

National RE Updates for SACREs Summer 2021

Ofsted publishes research review on religious education

The latest review, published on 12th May 2021 draws on the education inspection framework (EIF) and other religious education (RE) literature to identify what contributes to high-quality RE.

Read the [RE research review](#) here.

Brief Summary

The review recognises that there is no single way of constructing and teaching a high-quality RE curriculum, but identifies some common features:

- The curriculum should cover substantive content and concepts collectively (or 'collectively enough'), rather than covering excessive amounts of content superficially. Content is sufficient for pupils to grasp a bigger picture about the place of religion and non-religion in the world.
- What is taught and learned in RE is grounded in what is known about religion or non-religion from academic study. This helps prevent pupils from developing misconceptions about religion and non-religion.
- Pupils study certain areas of the RE curriculum in depth and acquire a range of detailed knowledge of different concepts and ideas, which they remember long term. Drawing on this prior knowledge enables them to consider more complex ideas about religion. Leaders and teachers select this 'depth of study' from contrasting religious and/or non-religious traditions so that pupils avoid developing misrepresentations.
- The curriculum is well sequenced to ensure that pupils learn the knowledge they need for later topics.
- There is a consideration of when pupils should relate the content to their own personal knowledge (for example, their own prior assumptions).
- How the curriculum is taught and assessed focuses pupils' attention squarely on the knowledge they need to learn.
- Adequate curriculum time is given to RE, so that leaders can deliver an ambitious curriculum.
- There is sufficient training and professional development so that teachers have appropriate subject professional knowledge.

The review refers to 3 different types of subject-specific knowledge that pupils learn in RE. Each of these is powerful and should not be confused with 'mere facts'. The first is 'substantive' knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions. The second type is 'ways of knowing', where pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion. The third type is 'personal knowledge', where pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about what they study. The review suggests that improvement in RE at both primary and secondary level includes knowing more of these 'pillars of progression'. This prepares pupils to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular world.

In the spring term of 2022, Ofsted will publish a report on the quality of RE curriculums taught in schools, gathering evidence through 'deep dives'.

How can SACRE encourage schools to engage with Ofsted's findings? Could this information be shared with SIPs so they are aware of the necessity to teach RE to all?

Question in Parliament

Recently an MP, supported by information from NATRE, asked a question of the Department for Education

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the most recently published School Workforce Census, how many schools with an outstanding Ofsted rating reported zero hours of religious education teaching in year 11; and if he will make a statement.

In November 2019, 2,958 state funded secondary schools returned full curriculum information to the Department via the School Workforce Census. This represents 86% of all state funded secondary schools in England.

Of these 2,958 schools, 984 reported no teaching of religious education (RE) or philosophy teaching to Year 11 pupils during the week of the workforce census. One school reported teaching RE or philosophy in mixed year groups, which may include Year 11 pupils.

Of the 984 schools, 144 were judged outstanding in their last Ofsted full inspection. The last full inspection may have been several years prior to 2019. It is therefore not possible to draw any meaningful correlation between information about teaching time on these subjects during the census week and a school's Ofsted rating.

The information above is based on the number of hours of dedicated RE or philosophy teaching recorded by each school for Year 11 pupils. It is possible that other general teaching within the school may include elements of RE, ethics, or philosophy.

State funded schools in England have a duty to teach RE to all pupils aged 5 to 18 years. While academies, free schools and most maintained schools designated as having a religious character may design and follow their own curriculum, all other maintained schools must follow their area's locally agreed syllabus for RE.

Any concerns that a school may not be complying with the requirement to teach RE should, in the first instance, be raised via the school's complaints procedure. If the complaint is not resolved, then the issue can be escalated to the Department's School Complaints Unit.

Answered 1 June 2021

By Nick Gibb (Conservative, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton)

The new Agreed syllabus launch is a key time to remind all schools of their duty to teach RE to all pupils in all year groups. Could this information be shared with SIPs so they are aware of the necessity to teach RE to all?

NASACRE Report on SACRE funding in England

NASACRE has published its research report on SACRE funding following a freedom of information request to local authorities. The report reveals the startling statistic that only 8% of Local Authorities provide NASACRE's recommended level of funding for their SACREs. The 2% benchmark represents the proportion of the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) government funding that is deemed necessary to fulfil the statutory functions of a SACRE and an Agreed Syllabus Conference. The full report can be viewed here: [1-376-nasacre-report-on-sacre-funding-in-england-2021.pdf](https://www.nasacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/376-nasacre-report-on-sacre-funding-in-england-2021.pdf)

We are fortunate that we do provide school support and pay for expertise. Is there anything our SACRE can learn from this report?

NATRE Secondary Survey 2021

NATRE is conducting its eighth secondary survey about the current state of RE in all types of schools. This helps the organisation to continue to support teachers in the classroom by raising awareness of the impact of government policy on RE. The deadline for participating in this survey is mid July and all teachers completing the survey will be entered into a prize draw. The survey can be found here: [NATRE Secondary Survey 2021 \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk)

You can see some of the findings from the 2019 survey in the infographic:



Can this survey link be shared with all secondary schools?

