

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

## Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

The meeting will be held at **6.00 pm** on **17 October 2018**

**Committee Room 4, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL**

### **Membership:**

#### **Committee A:**

Mrs S Lawson, Free Church Christian Member  
Mr P Anderson, Free Church Christian Member  
Mrs M Shepherd, Diocese of Brentwood, Roman Catholic Member  
Mr A Rashid, Muslim Member  
Miss A Ahmed, Muslim Member  
Ms H Kaur Takhtar, Sikh Member  
Mr T Ojetola, Pentecostal Member  
Mr A Kariyawasam, Buddhist Member  
Vacancy, Jewish Member  
Vacancy, Hindu Member

#### **Committee B:**

Rev.J Guest, Church of England Member  
Mr D Bates, Church of England Member  
Vacancy, Church of England Member  
Vacancy, Church of England Member

#### **Committee C:**

Mrs R Gedalovitch, Teachers' Associations  
Ms H Martins, Teachers' Associations  
Ms A Harris, Teachers' Associations  
Ms J Culloty, Teachers' Associations  
Vacancy, Teachers' Associations

#### **Committee D: Local Education Authority**

Councillor Martin Kerin, Sue MacPherson and Angela Lawrence

### **Agenda**

Open to Public and Press

**Page**

**2 Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education meeting held on 18 July 2018.

**3 Items of Urgent Business**

To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

**5 Election of Chair**

**6 Commission on Religious Education 1 - 24**

**7 Monitoring provision for Religious Education in Thurrock Schools 25 - 30**

**8 Review of Membership and attendance**

**9 Any Other Business**

**Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:**

Please contact Tisha Sutcliffe, Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

Agenda published on: **11 October 2018**

<b>17 October 2018</b>		<b>ITEM: 6</b>
<b>Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education</b>		
<b>Commission on Religious Education</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Deborah Weston: Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

## Executive Summary

The Executive summaries of the commission on RE is attached as appendices to this report:

### 1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

#### That SACRE Members

- Discuss the recommendations of the report
- Considers its response to each recommendation

### 2. Introduction and Background

#### Commission on RE

The Commission on Religious Education has been established to review the legal, education, and policy frameworks for religious education (RE). This review will be a wide-ranging, inclusive and evidence-based process designed to inform policy makers. The ultimate aim will be to improve the quality and rigour of religious education and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Remit of the Commission:

1. To consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education.
2. To identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE, and the barriers that currently limit it.
3. To identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE.

4. To ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform.

In considering the above four tasks, the REC has identified the following areas for the Commission to consider:

- a) The quality of teaching and learning in RE
- b) The legal and structural arrangements
- c) The public and professional profile of the subject
- d) Recruitment, Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development
- e) The range of school settings in which RE should be required
- f) The age range for which RE should be required
- g) The right to withdraw (parents or carers, pupils and teachers)
- h) Whether or not there should be a common entitlement in RE, and if so what the entitlement should be

The commission has made eleven recommendations for improving Religious Education in England.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 1.1 The Commission on RE has just produced its final report.
- 1.2 SACRE now has an opportunity to consider the recommendations

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 The findings of the Commission on RE are likely to have a significant impact on the future direction of RE in England, not least on the work of SACREs. For this reason, it is vital that SACRE members make their views known.

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Not applicable

### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The Local Authority reviews its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education on a regular basis;
  - Publishes an Annual Report of its work;
  - Offers guidance on resources and methods of teaching and in consultation with Thurrock Schools;
  - Monitors the quality of provision for RE and Collective Acts of Worship in Thurrock.

This report includes material that is pertinent to all three aims of this programme.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**

**Finance Manager Corporate Finance**

There are no financial implications to this report

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**

**Education Lawyer**

Members are not asked to make any decisions. They are asked to consider the report and their responses. There are no further legal comments.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren.**

**(Community Development & Equalities  
Manager)**

The final report from the Commission on RE aims to highlight some of the challenges schools face in meeting their legal/contractual requirements in relation to RE but also to encourage them to do better. If the levels and the quality of provision for RE improves then SACRE believes schools will be better equipped to fulfil their statutory duty to promote community cohesion and to encourage better respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.

### **7.4 Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable

## **8.0 Appendices to the report**

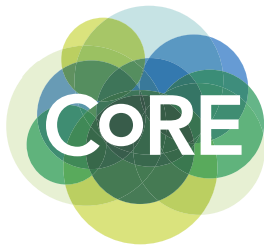
### **8.1 Appendix A - Executive Summary Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward**

#### **Report Author:**

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

This page is intentionally left blank



Commission on  
Religious Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS: THE WAY FORWARD

## A national plan for RE

SEPTEMBER 2018







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION: THE CASE FOR CHANGE

1. The study of religious and non-religious worldviews is a core component of a rounded academic education. This has long been recognised as essential in Britain. Indeed, one could argue that it is more important now than ever. Young people today are growing up in a world where there is increasing awareness of the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews, and they will need to live and work well with people with very different worldviews from themselves. One need only glance at a newspaper to know that it is impossible fully to understand the world without understanding worldviews – both religious and non-religious.
2. This report reaffirms the central importance of learning about religious and non-religious worldviews for all pupils, regardless of their background, personal beliefs or the type of school they attend. Knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews is an essential part of all young people’s entitlement to education. This report seeks to articulate that entitlement.
3. Despite its central importance, Religious Education (RE) in too many schools is not good enough to prepare pupils adequately for the religious and belief diversity they will encounter, nor to support them to engage deeply with the questions raised by the study of worldviews. Our report sets out a National Plan to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to an academically rigorous and rich study of religious and non-religious worldviews. This National Plan has three core elements.
  - a. There is a need for a new and richer vision of the subject. Our vision preserves the best of current practice and demands new developments drawn from the academic study of religious and non-religious worldviews as well as broader social changes in England and globally. We discuss this new vision below, and propose that the subject should be called *Religion and Worldviews* to reflect the new emphasis.
  - b. Too many pupils are not currently receiving their entitlement to knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews. This is an essential subject for all pupils, so we propose that there should be a statutory National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews which applies to all publicly funded schools and is subject to inspection. This entitlement reflects our vision for the subject, which is widely shared among teachers and subject experts, while retaining the flexibility for schools of all types to interpret it in accordance with their own needs, ethos and values.

