pupil Progress in RE work is also pertinent. Though there is clearly 'unfinished business' in the area of assessment and RE, there is evidence that, with skilful and knowledgeable handling, the use of levels can promote progress in RE but that, generally, too few teachers and schools have the confidence or expertise to use assessment techniques well. From the pool of schools that has been visited in recent years, HMI judges assessment in RE overall to be relatively weak in relation to other subjects³⁸. There is also divided opinion over the usefulness of the 'learning about' and 'learning from' dichotomy as a means of carrying out assessment. At best, it has been suggested, it gives people a good sense of the subtle nature of RE and 'learning from religion'

³⁷ The title of the fourth focus as given to the Expert Panel was 'qualifications and assessment of RE'. Following discussion, however, panel members decided that it was helpful to reword this as 'assessment (including qualifications)' and to interpret 'qualifications' as applying predominantly to the GCSE and GCE public examinations in religious studies (RS) available to pupils at school.

³⁸ See the two long Ofsted reports (2007, 2010) on RE in schools visited.

provides a strong starting point for higher order thinking in RE, including skills of critical and personal evaluation. At worst, however, it leads to a narrow interpretation of each element so that “learning about’ becomes synonymous with ‘facts’ and ‘learning from’ with ‘feelings’. Many expert witnesses stated that some teachers are confused about what the terms actually mean³⁹.

- 4.2 A review of qualifications in RE/RS⁴⁰ also presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, there has been a spectacular increase in the number of students taking RE/RS public examinations in recent years⁴¹, both at GCSE and GCE levels, with solid rates of achievement being recorded. Evidence suggests that the worth of RE/RS examinations has risen in the esteem of students, many of them seeing the kinds of issues-based RE/RS examinations that have developed as being helpful for living in the modern, plural world. The increased popularity of RE/RS examinations has also meant that they have become a significant commercial factor for the examination Awarding Bodies: RE/RS has, in short, attained a strong market position. On the other hand, there are currently significant and fast-moving changes taking place in the national examination scene, some expert witnesses voicing concerns that there is a danger the RE community will not be able to respond quickly enough so as to influence decisions that will impact on the future of RE/RS as an examination subject.
- 4.3 There is also evidence, however, that the rapid growth in the number of candidates for RE/RS public examinations has come at a cost. For example, concerns have been expressed by some expert witnesses that: the GCSE short courses lack rigour and challenge; the full GCSE courses are too content-based so that they encourage ‘teaching to the exam’; and that the popularity with students of A level philosophy and ethics-type RE/RS courses has led to a belief that ‘anything goes’ (in terms of argument) and that ‘philosophy’ and ‘philosophy of religion’ (which usually means Western philosophy) have become conflated so that both become distorted. There is also a much-repeated concern that, all through the school years – but particularly in Key Stages 4 and 5 when examinations predominate - pupils exhibit a diminishing understanding of the nature of religion in general as well as of the basic theological positions of particular religious traditions and the questions that they raise. In the words of one expert witness: ‘The focus on so-called ‘philosophy and ethics’ has reduced religions at Key Stage 4 to providers of proof texts, learnt by heart, to illustrate religious attitudes to “issues”’.
- 4.4 If the above factors are, to a lesser or greater extent, within the control of RE/RS and examination professionals, the same cannot be said for changes that emanate from decisions made at government level and which can leave educational professionals feeling helpless, frustrated and often angry. Such has been the case with the

³⁹ See, for example: Teece, G (2010).

⁴⁰ The term RE/RS has been used in this section as a reminder that, at public examination level, RE is termed ‘religious studies’ (RS).

⁴¹ Over 450,000 students have been certificated at GCSE each year in the last six years. In the last 15 years, over 25,000 students have sat the AS level in Religious Studies.

decision not to include RE/RS as one of the humanities subjects which combine with others to form the measure of school examination performance termed the 'EBacc'. Recent surveys⁴² have demonstrated that this one move has done much to undermine the status and staffing of RE in a significant number of English secondary schools. It is, many have claimed, a cruel example of damaging RE 'by default'; that is, educational decisions not specifically related to RE nevertheless having a negative impact on RE, thereby undermining its position in schools. Some expert witnesses also expressed concern at RS not being listed as a 'facilitating subject' by the Russell Group of universities, saying that this has fuelled negative perceptions of RE amongst some pupils and members of the wider public.

- 4.5 The pattern of recent years through which students have gained teaching qualifications through a course in initial teacher education is also currently undergoing fundamental change with the number of post-graduate students being accepted for RE-related courses being reduced (resulting in some long-established university post-graduate certificate of education [PGCE] RE courses folding) and a clear national government-led preference for initial teacher education taking place 'on site' in schools themselves. Those currently involved in initial teacher education work, the quality of whose work is regularly monitored, have voiced concerns about there being no apparent safeguards to ensure that the school RE that beginning teachers will experience will be of an appropriately high standard. Taking a wider perspective, questions are continually asked about how school and university courses prepare future teachers to engage professionally in informed and engaging RE teaching, whether at primary or secondary level.

