

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Meeting to be held on 18 March 2024 at 6.00 pm

In Goodsell Hall, Aldridge School, Tynings Ln, Aldridge, WS9 0AS

**NOTE: MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO MAKE
EVERY ENDEAVOUR TO ATTEND THE MEETING
IN ORDER TO ENSURE A WIDER REPRESENTATION
OF THE GROUPS**

QUORUM: 8 Members from 3 out of 4 groups

Democratic Services, The Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TW
Contact Name: **Mr Edward Cook, Democratic Services Officer** Telephone (01922)
653204
www.walsall.gov.uk

**If you are disabled and require help to and from the meeting room,
please contact the person above**

Walsall Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Representatives

Church of England

Mrs P. Lane
Mr A. Orlik - Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education
Mrs K. Donnellan
Mrs R. Graham
Vacancy

Christian denominations, other religions and religious denominations to reflect the principal religious traditions in Walsall.

Dr G. Gomez - Roman Catholic
Mrs V. Heydon-Matterface - Methodist, Brownhills and Willenhall
Deacon Helen Webster - Methodist, Walsall
Mr D. Lomax - United Reformed Church
Mrs D. Letford - New Testament Church of God
Mrs M. Mather - Walsall Quakers
Mr M. Sacha - Muslim Welfare Society
Imam Saeed-Ur-Rahman - Mosque and Islamic Centre
Mr K. Bhatt - Shree Ram Mandir (Walsall)
Mr M. Ashik Ali - Bangladesh Islamic Association
Mr G. Singh - Guru Nanak Gurdwara
Mr J. Singh Bachra - Guru Nanak Sikh Temple
Mr S. Singh Padda - Walsall Sikh Forum
Mr G. Tsiappourdi - Black Country Orthodox Trust
Mr Bill Green - Humanist Representative
Vacancy - Muslim Faith
Vacancy - Hindu Faith
Vacancy - Jewish Faith
Vacancy - Buddhist Faith
Vacancy - Salvation Army

Teacher Representatives

Mr G. Headley - National Union of Teachers
Ms H. Leadley - Blackwood Primary School

Local Authority

Councillor I. Hussain }
Councillor F. Hassan }
Councillor R. K. Mehmi } - Local Education Authority
Councillor E. Morgan }
Councillor Singh Sohal }
Councillor C. Statham }
Councillor M. Statham }

Co Opted Members

Vacancies

Agenda

1. **Welcome**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Late Items to be introduced by the Chair**
4. **Minutes** *– Enclosed*
To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October, 2023
5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
6. **Walsall SACRE Action Plan 2023-24** *– Enclosed*
7. **SACRE National Updates from RE Today** *– Enclosed*
8. **Non-statutory national content standard**
To inform SACRE of the RE Council's National Content Standard for RE which provides a non-statutory benchmark. *– Verbal update*
9. **Faith and Belief Forum – Identity Unboxed**
To inform SACRE of the Faith and Belief Forum's Identity Unboxed project. *– Verbal update*
10. **Inclusion Update**
To provide an update on inclusion and work to develop a Ten-year Inclusion Strategy and Plan. *– Enclosed*
11. **RE in Walsall – OFSTED update**
To receive an update on comments regarding RE in recent Walsall school OFSTED inspections. *– Enclosed*
12. **Education in Walsall update** *– Verbal update*
13. **Action Tracker** *– Enclosed*
14. **Date of Future Meetings:**
 - 15th July, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

**Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
Monday 23 October, 2023 at 6.00 p.m. in Conference Room 2 at the
Council House, Walsall**

Present:

Chair - Mr D. Lomax (United Reformed Church)
Mrs P. Lane (Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education)
Mr A. Orlik (Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education)
Mrs K. Donnellan (Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education)
Ms M. Mather (Quakers)
Dr G. Gomez (Roman Catholic)
Mr G. Singh (Guru Nanak Gurdwara)
Mr Sukhvinder Singh Padda (Walsall Sikh Forum)
Mr B. Green (Humanist)
Councillor M. Statham
Councillor C. Statham
Councillor I. Hussain
Councillor Singh Sohal
Councillor R.K. Mehmi

In attendance:

Fiona Moss (RE Today Advisor)
Nick Perks (Quality Assurance Team Manager, Walsall Council)
Neil Picken (Principal Democratic Services Officer, Walsall Council)
Edward Cook (Democratic Services Officer, Walsall Council)

1. Welcome and Introductions

All present were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves. SACRE noted that Mr Edward Cook would be undertaking the role of Clerk at future meetings.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Farhana Hassan and Mr Sacha.