- c. The study of religious and non-religious worldviews requires high-quality, well-informed specialist teaching. Religious and non-religious worldviews are complex, diverse and plural. Understanding them requires a nuanced, multidisciplinary approach. Therefore, there will need to be sustained investment in developing knowledgeable teachers, as well as investment in high quality curriculum materials to support them, particularly at primary level. Local communities have often played a key role in supporting teachers, and they form an essential component of our recommended structures to develop and support high-quality teaching.
4. Academisation and the move towards a school-led system have transformed the educational landscape. The structures and systems supporting Religious Education have not kept pace with these changes. The evidence that we have gathered confirms the need identified in many previous reports for a change to the structures supporting Religious Education so that the subject is taught well across all schools in all localities. The National Entitlement is a direct response to this need, as are our recommendations for developing and supporting teachers nationally and locally.
5. We have carefully analysed the evidence that we have received. Our recommendations set out a coherent structure which preserves the best of the excellent practice that exists in some schools and localities, and strengthens the subject across all schools and localities.

## RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS: THE CASE FOR A NEW VISION AND A STATUTORY NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT

### WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

The English word ‘worldview’ is a translation of the German *weltanschauung*, which literally means a view of the world. A worldview is a person’s way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. This includes how a person understands the nature of reality and their own place in the world. A person’s worldview is likely to influence and be influenced by their beliefs, values, behaviours, experiences, identities and commitments.

We use the term ‘institutional worldview’ to describe organised worldviews shared among particular groups and sometimes embedded in institutions. These include what we describe as religions as well as non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, Secularism or Atheism. We use the term ‘personal worldview’ for an individual’s own way of understanding and living in the world, which may or may not draw from one, or many, institutional worldviews.

6. It is one of the core tasks of education to enable each pupil to understand, reflect on and develop their own personal worldview. This is a whole-school responsibility and the explicit, academic study of worldviews is an essential part of it. Through understanding how worldviews are formed and expressed at both individual and communal levels, the ways in which they have changed over time, and their influence on the actions of individuals, groups and institutions, young people come to a more refined understanding of their own worldview – whatever this happens to be – as well as those of others. Currently, this study takes place mainly through RE.
7. Studying religious and non-religious worldviews gives young people the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding and motivation they need to engage with important aspects of human experience including the religious, spiritual, cultural and moral. It provides an insight into the sciences, the arts, literature, history and contemporary local and global social and political issues. The young people we have spoken to have told us that RE enables them to have better friendships and to develop greater respect and empathy for others. Learning about worldviews helps young people to deal positively with controversial issues, to manage strongly held differences of belief and to challenge stereotypes. In an increasingly diverse society, understanding religious and non-religious worldviews has never been more essential than it is now.
8. The nature of RE has changed over time to reflect new understandings and new social realities. At the time of the 1944 Education Act, it was known as Religious Instruction, was limited to Christianity and was the only compulsory subject. Over time, subject experts came to recognise that young people needed to understand both a wider range of religious and non-religious worldviews and the idea of diversity within worldviews. This was reflected in the Education Reform Act of 1988, which also changed the name of the subject to Religious Education. Thirty years on, the local, national and global religious landscape and academic understandings of the subject have changed significantly.
9. The presentation of religious worldviews in schools has not always placed enough emphasis on their diverse and plural nature and the ways that they have changed over time. While many teachers and subject experts do present diversity within religions, this can often be reduced to crude differences between denominations. RE has sometimes inadvertently reinforced stereotypes about religions, rather than challenging them<sup>1</sup>. As we learn more about diversity and change within religious worldviews, it becomes even more important that the presentation of worldviews in schools reflects this.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Thobani (2011). Islam in the school curriculum: symbolic pedagogy and cultural claims. London, Routledge.*

10. Non-religious worldviews have also become increasingly salient in Britain and Western Europe. According to the most recent British Social Attitudes survey, over 50% of adults identify as not belonging to a religion, with 41% identifying as Christian. The proportion of adults identifying as not belonging to a religion has increased from 31% in 1983 and has remained fairly stable around 50% since 2009<sup>2</sup>. While some of these individuals may identify with non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, many have looser patterns of identification or do not identify with any institutional worldviews.
11. Deeper academic study of the experience of those who hold both religious and non-religious worldviews suggests that the distinction between religious and non-religious worldviews is not as clear-cut as one might think. Individuals may draw on aspects of both religious and non-religious worldviews in their own personal worldviews.<sup>3</sup>
12. The time is right for a new vision for the subject if we are to prepare children and young people for living in the increasingly diverse world in which they find themselves. We need to move beyond an essentialised presentation of six ‘major world faiths’ and towards a deeper understanding of the complex, diverse and plural nature of worldviews at both institutional and personal levels. We need to ensure that pupils understand that there are different ways of adhering to a worldview – you may identify with more than one institutional worldview, or indeed none at all. More still needs to be done to ensure that a wider range of institutional worldviews is taught, particularly Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism, which are sometimes neglected. And there needs to be a greater understanding, at a conceptual level, of how worldviews operate, the accounts they provide of the nature of reality, and how they influence behaviour, institutions and forms of expression. It is this powerful, conceptual knowledge that all pupils need to have.
13. This is why we have set out a statutory National Entitlement for all pupils in all publicly funded schools. The National Entitlement makes clear the central importance of understanding religious and non-religious worldviews as well as the conceptual categories which lead to this understanding. It sets out a clear purpose and core knowledge which all pupils across all schools must gain. It also reflects the new vision that we have outlined here, which will effectively prepare all pupils for the world of religious and belief diversity in which they find themselves.