⁴² Particularly the four surveys, each of which attracted a significantly high number of responses from English secondary schools, which were conducted by NATRE 2010-2012.

Assessment: Main strengths

- 4.6 The quality and wide use of the RE eight-level scale from the Framework is not without problems, but is perceived to be a strength of the subject by many teachers and syllabus-makers. By offering a common platform with subjects such as history and geography, the eight-level scale has led to greater coherence and rigour in the ways that teachers describe achievement and progression in RE for 5-14s.⁴³ It has also been suggested that self-assessment and peer-assessment has become more popular in RE, giving pupils greater agency and ownership.
- 4.7 It is a strength that RE has for over a decade shared parity of language and structures for describing assessment with, for example, history, geography and art. This has had a benefit for the strength of the subject's assessment work and for the status of RE in the eyes of teachers, parents and pupils.
- 4.8 The spectacular increase in recent years in the number of students taking examination courses at both GCSE and GCE levels, the short course GCSE being particularly strategic in helping schools to fulfil the legislative requirement for all students to take RE (unless withdrawn by parents or carers) at Key Stage 4.
- 4.9 The raised status of RE amongst 14-18 pupils, particularly with the popularity of issues-based/philosophy and ethics-type GCSE and GCE courses.

⁴³ One example of the impact of the scale is that over 2,600 teachers have benefitted from continuing professional development courses on assessing RE organised by RE Today.

Assessment: Main Weaknesses

- 4.10 The general standard of assessment in RE is relatively weak in relation to other subjects. Contributory factors include including lack of teacher confidence, decreasing opportunities for initial and continuing professional development, lack of curriculum time, the unrealistic amount of assessment required of some teachers, and lack of clarity about the aims of RE, and variant and muddled understanding of how to use 'learning about' and 'learning from'.
- 4.11 The debilitating impact of RE not being included as one of the humanities subjects of the EBacc, evidence suggesting that it is making some schools question the value of running RS short/full GCSE courses or even to eliminate such courses entirely. In such schools, the negative impact on the perception of RE's value and on the morale of teachers can be marked.
- 4.12 There is widespread concern that the popularity of philosophy and ethics examination courses post-14, at the expense of a study of world religions or religious texts, has led to a shallower understanding of the nature of religion/s. This, in turn, will impact on the knowledge and understanding of future entrants into the teaching profession.
- 4.13 Since 1997, the GCSE short course in religious studies has been the most popular of all short courses, meeting a real need to certificate the core learning in legislatively required RE. If it were to continue, reform is needed because of a perceived lack of rigour⁴⁴ (a perception that is also widely applied to the full GCSE course), There is a need to clarify the relationship of the short course with other qualifications (such as, presently, the full RS GCSE course, or any successor qualification). But, if the short course in RS were to be abolished, then another way of accrediting the learning entitlement of the RE required by legislation will be needed. The accreditation of learning at 16 or in Key Stage 4 (14-16) is currently a weakness in RE provision.

⁴⁴ See, for instance: Ofsted (2010), 5.

Two Further Recommendations

Recommendation 8

That the 2004 *Non-Statutory National Framework* for RE is reviewed and replaced with an updated and recast document.

Recommendation 9

That increasingly influential links are built and used with the DfE in order to promote RE in all schools, in line with the REC subject review's work and recommendations (above), challenging and encouraging government to act to improve RE.

Note

Each of recommendations 1 to 7 is linked to one of the four foci of this report (aims, curriculum, exemplification of good practice, and assessment including qualifications). This is not the case with the final two recommendations which are more overarching in nature.

Recommendation 8 will draw from the outcomes of the work envisaged in the preceding recommendations. Recommendation 9 provides the backdrop to the RE Review as a whole and echoes one of the key aims of the REC.

A Final Word

There are many traditional adages that have, at their core, the truism that nothing that is really worthwhile is easy. Members of the expert panel have certainly discovered this anew over the three months of its work.

It was reassuring to know, however, that their report would be a beginning rather than an end: a starting point for further reflection and discussion which would lead to a refinement of both its findings and recommendations; a platform on which to base further action.

I wish to pay tribute both to my colleagues on the Expert Panel for the expertise, time and energy which they have brought to this task but also to the many other members of the RE community who have also contributed so willingly to the process culminating in this report and its later refinements.