Spirited Arts 2021 – Still time to enter!

Entries for this year's Spirited Arts competition are still welcome up until the deadline of 31st July. Click here to watch Lat Blaylock, RE Today editor and National RE Adviser, explain you everything you need to know about this year's competition: [Spirited Arts & Poetry Competition 2021 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

How can SACRE encourage schools to enter this competition?

Research for RE

RE:online has had a bit of a refresh. Access some of the latest research online, including the 'Research of the Month' featuring a different piece of research each month: [Research of the Month - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](https://www.reonline.org.uk)

How can SACRE encourage teachers of RE to keep up to date with current research?

“Learning to Listen” report

The recent APPG (All-Party Parliamentary Group) report on Religion in the Media aimed at ‘working with parliamentarians, industry leaders, journalists, academics and faith communities to improve religious literacy in broadcast and print media’ draws attention to the importance of education in religion and worldviews. The full report can be viewed here: [APPG+Learning+to+Listen+12+04+21+\(2\).pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

Katie Freeman, Chair of NATRE: “Understanding people and their unique perspective on the world is a vital skill for us all, especially young people. Good religious education plays a vital role in that, helping create a more cohesive society, ensures young people receive a balanced education, and supports a vibrant economy by preparing employees and future business leaders for the globalised workplace and that includes roles in the media”

How can SACRE bring this important report to the attention of communities in our local authority?

NATRE call to action: Time for the government to address the consequences of their neglect of RE teachers

NATRE’s recent article claims that the demands of teaching Religious Education are generally poorly understood. A teacher of RE in modern Britain must not only understand the principal religious and non-religious worldviews, but also the diversity within and between those traditions, but many teachers are ill-equipped to do so effectively. The article can be read here: [Time for the government to address the consequences of their neglect of teachers of RE? \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

How does this apply to schools in our local authority?

Resources for RE

Humanist Heritage website launch

‘To mark the 125th anniversary of Humanists UK, Understanding Humanism have launched a new, free online resource that will support teachers and students to explore the rich history and influence on the UK of humanist thought and action.’ [Humanist Heritage - Exploring the rich history and influence of humanism in the UK \(humanists.uk\)](#)

Real People: Real Faith

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub recently launched its Real Faith: Real People project. Funded by Westhill and hosted on the NATRE website, this is a series of interviews filmed in locations across Berkshire, featuring local faith communities answering questions about their faith. Two questions, specific to each key stage were asked across the range of venues and in most venues, several people answered each question. This allows pupils and teachers to explore some of the diversity both between and within faith communities. The same six communities were interviewed at each key stage. Each film has a page of notes outlining the key questions and concepts, with a brief summary of the answers and some suggested follow-on activities. The hub is planning more videos in the next academic year. The clips and accompanying notes can be found here: [Real People Real Faith \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

Nobody stands nowhere

A new animated film by Emily Downe, created in partnership with Culham St Gabriel’s Trust and Canterbury Christ Church University, unpacks the idea of worldviews and invites the viewer to consider how their own unique view of the world might co-exist with other vantage points held by those around them.’ View the film here: [Nobody Stands Nowhere - Theos Think Tank - Understanding faith. Enriching society.](#)

Premier League footballer talks about his experience of Ramadan

Wolves defender Romain Saiss talks to the BBC's Match Of The Day about what it's like being a Premier League footballer and fasting during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Watch the video here:

[MOTDx: Wolves' Romain Saiss on being a footballer during Ramadan - BBC Sport](#)

Bhaktivedanta Manor virtual visit

Every year thousands of teachers and students visit Bhaktivedanta Manor to learn about Hinduism and 'lived religion'. Because of lockdown schools have been unable to go on any educational visits. This short informative video can be shared with students. Watch the video here: [Temple Visit - YouTube](#)

BBC Being...

A new series from the BBC, showing British Sikhs, Hindus, Jewish people, Christians and Muslims celebrating some of life's biggest moments, from birth and coming of age to marriage and the end of life makes a great classroom resource. [BBC iPlayer - Being... - Series 1: 2. Sikh](#)

How Islam began in under 10 minutes

True Tube tells the turbulent tale against the clock, with all the names, dates and events on a timeline. Watch here: [How Islam Began - In Ten Minutes - TrueTube](#)

Primary RE Facebook group

This group is intended to provide a supportive forum for teachers of Religious Education to Primary age children: [Primary RE - for everyone teaching RE in Primary Schools! | Facebook](#)

New blog launched for Key Stage 3 Buddhism

Dr Rachel Jackson-Royal has recently launched a new blog, entitled Unity and Diversity: Exploring Buddhism in KS3. Its aim is to help teachers towards a more authentic presentation of Buddhism in Key Stage 3 RE. The blog can be viewed here: [Unity and Diversity: Exploring Buddhism in KS3 – Reforming RE \(wordpress.com\)](#)

WHS Essay Competition 2021

The Wesley Historical Society runs an annual essay competition, open to Sixth Formers, seeking short essays on religious history.

There is a prize of up to £250 and the deadline is 1 October. Enter here: [The Wesley Historical Society: Events](#)