---

2 NATCEN (2017). *British Social Attitudes Survey*. [www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2017/september/british-social-attitudes-record-number-of-brits-with-no-religion/](http://www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2017/september/british-social-attitudes-record-number-of-brits-with-no-religion/)

3 Wallis, S (2014). *Ticking ‘no religion’: a case study amongst ‘young nones.’* *Diskus* 16:2. Woodhead, L (2016), *‘The rise of “no religion” in Britain: The emergence of a new cultural majority’*, *Journal of the British Academy*, 4: 245–261. DOI 10.85871/jba/004.245

14. Our new vision is also signified by a new name for the subject: Religion and Worldviews. The shift in language to ‘worldviews’ captures, as best we can, the shifts in vision that we have outlined above, in particular the complex, diverse and plural nature of worldviews. The name also removes the ambiguity in the phrase ‘Religious Education’, which is often wrongly assumed to be about making people more religious. We are keeping the word ‘religion’ in the subject name both to provide continuity and to signify that young people need to understand the conceptual category of ‘religion’ as well as other concepts such as ‘secularity’, ‘secularism’ and ‘spirituality’.

## THE CASE FOR IMPROVED SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

15. As we have stated above, the structures supporting RE have not kept pace with the changes to the education system. This has led to a situation in which, despite pockets of excellent practice in some schools and localities, the provision and quality of RE is not good enough in too many schools.
16. The quality of RE is highly variable across all school types. The last Ofsted subject review (2013) found RE to be to be less than good in just under half of secondary schools and in six out of ten primary schools observed by Ofsted.<sup>4</sup> In *Making a Difference*, a review of standards in RE in Church of England schools, the reviewers found that RE was good or better in 70% of secondary schools, but only 40% of primary schools<sup>5</sup>. No evidence was forthcoming on the quality of RE in Catholic schools or other schools of a religious character. Since 2013, there has been no mechanism to gather evidence on the quality of RE in primary and secondary schools at a national level. The evidence that we have gathered suggests that there has been little positive change in the past five years and that the situation has got worse in some areas.
17. One reason for this variability in quality is some confusion over the purpose of RE, which we hope will be resolved through our new vision for the subject and the common National Entitlement which provides clarity on the aims and purposes of RE.
18. Another key reason for this variability in quality is the lack of adequate training and support for teachers. A majority of recently qualified primary teachers received fewer than three hours of subject specific training for RE

---

4 *Ofsted (2013). Religious Education: Realising the potential.*  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-realising-the-potential](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-realising-the-potential)

5 *Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, Education Division (2014). Making a Difference: a review of Religious Education in Church of England schools.*  
[http://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2014\\_making\\_a\\_difference\\_-\\_a\\_review\\_of\\_religious\\_education\\_in\\_church\\_of\\_england\\_schools\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2014_making_a_difference_-_a_review_of_religious_education_in_church_of_england_schools_web_final.pdf)

during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE)<sup>6</sup>. At secondary, almost three times<sup>7</sup> as many RE lessons as History lessons are taught by non-specialists. We therefore set out plans for improving training and support for teachers, so that they have the knowledge that they need to teach this important subject.

19. Successive surveys of teachers, especially at primary level, have shown that teachers lack confidence to teach RE and to tackle the sensitive and controversial issues that are the lifeblood of the subject.
20. An increasing number of schools, particularly academies, offer no provision for RE at Key Stages 3 and 4. In 2016, 33.4% of all schools did not offer any RE at Key Stage 4 and 23.1% did not offer any RE at Key Stage 3. This represents nearly 900 schools offering no RE at Key Stage 4, and a significant increase from 22.1% (nearly 600 schools) in 2015.<sup>8</sup> Curriculum time for primary is also limited, with nearly 30% of schools which responded to the 2016 NATRE primary survey offering less than 45 minutes per week.
21. There is a clear, and increasing, disparity between school types in terms of provision of RE. For example, the percentage of schools without a religious character offering no RE at Key Stage 4 in 2016 (38.9%) is almost four times that of schools with a religious character (11.2%)<sup>9</sup>. If something is not done urgently to re-establish the subject, there is a real risk that it could disappear from schools without a religious character, depriving pupils of their entitlement to this vital area of knowledge.