Bill Gent

Chair of RE Expert Panel

November 2012

Annex 1: Expert Witnesses Consulted

Written submissions were received from the following:

Jo Backus
Dr Robert Bowie
Jane Brooke
Alan Brown
Roger Butler
Mike Castelli
Professor Trevor Cooling
Andrew Copson
Dr Nigel Fancourt
Professor Brian Gates
Professor Michael Hand
Patricia Hannan
Dr Mary Hayward
Daniel Hugill
Dilwyn Hunt
Professor Bob Jackson
John Keast OBE
Anne Krisman
Juliet Lyal
Carrie Mercier
Dr Joyce Miller
Dr Bill Moore
Mary Myatt
Dr Kevin O'Grady
Dr John Rudge
Joy Schmack
Dr Anna Strhan
Sandra Teacher
Dr Geoff Teece
Peter Ward
Michael Wilcockson
Dr Barbara Wintersgill

The following provided written submissions and met with Expert Panel members:

Professor Vivienne Baumfield
Alan Brine HMI
Dr Mark Chater
Rev Sior Coleman
Julia Conway-Diamond
Professor Denise Cush
Dr Marius Felderhof
Dave Francis
Guy Hordern
Ed Pawson
Deborah Weston
Professor John White

Annex 2: Key Documents Consulted

As the first part of their work, members of the Expert Panel agreed to read and take account of the following key documents. Additional documents were referred to by individual panel members.

DfE-related

National Curriculum Expert Panel Report (Dec 2011)

Text of address of Minister for Schools at REC AGM (May 2012)

Government response to Expert Panel Report (June 2012)

On-going communications between DfE, Expert Panel Members & RE organisations

REC-related

Scoping Exercise Report (Feb 2012)

RE-focused (excluding journal/magazine articles)

Baumfield, V (2011) 'Making RE Work: a thoughtful future for the subject' (Burn Hall Lecture)

Castelli, M (2012), 'What makes a good preparation to teach RE, and how important is subject knowledge?' (Discussion plan, March 2012 ITER summit)

Chater, M 'What's Worth Fighting For?' (RE online/Unlocking RE website, March 2011)

Cush D (2003) Notes on 'Religiate school leavers aged 16+'

Cush, D & Robinson, C (2012) *Developments in Religious Studies: Towards a Dialogue with Religious Education* (Talk at AULRE Conference, July 2012)

QCA/DES (2004) *Religious education: The non-statutory national framework*

DCSF (2010) *Religious Education in English Schools: non-statutory guidance*

DCSF/Warwick University (2010) Conclusions and recommendations to *Materials Used to Teach About World Religions in Schools in England*

Felderhof, M C & Whitehouse, S, 'The 2007 Birmingham Agreed Syllabus: Educating pupils and the community' in Grimmitt, M (2010) *Religious Education and Social and Community Cohesion* (Great Wakering: McCrimmons) + DVD to support 2007 agreed syllabus.

IPPR Report: *What is Religious Education For? Getting the National Framework Right* (2004)

ITE Summit (2012) *How will we prepare the next generation of RE teachers?*

Jackson, R (2011) *Learning about Religions & Non-religious Worldviews: European Research Findings & ongoing Policy Development in the Council of Europe* (ISREV Conference paper)

Jackson, R (2009/12) *Studying Religions: The Interpretive Approach in Brief* (European Wergeland Centre, Oslo)

Keast, J (2007) 'Does RE Matter?' (RE online/Unlocking RE website)

Mayled, J (2010) 'Religious Studies Examinations' (RE online/Unlocking RE website)

NATRE (April 2011) *Teacher Survey re impact of EBacc*

NATRE (June 2011) *Second Teacher Survey*

Ofsted (1997) *Making Sense of Religion*

Ofsted (2010) *Transforming Religious Education*

QCA (2004) *Non-Statutory National Framework for RE*

REC (2007) *RE Teaching & Training in England: current provision & future improvement*

RE Today Services (2012) Report on Westhill Endowment Trust Seminar Series, 2011-12

RE Today Services (date) powerpoint sequence on 'RE: Why do we have to do this?'

Rudge, J (2012) 'What is – and should be – happening to GCSE & A level RS as routes to University?' (Talk plan, March 2012 ITE summit)

St Gabriel's (2011) Proceedings of RE Community Conference, Wokefield Park, Reading, October 2011

Strachan, A (2011) 'The Future of RE: Looking backwards to look forwards' (RE online/Unlocking RE website)

Teece, G (2012) *Learning about religion & Learning from religion* + appendix (Paper prepared for the department of Education of the Swiss Canton of Zurich)

RE-focused (journal/magazine articles)

Blaylock, L (2009) "'Learning from Religion": a very short history', *REsource*, 31:2, 10-13

Brown, (2012), review of *Debates in Religious Education*, *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 32:3, 368-370

Chater, M (2011) 'The Gove who kicked the hornets' nest', *REsource*, 33:3, 24-25

Habermas, J (2006) 'Religion in the Public Sphere', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 14:1, 1-25

Jackson, R (2008) 'Contextual religious education & the interpretive approach', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 30:1, 13-24

Keast, J (2011) 'Political change & the future for RE: looking into the glass darkly', *REsource* 33:2, 4-5

Lundie, D (2010) 'Does RE Work?', *REToday* 28:1, 38-39

Teece, G (2009) 'Religion as Human Transformation', *REsource*, 31:3, 4-7

Teece, G (2010) 'Is it learning about and from religions, religions or religious education? And is it any wonder some teachers don't get it?', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 32:2, 93-103

White, J (2004) 'Should religious education be a compulsory school subject?', *British Journal of Religious Education* 26:2, 151-164

Wright, A (2004) 'The justification of compulsory religious education: a response to Professor White', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 26:2, 165-174

Wright, A (2008) 'Contextual religious education & the actuality of religions', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 30:1, 3-12

Annex 3: Pen Portraits of RE Expert Panel Members

Lat Blaylock

Mr Lat Blaylock is the Editor of *RE Today* magazine, and a national RE adviser in the UK. He trains about 1500 primary teachers of RE and about 1500 secondary RE teachers every year through his professional development courses on topics including RE for infants, spiritual development 4-19, assessing primary RE and GCSE learning. He has built up a national reputation for practicality and inspiration. Before joining the RE Today advisory team, he was a classroom teacher of RE for 11 years in a large comprehensive school in multi-faith Leicester. As Head of Humanities, he developed interests in history, geography, social science and curriculum partnerships. His MA from the University of Warwick studied the implementation of local agreed syllabuses.

He has published numerous RE resources, including making four series of RE broadcasts for the BBC. 'Representing Religions' explores the teaching of six religions through multi-authored chapters by teachers who are also members of six different faiths. He has written four packages of visual learning materials, called 'Picturing Jesus' which use the global art of the contemporary Christian communities for RE. He has been a consultant on RE to the BBC, the Bible Society, the Inter Faith Network, Christian Aid, many local authorities and some Academy networks.

His long-term work on assessing RE led to his appointment as a partner in the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agencies 'Assessing Pupil Progress' project, from which new RE assessment materials for RE were published by Michael Gove's Department in 2010. He is the initiator of 'Spirited Arts', a National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) strategy for creativity in RE in the UK, which is also used across Europe and in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Bill Gent

Dr Bill Gent began his 15-year career as a schoolteacher in Birmingham, specialising in religious education. Early on developing an interest in the nature and problematic role of collective worship in schools, he wrote and spoke widely on this, building up a national reputation as an engaging and entertaining communicator. Following teaching, he moved on to advisory and inspection work where he worked with primary, secondary and special schools across the London Borough of Redbridge and beyond. He was involved in the writing and revising of a number of agreed syllabuses and, with his wife, wrote the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 RE books in the popular Scholastic Curriculum Bank series. He also developed a particular interest and expertise in working with educational and faith groups in producing clear, agreed and authoritative texts.

His interest in the composition and educational life of religious communities led him to take an educational doctorate with the University of Warwick. His thesis explored the nature of supplementary schooling within the Muslim community, with a particular focus on Qur'ānic memorisation and recitation. He has published a number of articles and book chapters in this field and is currently working with a group of European scholars looking at how Muslim pupils move between different educational traditions in a range of settings. He is an Associate Fellow of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit based at the University of Warwick.

From 2006, he has edited *REsource*, the journal of the National Association of Teachers of RE for the quality of which work he was awarded the prestigious Shap Award in 2012.

Julian Stern

Professor Julian Stern was educated at the Royal Academy of Music, London Institute of Education, and the universities of Oxford and Leicester. He is currently Professor of Education and Religion, and Dean of Education and Theology, at York St John University. He taught in UK schools for 14 years, and has worked in universities for 20 years (initially alongside school work), at the London Institute of Education, the Open University, Brunel University (as Deputy Director of the BFSS National RE Centre), the University of Hull (as Reader and Dean of the Institute for Learning), and now York St John University.

Julian has written eleven books, including *Teaching Religious Education* (2006), *Schools and Religions: Imagining the Real* (2007) and *The Spirit of the School* (2009), alongside general books for teachers and over 30 articles for journals as diverse as the *British Journal of Religious Education*, *Support for Learning*, the *Journal of Advanced Clinical Nursing*, and the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*. He has worked in initial and in-service teacher education for both primary and secondary teachers, and has been involved in creating digital training materials and television programmes. He has been a consultant and researcher for primary, special and secondary schools, and universities across the UK and in Germany, Sweden, Hong Kong, Australia, and the USA. He is currently researching religious education, spirituality, dialogue, community, learning, loneliness, and the influence of research.