---

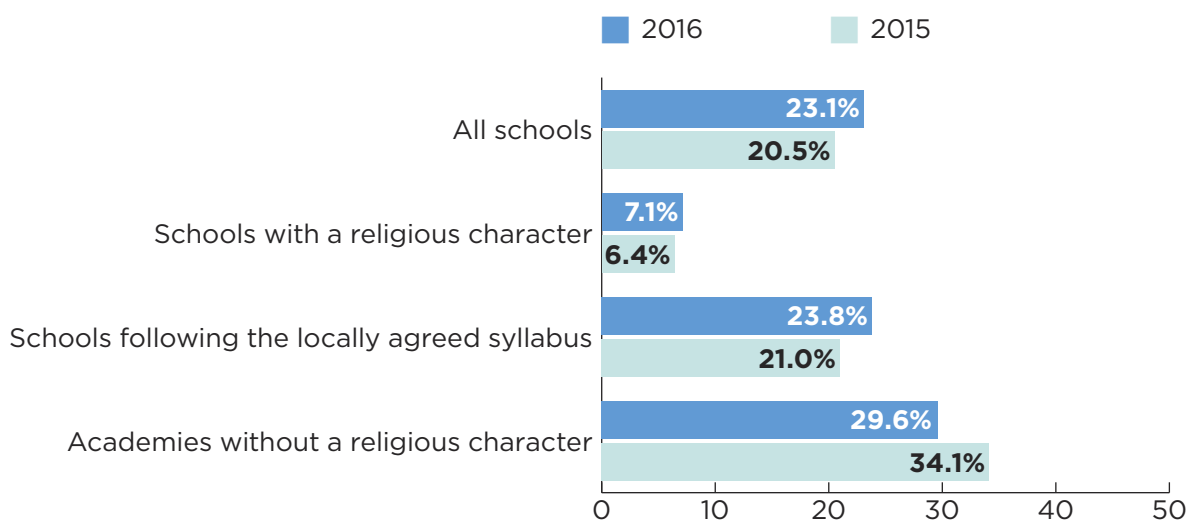
6 NATRE (2016). *An Analysis of the provision for RE in primary schools*. [www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf](http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf)

7 NATRE (2016). *An Analysis of the provision for RE in primary schools*. [www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf](http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf)

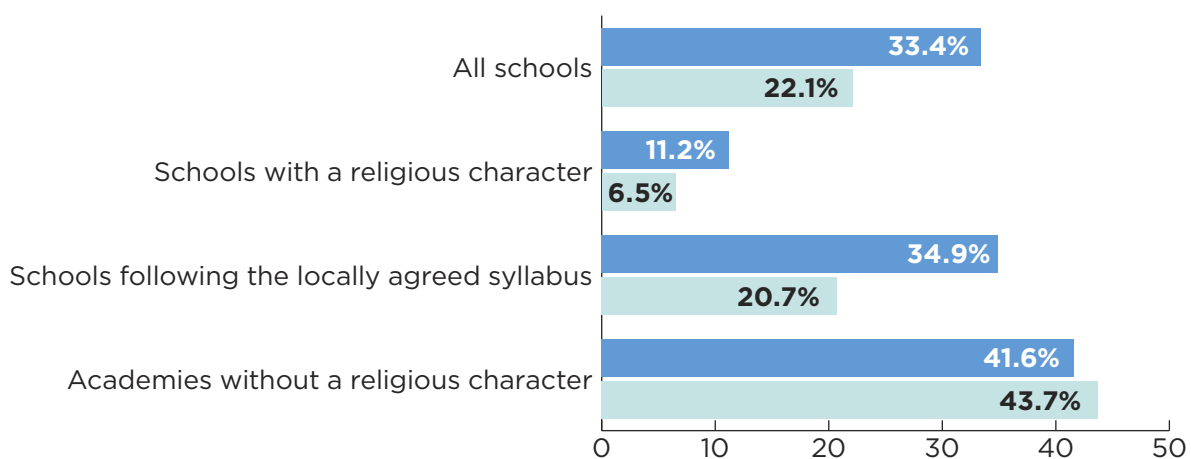
8 Source: *School Workforce data 2015 and 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE*.

9 Source: *School Workforce data 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE*.

**Figure 1: Schools offering no RE at Key Stage 3<sup>10</sup>**



**Figure 2: Schools offering no RE at Key Stage 4<sup>11</sup>**



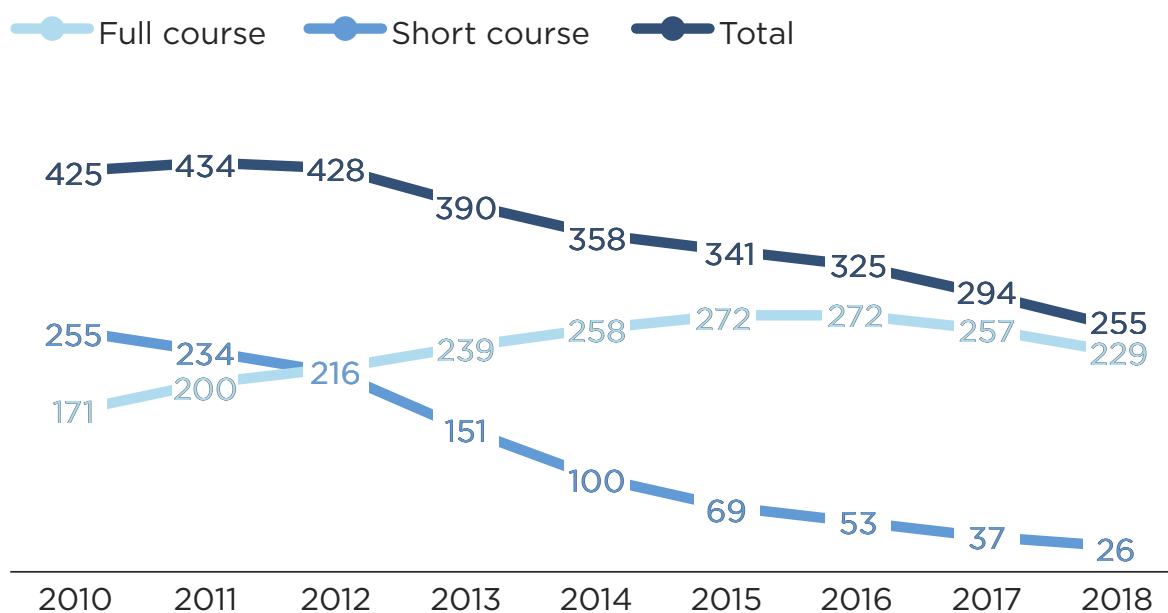
22. Academisation and reductions in funding have reduced local authority support for RE via Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) and professional advisers, to the point where such support is unsustainable in many areas and already disappearing in some. This further increases the disparity between schools with a religious character, where support structures remain relatively robust, and those without, where they are increasingly in jeopardy.