Professor Stern is General Secretary of ISREV, the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (the major international research body in religious education with 243 senior researchers across 36 countries) and is on the editorial boards of the *British Journal of Religious Education*, the *Religious Education Journal of Australia*, and the *Journal of Spirituality Studies*.

Karen Walshe

Dr Karen Walshe is Senior Lecturer in Religious Education at the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter, where she is Subject Leader for Secondary Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) RE and Programme Director for the Secondary PGCE Programme. Having taught and led RE in secondary schools in Devon and Cornwall for ten years, she moved to the University of Exeter in 1989 to work as research assistant on the Biblos, Parables, and Teaching about Jesus research projects. She was awarded her PhD in 2009 for her research into young people's perceptions of Jesus in RE.

Karen has published a wide range of RE resources as well as professional and academic papers in the field of RE. She is currently working on a collaborative research project, funded by the Farmington Institute in Oxford, examining teachers' and trainee teachers' understanding of 'understanding' in RE.

Karen is Deputy General Secretary of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV) and a member of the Devon Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE). She also has extensive experience as an external examiner for secondary PGCE RE and Graduate Training Programme course.

Religious Education

Draft Programmes of Study for Key Stages 1-3

**Launch date 7 June 2013
Respond by 5 July 2013**

**Ref: Religious Education Council
of England and Wales**

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Religious Education

Purpose of Study

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God or ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and non-religious worldviews. It should enable pupils to develop their own views, values and identity. It should develop an aptitude for dialogue in pupils and the capacity to participate positively as members of a diverse society and a globalising world. Pupils should learn how to study religions and non-religious worldviews systematically and to an increasing level of complexity and depth. They make progress by reflecting with increasing sophistication on the impact of religions and non-religious worldviews on contemporary life; and develop skills of interpretation and the capacity to evaluate evidence through this process. They learn to articulate clear and coherent accounts of their personal beliefs, opinions, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to have different views, values and ways of life.

Aims

The curriculum for religious education aims to ensure that pupils:

- know and understand a range of religions and non-religious worldviews, so that they can:
 - o describe, explain and analyse religious and non-religious beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between individuals and communities;
 - o identify and investigate the questions posed and the responses offered by the world's religions and non-religious worldviews;
 - o appraise the nature and significance of religion and non-religious worldviews;
 - o appreciate the impact of faith, beliefs and values on individuals and communities.
- know and understand a range of responses to questions of meaning, purpose and truth
- develop the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and non-religious worldviews, so that they can:
 - o describe them, interpret text, consider, analyse, and appraise evidence critically;
 - o explain some of the key concepts that underpin them; and
 - o articulate beliefs and values clearly in order to explain the reasons why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

School curriculum

RE is a statutory subject on the school curriculum of maintained schools. Academies and Free Schools are normally required to make provision for the teaching of RE through the terms of their funding. RE promotes pupils' spiritual, cultural, social and moral development in distinctive ways. RE lessons should offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection. Teaching in RE should engage pupils in discussion, dialogue and debate which enables them to make their reasoning clear and which supports their cognitive and linguistic development. Teaching in RE lessons should also allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local or global.

Subject content

Early Years Foundation Stage

Pupils should encounter religions and non-religious world views through special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They should listen to and talk about stories, may be introduced to subject specific words and use their senses to explore beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation of and wonder at the world in which they live.

From the EYFS Profile 2013:

*Through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity, pupils should have the opportunity to:

- listen to stories from religions and non-religious sources and respond with relevant comments, questions or actions (elg: communication and language)
- answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences in response to religious and non-religious stories or events (elg: communication and language)
- talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable (elg: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development)
- show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships (elg: personal, social and emotional development)
- recognise, create and describe some religious and non-religious patterns (elg: mathematics)
- know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among religious and non-religious families, communities and traditions (elg: understanding the world)
- explore, observe and find out about religious and non-religious places and objects (elg: understanding the world)

- represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through role play and stories (elg: expressive arts and design)

*based on the prime and specific areas of the early learning goals

Key Stage 1

Pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding about Christianity and at least one other religion or non-religious worldview, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about.

More specifically in relation to the programme of study, pupils should be taught to:

- name and recount some religious and moral stories, sacred writings and sources, exploring and discussing them with reference to the tradition they came from
- name and describe religious and non-religious beliefs and practices, including celebrations, worship, rituals and ways of life, in order to investigate the meaning and purpose behind them
- understand that links can be made when beliefs and practices, symbols, stories and actions are compared within and between religions and non-religious worldviews
- understand that many people have a clearly defined sense of identity, shaped by their beliefs and practices and ways of belonging
- observe and describe expressions of religion and non-religious worldviews within and outside the classroom
- investigate questions of meaning and purpose which religious and non-religious people ask themselves and begin to express their own opinions in response
- investigate questions of right and wrong which religious and non-religious people ask themselves and begin to express their own opinion.