<sup>10</sup> Source: School Workforce Data 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.

<sup>11</sup> Source: School Workforce Data 2016 analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.



23. Changes to accountability systems have created an environment where there is less and less incentive for schools to offer good RE, particularly at secondary level. These include Ofsted no longer inspecting individual subjects, the removal of GCSE Short Courses from school performance measures and the non-inclusion of Religious Studies GCSE in the Ebacc. This has led to a significant drop in students taking a Key Stage 4 qualification in RE<sup>12</sup> and has affected, for example, the number of specialist teachers at secondary level.



**Figure 3: Trends in GCSE entries for Religious Studies<sup>13</sup>**  
*Religious Studies GCSE entries in England 2010–2018 (thousands)*

24. All of these issues mean that urgent action needs to be taken to reform and strengthen the structures that support Religion and Worldviews in schools. We therefore recommend changes to accountability systems, curriculum development, local and national support structures and initial teacher education, creating a robust and coherent structure for Religion and Worldviews. Our recommendations, as set out below, will enable all pupils in all schools to receive high quality education in Religion and Worldviews and will support and strengthen the subject for the foreseeable future.

<sup>12</sup> 260,300 pupils entered for a Key Stage 4 qualification in Religious Studies in 2018, down from a high of 433,750 in 2011.

<sup>13</sup> GCSE entry figures for 2017 and 2018 do not include the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. In 2016, there were 1,142 Full Course entries and 938 Short Course entries from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Source: JCQ: [www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses](http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses)



25. We are aware that rapid change is disruptive and counterproductive for teachers and schools. We therefore suggest a phased approach in which programmes of study and support structures are established before schools are required to change their curriculum to align it with the National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews. We have set out our proposed timeline in Appendix 1.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1

The name of the subject should be changed to Religion and Worldviews. This should be reflected in all subsequent legislation and guidance.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

The National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews should become statutory for all publicly funded schools.

- a. For community, foundation and voluntary controlled schools, the requirement for Religion and Worldviews to be provided in accordance with the National Entitlement will replace the requirement in the Education Act 1996 (Section 375) to follow their locally agreed syllabus.
- b. For academies, all funding agreements should be amended to state that all academies must provide Religion and Worldviews in accordance with the National Entitlement.
- c. For voluntary aided schools of a religious character, a requirement should be introduced to provide Religion and Worldviews in accordance with the National Entitlement as well as the requirements of their Trust Deed.

## THE NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS

All pupils are entitled to be taught Religion and Worldviews in every year up to and including year 11. Post-16 students, including those in Further Education should have the opportunity to study Religion and Worldviews during their post-16 course of study.

Schools must publish a detailed statement about how they meet the National Entitlement and ensure that every pupil has access to it through the curriculum, lessons and wider experiences they provide.

Pupils must be taught:

1. about matters of central importance to the worldviews studied, how these can form coherent accounts for adherents, and how these matters are interpreted in different times, cultures and places
2. about key concepts including 'religion', 'secularity', 'spirituality' and 'worldview', and that worldviews are complex, diverse and plural
3. the ways in which patterns of belief, expression and belonging may change across and within worldviews, locally, nationally and globally, both historically and in contemporary times
4. the ways in which worldviews develop in interaction with each other, have some shared beliefs and practices as well as differences, and that people may draw upon more than one tradition
5. the role of religious and non-religious ritual and practices, foundational texts, and of the arts, in both the formation and communication of experience, beliefs, values, identities and commitments
6. how worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions of meaning and purpose raised by human experience, and the different roles that worldviews play in providing people with ways of making sense of their lives

7. the different roles played by worldviews in the lives of individuals and societies, including their influence on moral behaviour and social norms
8. how worldviews have power and influence in societies and cultures, appealing to various sources of authority, including foundational texts
9. the different ways in which religion and worldviews can be understood, interpreted and studied, including through a wide range of academic disciplines and through direct encounter and discussion with individuals and communities who hold these worldviews.

Programmes of study must reflect the complex, diverse and plural nature of worldviews. They may draw from a range of religious, philosophical, spiritual and other approaches to life including different traditions within Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, non-religious worldviews and concepts including Humanism, secularism, atheism and agnosticism, and other relevant worldviews within and beyond the traditions listed above, including worldviews of local significance where appropriate.

Teaching must promote openness, respect for others, objectivity, scholarly accuracy and critical enquiry.

Pupils are therefore entitled to be taught by teachers who:

- a. have secure subject knowledge
- b. are capable of addressing misconceptions and misunderstandings and handling controversial issues
- c. demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the study of religion and worldviews
- d. promote the value of scholarship.

In order for all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in Religion and Worldviews, the subject must be given adequate time and resources commensurate with the place of Religion and Worldviews as a core component of the curriculum.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

- a. Non-statutory programmes of study for each of Key Stages 1–4 should be developed at a national level, at a similar level of detail as those for History and Geography in the National Curriculum. These should be ratified by the DfE.
- b. Programmes of study should be developed by a national body of a maximum of nine professionals, including serving teachers. This body could choose to take advice from other organisations as relevant.
- c. The core purpose of the national body should be to develop and revise the programmes of study. It will also make recommendations to the government and advise the profession on issues relating to Religion and Worldviews and the resources and support needed to deliver high quality Religion and Worldviews for all pupils.
- d. The national body should be appointed by the DfE on the basis of recommendations from the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, following an open application process.
- e. Members of the national body should be appointed on the basis of commitment to the approach taken to Religion and Worldviews in the National Entitlement and proven expertise in some or all of the following:
  - i. specialist knowledge of Religion and Worldviews with both research and classroom experience
  - ii. curriculum development, within or beyond Religion and Worldviews
  - iii. initial teacher education or continuing professional development of teachers
  - iv. current or recent classroom experience in either primary or secondary phases.
- f. The national body should be a standing body with a third of members changing every three years. It should be funded on a *per diem* basis by the DfE.
- g. Programmes of study should be reviewed whenever the National Curriculum is reviewed, but the national body should also have the power to request the DfE for a review if they believe this is warranted.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4

Section 375ff of the Education Act 1996 should be amended to remove the requirement for local authorities to convene Agreed Syllabus Conferences and develop locally agreed syllabuses.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5

- a. When GCSE and A-level specifications are next reviewed, this should be done in the light of the National Entitlement.
- b. The national body should also consider how the study of Religion and Worldviews may be incorporated into vocational qualifications, either as a stand-alone course or as modules within existing vocational courses.

#### RECOMMENDATION 6

All Initial Teacher Education (ITE) should enable teachers, at primary and where relevant at secondary level, to teach Religion and Worldviews based on the National Entitlement and with the competence to deal with sensitive issues in the classroom, and the teachers' standards should be updated to reflect this. In order to support this, the following should be implemented.

- a. There should be a minimum of 12 hours of contact time for Religion and Worldviews for all forms of primary ITE including School Direct and other school-based routes.
- b. Bursaries for ITE in Religion and Worldviews should be set at parity with other shortage subjects.
- c. Funding for Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses should be reinstated at parity with Ebacc subjects. Funding should be allocated for Subject Knowledge Enhancement for primary.
- d. Two new modules for Religion and Worldviews should be developed for primary ITE, and also made available as continuing professional development (CPD) modules: one for those with limited experience and one for those with proficiency in the subject who would like to be subject leaders or work beyond their own classrooms. These modules should focus on the delivery of the national programmes of study.

#### RECOMMENDATION 7

The government should allocate funding for CPD for Religion and Worldviews to support the delivery of the new non-statutory national programmes of study. This funding should be for a period of at least five years and be sufficient to cover:

- a. a national programme of online and face-to-face CPD, including an online platform with both massive open online courses (MOOCs) and static resources
- b. the development of curriculum materials and supplementary guidance, including resources for local studies
- c. support for local face-to-face CPD including teacher hubs and networks, with specific allocations for areas of opportunity and of a sufficient level to cover adequate professional advice and support.

All of the above funding streams should be administered and overseen by the national body as part of their remit.

## RECOMMENDATION 8

Legislation regarding the establishment of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education should be amended as follows.

- a. The name of the body should be changed to Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews.
- b. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews must facilitate the implementation of the National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews in all schools within the local authority boundaries by providing information about sources of support available, and must connect schools with local faith and belief communities and other groups that support the study of Religion and Worldviews in schools.
- c. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews must submit an annual report to the DfE and to their local authority. The DfE and the local authority must publish the annual reports on a dedicated web page.
- d. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews should be made up of members from five groups:
  - i. teachers of Religion and Worldviews from all phases including Higher Education
  - ii. school leaders and governors
  - iii. ITE and/or CPD providers
  - iv. school providers including the Local Authority (LA) and Multi Academy Trust (MAT), dioceses etc
  - v. religion, belief and other groups that support RE in schools or wish to do so (this might include local museums and galleries as well as religion and belief groups).

- e. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews may also:
  - i. provide CPD support for schools
  - ii. develop programmes of study to support the National Entitlement and supplementary curriculum materials for use within and across their local authority boundaries
  - iii. provide extra resources for schools on local faith and belief communities to support local studies
  - iv. provide further support for learning outside the classroom
  - v. provide advice to schools and school providers on matters of religion and belief in schools
  - vi. facilitate school-to-school collaboration
  - vii. celebrate success including through offering prizes and competitions
  - viii. promote good community relations within and outside schools.

Statutory funding must be provided for all Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews, calculated by size of local authority and of a sufficient level to enable the group to carry out its activities effectively. This should be ring-fenced within the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) of funding provided to local authorities.

## RECOMMENDATION 9

- a. Ofsted or Section 48 inspectors must report on whether schools are meeting the National Entitlement.
- b. There should be a one-off, in-depth review of the impact of the National Entitlement and national programmes of study once these have been implemented. This should be conducted by Ofsted.
- c. The DfE should publish data on hours taught in all subjects (Key Stages 1-4) and GCSE entries for all subjects, including trend data, in an easily accessible format on their website.

## RECOMMENDATION 10

- a. The DfE should consider the impact of school performance measures on the provision and quality of Religion and Worldviews, including the impact of excluding Religious Studies GCSE from the Ebacc and of excluding GCSE Short Courses from school performance measures.