Key Stage 2

Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and at least two other religions or non-religious worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject specific vocabulary. They should be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils should learn to express their own views in response to the material they engage with, giving reasons and relevant information to support those views.

More specifically in relation to the programme of study, pupils should be taught to:

- describe and make links between features of particular religions and non-religious world-views; begin to understand the context which they come from and recognise recurring themes that are distinctive to that tradition

- understand the connection between these stories and key practices within the traditions under investigation, paying particular attention to celebrations and festivals and worship, including those rituals which mark important points in life
- understand that there is diversity in the interpretation of symbol and action within and between religions and non-religious worldviews as well reasons for this diversity
- observe and describe examples of religion and non-religious worldviews within and outside the classroom in ways that demonstrate understanding of their meaning and significance to other people
- understand why belonging to a community of faith or belief is valued, and also the challenges such commitment brings, both in their own lives and within those communities being studied
- discuss their own and others' views on challenging questions about life's meaning and purpose, including religious and non-religious truth claims, and articulate their own ideas in response
- discuss their own and others' views on ethical questions, including ideas about right and wrong, justice and fairness, and articulate their own ideas in response.

Key Stage 3

Pupils should extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and at least two religions or non-religious worldviews, recognising their local, national and global context. Building on their prior learning, they begin to appreciate them in systematic ways. They should draw on a wide range of subject specific language confidently and flexibly, so that they can apply these when they encounter expressions of religions and non-religious worldviews. They should understand how religious and non-religious beliefs influence the values and lives of both individuals and groups, and how they impact on current affairs. They should be able to appraise religious and non-religious practice and belief with an increasing level of discernment based on interpretation, evaluation and analysis, developing and articulating well-reasoned positions.

More specifically in relation to the programme of study, pupils should be taught to:

- interpret teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to understand religions and non-religious worldviews as coherent systems
- interpret the influence that religious history and culture and the history and culture of non-religious worldviews have exercised on the lives of individuals and communities, including celebrations, rituals and rites of passage; to consider reasons why some people question these interpretations
- understand that individuals and cultures express their beliefs and values in many different forms and to explore the variety, difference and relationships that exist within and between them.

- explain those religions and non-religious worldviews which they encounter within and outside the classroom clearly and coherently; evaluate them, drawing on a range of introductory level approaches recognised in the study of religion or theology
- explore the impact of religions and non-religious worldviews on people's lives, particularly those for whom their worldview exercises a strong influence on their sense of identity and belonging; recognise that commitment to a religion or non-religious worldview is expressed in a variety of ways and consider why such commitment is valued by some people and questioned by others
- explore some of the ultimate questions that are raised by human life in ways that are well-informed and which invite personal response, drawing on a range of examples including philosophy, art, music and poetry
- explore significant moral and ethical questions posed by being human in ways that are well-informed and which invite personal response, using reasoning which may draw on a range of examples from real life, fiction or other forms of media.

Attainment Targets*

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

* The wording of the attainment targets for RE is provisional and in this draft document simply follows the same form of words contained in the proposals for all other National Curriculum subjects

Implementing Phase One Recommendations in Phase Two

TG1 RE and its curriculum: aims, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment To prepare a working paper/ working papers which:	TG2 Structuring and sustaining the future of RE To undertake the following activities:
Provide a clear and cogent statement of aims for RE, applicable across the range of school settings, and propose ways in which these aims might be communicated to different stakeholders	Build and use increasingly influential links with the DfE in order to promote RE in all schools, in line with the REC subject review’s work and recommendations (see Phase One report), challenging and encouraging government to act to improve RE
Re-evaluate and produce clear accounts of core knowledge and understanding in RE, appropriate to pupils in particular age groups and stages	Seek maximum influence with the relevant examination Awarding Bodies in order to promote: (a) coherence and progression between 4-14 programmes and public examinations used at 14-19; and (b) the study of religions in religious studies qualifications 14-19, in appropriate relation to studies of, for example, ethics and philosophy
Create new instruments for describing achievement in RE that teachers can use working alongside the DfE’s new descriptions of achievement in subjects like English, mathematics and science	Explore strategies through which the collective efforts and wisdom of those individuals and groups which make up the RE community can be brought together and made known effectively for the benefit of the subject and the young people studying it
	Pursue with policy makers challenges around the existing “settlement” for RE, including its governance of RE and legal position?