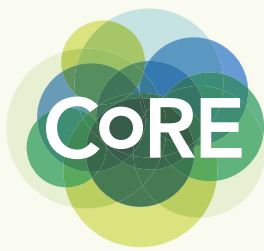
- b. In the light of the evidence, the DfE should make amendments to school performance measures to ensure that the study of Religion and Worldviews is not neglected or disadvantaged.
- c. The Russell Group universities should review the list of facilitating subjects and consider whether, given their stated comments on the academic rigour and value of Religious Studies A-level, it should be included.

## RECOMMENDATION 11

- a. The DfE should review the right of withdrawal from Religion and Worldviews and provide legal clarification on:
  - i. whether parents have a right to withdraw selectively from parts of Religion and Worldviews
  - ii. whether parents have a duty to provide an alternative curriculum for Religion and Worldviews
  - iii. whether children withdrawn from Religion and Worldviews can access other curriculum subjects or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support during the time they would normally be studying Religion and Worldviews.
- b. The DfE should work with school leaders to develop a code of good practice for managing the right of withdrawal.
- c. The DfE should monitor how the right of withdrawal is being used on an annual basis and provide data on the number of full and partial withdrawals and the reasons for withdrawal where given.







## Commission on Religious Education

Report drafter: Amira Tharani  
Report produced for the Commission on Religious Education  
by NCVO - CES

© RE Council September 2018

Religious Education Council of England & Wales  
CAN Mezzanine  
49-51 East Road  
London N1 6AH  
020 7250 8166  
[religioueducationcouncil.org.uk](http://religioueducationcouncil.org.uk)  
[facebook.com/religioueducationcouncil](https://facebook.com/religioueducationcouncil)  
[twitter.com/RECouncil](https://twitter.com/RECouncil)

<b>17 October 2018</b>	<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education</b>	
<b>Monitoring Provision for Religious Education in Thurrock Schools</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key
<b>Report of:</b> Deborah Weston: Associate Adviser for Religious Education	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children’s Services	
<b>This report is Public</b>	

## Executive Summary

In order to discharge its legal duties, SACRE monitors provision for Religious Education in its local area where RE is delivered in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus. This report includes data from the school workforce census data conducted in November 2016 and 2017. It identifies a number of secondary schools that appear not to be meeting their legal duty to provide religious education for all pupils.

### 1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

That SACRE members

- Receives this background paper and discusses the different sets of data
- Writes to the principal / head teacher of each of the academies concerned to:
- Ask for further information and explanation about why they are not making provision for all pupils
- Where such letters have not been acknowledged in the past, to issue a complaint the governing board of this academy

### 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 One of the key aims of SACREs around the country is to ensure that children and young people in their area are properly educated in Religious Education. Academies must make provision for RE for all their students according to their funding agreements and it is within the legal remit of a SACRE to agenda any matter concerned with RE.

The model funding agreement which forms the basis of almost all non-faith Academies legal contract states the following:

- a) subject to clause 27, the Academy Trust shall ensure that provision shall be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy` in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph 2(5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, [and having regard to the requirements of the QCDA's national framework for religious education in schools]

2.2 The Department of Education have been consulted on the interpretation of this section of the paragraph and they were pleased to inform us that it means that ALL students in ALL year groups must be taught Religious Education. This means that all students must study RE at all key stages. Further clarification about how schools and academies can be held accountable for their provision has been received from the department of education. See appendix B

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

#### **Level of provision in relation to timetable time:**

The provision for RE in some of the Academies in Thurrock appears to be low in relation to the amount of timetable time dedicated to the subject. If students are not receiving their legal entitlement to Religious Education, what impact might this have on the degree to which they are able to take their place in a plural society?

According to this data, the academy schools highlighted are not making provision for RE for all pupils as required by their funding agreement.

RE teaching in Thurrock local authority area academies in a typical week in November 2017, hours taught by year group – see Appendix A

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 One of the responsibilities of a SACRE is to monitor provision for RE to be given in accordance with its Agreed Syllabus

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Not applicable

### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The Local Authority reviews its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education on a regular basis;

- Publishes an Annual Report of its work;
- Offers guidance on resources and methods of teaching and in consultation with Thurrock Schools;
- Monitors the quality of provision for RE and Collective Acts of Worship in Thurrock.

This exercise falls under the third element of this programme.

### **7. Implications**

- 7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**

**Finance Manager Corporate Finance**

There are no financial implications to this report since the analysis of the data collected through this exercise will be conducted by the Associate RE Adviser as part of her work

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**

**Education Lawyer**

The legal duties on the advisory council are set out in s391 of the Education Act 1996. The main one is to advise the local authority on such matters connected with the religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools which do not have a religious character and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed or other syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren.**

**Community Development & Equalities Manager**

The aim of this review is to collect information about the provision for RE in Thurrock, to address concerns and to celebrate success. Higher standards in the teaching of RE will help schools to fulfil their statutory duty to promote community cohesion and to encourage better respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.

## 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable

## 8.0 Appendices to the report

8.1 Appendix A – School Workforce Data (DfE) – 2016 and 2017

8.2 Appendix B – Greater Clarity for Academies in relation to Religious Education

### Report Author:

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

School Workforce Data (DfE) - 2016 and 2017

School name:	Religious character:	School type:	% hours spent on RE Teaching 7	% hours spent on RE Teaching 8	% hours spent on RE Teaching 9	% hours spent on RE Teaching 10	% hours spent on RE Teaching 11	% hours spent on RE Teaching 12	% hours spent on RE Teaching 13	% hours spent on RE Teaching for years 7 to 13
The Hathaway Academy	None	Academy Sponsor Led	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	2.1	.	.	0.7
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	None	Academy Converter	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.0	0.9	3.4	4.1	1.6
St Clere's School	None	Foundation School	2.8	2.6	2.0	2.4	0.0	.	.	1.8
William Edwards School and Sports College	None	Academy Converter	0.0	4.2	4.4	1.0	1.0	.	.	2.1
The Gateway Academy	Does not apply	ACADEMY SPONSOR LED	0.0	0.0	7.2	3.0	0.0	.	.	2.1
Gable Hall School	None	Foundation School	4.0	3.7	4.9	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
Hassenbrook Academy	None	ACADEMY CONVERTER	4.4	4.5	4.4	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
The Ockendon School	None	Foundation School	7.3	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.6	0.0	4.5	6.6
Grays Convent High School	Roman Catholic	VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL	9.2	9.4	9.6	10.0	10.5	.	.	9.8

Page 28

School name	Religious character	School type	School type group	Sponsor (if applicable)	Percentage of timetable time spent on teaching RE									GCSE examinations 2017					
					Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Hours of RE taught to key stage 3 year group	Hours of RE taught to key stage 4 year group	Percentage of key stage 5 teaching spent on RE	Percentage of all teaching spent on RE	% Y11 cohort entered for Full Course	% Y11 cohort entered for Short Course	% Year 11 cohort entered for ANY GCSE RS	% achieved grade A*-C (Gold = exceeded national average)
Gable Hall School	None	Academy converter	Academies	-	2.7	1.6	3.2	1.4	0	0	0	19	3	0	1.6	24.2	0	0	63.8
Grays Convent High School	Roman Catholic	Voluntary aided school	LA maintained schools	-	7.5	7.5	7.4	11	8.5	0	0	24	23	0	8.3	94.7	3.5	0	84.8
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	None	Academy converter	Academies	-	0	0	0	0	1.5	2.9	3	0	4	3	1.1	12.2	0	0	77.3
Hassenbrook Academy	None	Academy converter	Academies	The Stanford & Corringham Schools Trust	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.
Ormiston Park Academy	Does not apply	Academy sponsor led	Academies	Ormiston Academies Trust	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.
St Clere's School	None	Academy converter	Academies	-	4.8	4.9	2.7	2.3	0	0	0	22	5	0	2.8	0	28.6	0	87.7
The Gateway Academy	Does not apply	Academy sponsor led	Academies	Gateway Academy Trust	0	0	7	15	3.7	0	0	3	13	0	5.5	74.8	0	0	49.2
The Hathaway Academy	None	Academy sponsor led	Academies	Academy Transformation Trust	0	0	0	1.9	2.9	0	0	0	6	0	0.8	13.7	0	0	47.1
The Ockendon Academy	None	Academy converter	Academies	-	7.3	7.4	6.9	6.9	7.1	6.7	0	40	23	3.2	6.5	100	0	0	41.3
William Edwards School	None	Academy converter	Academies	-	0	4.2	4.1	0	1.0	0	0	18	3.0	0	1.8	3	0	0	71.4

### Greater clarity for Academies in relation to RE

At the end of March 2018, minister for schools; Nick Gibb MP responded to a parliamentary question about RE. In the response he said the following: “Where academies are subject to the same statutory duties as maintained schools, the Secretary of State has powers to enforce compliance via the terms of the funding agreement.” NATRE subsequently wrote to the DfE in an attempt to clarify what sort of matter might result in a Secretary of State using these powers in relation to RE. We asked: ‘Can you please provide us with some guidance about how you might judge a complaint about the failure of an academy to meet its funding agreement in relation to RE?’

The letter we received in response this week included the following six points:

1. In most non-religiously designated academy funding agreements, the requirement to provide religious education is in line with S.375(3) of the Education Act 1996 – religious education that **reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are Christian, whilst taking into account the practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain;**
2. Academies **may choose to use an agreed syllabus** in full or part to meet their requirements to provide RE. They may also choose to develop their **own syllabus that meets the requirements in their funding agreement** (including S.375 above);
3. We would expect that all schools provide pupils with **a curriculum that is high quality and promotes progression** through the key stages, including in RE;
4. Head teachers should ensure that “the subject is **well led and effectively managed**, and that standards and achievement in RE, and the quality of the provision, are subject to **regular and effective self-evaluation;**
5. If inspectors become aware that a school is not delivering the curriculum that it is expected to be offering, this will be reflected in the **assessment of the leadership and management** of the school, which in turn will inform the overall effectiveness of the school;
6. If the department is made aware of an academy that is not meeting the requirements for providing RE as outlined above, the **complaint would be passed onto the operational team** where the academy was located. The operational team would work with the policy team to understand the arrangements and specific situation in that school, and work with the school to resolve the matter.

The implication of these points is that when academies publish details of their curriculum for RE for each year group (as they are required to do following statutory guidance) the curriculum must be clear about:

- a) How it reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (S.375(3) of the Education Act 1996)
- b) Which specific syllabus is followed e.g. A local Agreed Syllabus or other Syllabus that includes sufficient clear information to allow teachers, parents and others to be clear about what content is to be taught in each year of each key stage? (Note: a previous complaint about a syllabus for RE has secured this working definition of a syllabus with support from DfE lawyers)
- c) How progression in knowledge, understanding and skills is secured in Religious Education as pupils move from one-year group to another

This page is intentionally left blank