Phase 3 Writing Group Prepare a clear, persuasive and attractive document suitable for wide public dissemination which
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replaces the 2004 Non-Statutory National Framework for RE and subsequent documentation with updated and recast guidance for the subject ▪ Supports this first document with further guidance on pedagogy and learning methods in RE for teachers and curriculum-shapers, that promotes high quality teaching and learning in RE while allowing for diversity ▪ Develops in addition evaluative principles that enable teachers to make sound professional judgements about what constitutes good professional practice and which promote high standards of learning in RE

DRAFT Reading SACRE development plan April 2013-March 2014

Aim	Actions	Timescales	People Responsible	Cost	Summer 2013	Autumn 2013	Spring 2013
A. To be a supportive and proactive SACRE enjoying full and well-informed membership.	1. Fill membership vacancies	End July 2013	SACRE Chair Committee Services		Some vacancies filled		
	2. SACRE members attend termly SACRE meetings (3 per year) and, when possible, teacher termly network meetings and training events	Termly SACRE meetings: Summer: 19 June 2013 Autumn : 20 November 2013 Spring 2014: 3 February Termly teacher network meetings Occasional training events	SACRE Chair/SACRE Adviser SACRE members SACRE Clerk	SACRE Adviser to prepare and attend x3 SACRE meetings a year @ £500 per term =£1500 SACRE Clerk to administer each meeting Oxford Diocese updates £50 x3 =£150 (shared with other SACREs)	All meeting obligations fulfilled 2012-13		
	3. Produce annual SACRE Report	Autumn Term 2013	SACRE Adviser and clerk	SACRE Adviser x1 day @£500			
	4. Review the development plan at each meeting and update for next year	At each SACRE meeting	SACRE Adviser and SACRE	SACRE Adviser time included in A2 above			
	5. ~Subscribe to NASACRE ~ Representation at annual NASACRE conference, NASACRE AGM and local SACRE events including the annual pan-Berkshire SACRE conference	Ongoing	SACRE members SACRE Adviser to organise Jo Fageant re pan-Berks event/s	Subscription £90 Conference/s and AGM budget £500 SACRE Adviser time if needs to be the SACRE representative x1 day shared with Wokingham £250	Jo attended AGM 23/5/13 (Alan Brine presentation attached to papers for 19 June meeting) Jan attended Wessex joint SACRE meeting 11/3/13 (notes attached 19/6/13)		
	6. Members to present aspects of their	At selected SACRE meetings	SACRE members. Decide plan at SACRE		?	Does SACRE wish	

	faith/beliefs to SACRE to inform members		meetings: Chair		to activate this item?		
B. To support teachers of RE to continually improve RE learning in their schools	1. Provide a termly Primary RE network meeting, 4-5.30, hosted by a school RE teachers and SACRE members to be invited	Once a term (3 per year) Summer 2013: 16 May Autumn 2013: 1 Oct Spring 2014: 3 February Summer 2014: 14 May (Venues tba) Hosted by schools/places of worship	SACRE Adviser to plan, invite schools, administer, deliver and follow up x 3 networks a year.	SACRE Adviser x1.5 days @ £500 = £750	16/5/13 Primary network held.8 attended. Thanks to LDS Church Volunteer hosts: places of worship? Bridge-building.		
	2. Provide, jointly with Wokingham SACRE, a termly secondary RE network meeting, 4-5.30, hosted by a school. RE teachers and SACRE members to be invited	Once a term (3 per year) Summer 2013: 21 May, venue Forest School Autumn 2013: 22 October Spring 2014: 11 February ,venue tba Hosted by schools	SACRE to plan etc in liaison with Secondary Federation manager/LA	SACRE Adviser x1.5 days @ £500 = £750. Cost shared with Wokingham so Reading contributes £375	21/5/13 Only 3 attendees, Kendrick. Continue in Autumn, then review		
	3. Provide a termly RE e.newsletter	Publish in the half-term when the network meetings don't happen	Jo Fageant to produce	£250 for JEF's time (shared with other SACREs)			
C. To support the implementation of the revised	1. Provide schools with a list of speakers from faith/belief communities for RE lessons	Summer Term 2013	SACRE Chair and SACRE members SACRE Adviser	SACRE Adviser x7 days @ £500, but cost shared with Wokingham so Reading contributes	Work has started. Training/induction day for speakers: July 18 th 9.30-		

Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for RE	2.Organise trip/s for teachers to places of worship to support planning and teaching (CPD)	Autumn term 2013		£1750 £1500 additional funding requested from Reading to enable this to happen + 2 days adviser time to organise,attend and lead (2@£500 =£1000)	12.30 Venue:tba Launch through networks etc Autumn Term 2013		
	3.Liaise with local places of worship re children's visits, appropriate to agreed syllabus	Summer term 2013		As part of the RE Directory	Work started		

Reading SACRE budget request April 2013-March 2014

SACRE Adviser

17 days (9.5 of those days shared with Wokingham, 7.5 Reading only) making x 7.5 days (Reading only) at £500 (£ 3750) and x 9.5 shared days @ £250 (£ 2375)

Total £6125

CPD/Trip subsidy for teachers

£1500

Oxford Diocese

£400

Other costs

NASACRE etc £590

Total budget request: £8615

Reading and Wokingham SACREs

RE support for schools

Project: Directory of speakers/places of worship and artefacts

Time-frame:

- Induction/training for the speakers: 9.30-12.30, Thursday 18th July 2013, venue tba
- Directory to be completed by the end of the Summer Term 2013
- Launched to schools at RE network events in the Autumn Term
- Launched to SACREs Autumn Term SACRE meetings

Work schedule:

- June 2013 : Jan Lever and colleague, Joanna Feast contact all relevant faith and belief communities and individuals to explain the project and invite participation
- Beginning July 2013: contact details and information collated into Directory
- July 18th induction/training (REInspired to co-deliver)

What will be in the Directory?

The Directory will be divided into sections relating to religion/belief system.

Each speaker will identify:

- i) Which religion s/he can be in dialogue about
- ii) Which aspects of the agreed syllabus i.e. which big questions/focus areas
- iii) Which age-group/s of children they are most suited to working with
- iv) Are they CRB checked/willing to be?
- v) Their availability and capacity

Each community will identify:

- i) Location of place of worship if appropriate
- ii) Possibility of bringing children to visit
- iii) When children could visit, which age groups, numbers
- iv) Who would be available to host visits
- v) Capacity...how many visits, when

Each community/individual will also be asked if they can help support schools with artefacts needed to teach the syllabus.

A shopping /wish list will be provided and communities will be asked if there is a possibility of donations being made or give contact details of suppliers etc

JL May 2013

RE: Realising the potential

Alan Brine: National Lead for RE

Berkshire SACRE
Conference 2013



Key headlines

- Too much RE is not good enough and little improvement - 60% of provision less than good
- Significant curriculum thinking needed to address concerns
- Concerns about quality and provision at GCSE
- Raft of recent education policies placing additional strain on RE – although degree of damage still unclear
- Policy changes raise serious concerns about the capacity of existing structures to support RE

SACREs

- NASACRE surveys and Ofsted evidence indicate many SACREs under increasing pressure
- Increasing variability in capacity
- Issues with funding and access to expertise
- Academisation raises serious and immediate questions about future of SACREs
- Morale and purpose issues

Pharaoh had a dream in which seven fat cows were swallowed by seven lean ones. Pharaoh and his men were puzzled until Joseph offered his interpretation: The fat cows represented seven years of prosperity, which would then be swallowed by seven lean years of poverty and famine.

The 15+ fat years 1990s to 2010

- SACREs functioning well
- National support strong – DfE, QCDA, Model syllabuses
- Statutory requirement retains leverage - Ofsted
- Broad consensus about RE – NSNF
- GCSE booming
- ITE – bursaries, strong recruitment
- Wider priorities giving RE purchase – ECM, Co Co,

But the cracks were there

- Statutory v educational justification not resolved
- Convoluted legal 'oddness' not addressed
- Short GCSE – seeking 'relevance' not rigour
- SACREs – fragile and variable
- National support - similarly fragile
- On the ground – little improving – status too low
- Issues around the purpose of RE unresolved

And then the climate changed

- Collapse of national support structures
- LA/SACRE capacity undermined
- Academies and Free schools – increase fragmentation of RE
- Culture around 'statutoriness' shifts – Ofsted etc
- GCSE landscape shifts – status crisis in secondary
- NC – SofS imposing approach unfavourable to RE
- CoCo and ECM disappear as educational priorities narrow
- Religion – shift in public attitude? – militant atheism etc

Good news

- Innovative thinking of some new syllabuses
- Some new models of partnership between academies and SACREs
- Some academy chains exploring new models of RE
- Threats have generated debate and interest – APPG etc
- New networks to support RE – REQM, F2F, 3FF, Faith Ambassadors, Leading Teachers

Key questions – we are where we are

Do we:

- Try to align with the NC – using REC to provide national framework?
- Stay detached, build capacity and plan for better days ahead?
- Develop a concerted campaign demanding Govt action?
- Work behind the scenes at local level to nurture best practice?
- Seek new models of structures/purpose/curriculum?

Key Questions

Is the current wide distribution of responsibility in RE (152 LAs, faith/non-faith; academies/maintained etc):

- A strength in the face of government policy?

Or

- A serious barrier to improvement?

How do we address a government that simply refuses to engage?