3. Late Items to be introduced by the Chair.

It was noted that Mr Sukhvinder Singh Padda had replaced Balvinder Nijjar as the Walsall Sikh Forum representative.

4. Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July, 2023, a copy having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

There were no items in private session.

6. SACRE Action Plan

A report was submitted.

(See annexed).

The Chair presented the report and welcomed debate.

SACRE agreed that rotating venues was positive. The Chair requested all present to notify the clerk should they wish to host a future meeting.

When considering Community Cohesion, SACRE requested that the Council's Integration Lead, Mr Nigel Rowe, be invited to a future meeting to discuss Community Cohesion.

Discussion ensued on the Agreed Syllabus and Collective Worship. Members agreed that a questionnaire should be developed by a subgroup of SACRE. Once agreed, the questionnaire would be disseminated by the Primary, Nursery and Special Forum and the Walsall Association of Secondary Heads.

When considering communication with schools, the Quality Assurance Team Manager confirmed that information appertaining to SACRE could be included in weekly briefings sent from the Access and Inclusion to schools and that a representative could attend half termly head teacher meetings to present key messages. The Chair stated that volunteers to attend to speak to collective worship would be sought via the Clerk following the meeting.

SACRE then discussed the most effective approach to developing a guide for visiting places of worship. The RE Today Advisor explained that there was a National Programme via RE Hubs, organised into regional hubs, that listed places of worship once representatives had attended a short training session. It was noted that Mr Green had attended the course. The RE Today Advisor encouraged other members of SACRE to attend and to raise awareness within their networks. The national scheme placed the responsibility to update details on each member and could be updated at any time. A flyer providing training dates would be circulated to members of SACRE.

Members of SACRE agreed that a list of places of worship and contact details was important, especially for those wishing to make contact to arrange school visits. It was discussed whether a locally developed list would be more beneficial than using the national database. The RE Today advisor explained that encouraging

people to attend the regional database was positive as they would then update contact details for those wishing to arrange visits. SACRE noted that the Councils Community Cohesion team may have access to existing data and welcomed an update from the team at a future meeting. A member agreed to raise awareness of the national database at a forthcoming meeting of the Faith Leaders Network. The Quality Assurance Team Manager agreed to circulate details of the National Database to schools in the weekly briefing.

Resolved

That:

- 1.1 The clerk emails members of SACRE to seek volunteers to attend an online meeting to develop a questionnaire in respect of Collective Worship and the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus.
- 1.2 The Councils Integration Lead be invited to the next meeting of SACRE to discuss Community Cohesion and lists of places of worship.
- 1.3 The Quality Assurance Team Manager circulates details of the National Database to schools in the weekly briefing.
- 1.4 The RE Today Advisor provides the clerk with a flyer providing training dates for circulation to members of SACRE.

7. SACRE Annual Report

A report was submitted.

(See annexed).

The RE today advisor explained that producing the Annual Report was a statutory requirement. The document would be submitted to the DfE and National SACRE. In terms of broader circulation, it was agreed that the Quality Assurance Team Manager send the document with education updates.

Mr Green commented that he was pleased that Walsall Council took the decision in 2023 to include a Humanist representative in category 'A'. Humanists UK holds regular meetings and trainings for Humanist members of SACREs to ensure Humanists can be constructive and supportive SACRE participants. From attending these and from his experience as both a co-opted member and more recently as a full member in category 'A' it had become increasingly clear that Walsall SACRE was well organised and should be commended both for its inclusivity and for providing the resources required to enhance both the education of its members and that of the students within the Borough.

Other members noted that SACRE was well attended, well organised and focussed on issues that really matter.

Resolved

1. That the SACRE annual report be approved with the inclusion of a quote from the Humanist representative in the chairs foreword.
2. That the Quality Assurance Team Manager circulates the Annual Report to Headteachers.

8. School Workforce Data

A report was submitted.

(See annexed).

The RE today advisor explained that it was a statutory requirement for schools to submit workforce data to the Department for Education (DfE). However, some schools did not submit this information.

The data includes the percentage of time teaching subjects, including Religious Education. SACRE were informed that whilst there was no legal requirement in terms of curriculum time for RE, it was hoped that it would be 5% and good quality provision. It was explained that where the data was recorded as a z, schools had reported their teaching hours for other subjects, but had not reported RE. It should not be assumed that these schools teach or do not teach RE.

An overview of the schools that had submitted data was then provided. The chair undertook to speak with Bloxwich Academy and the Studio School to establish the level of RE provision as he was a Governor at the school.

The Chair enquired as to the consequences should schools not submit the required information. The RE today advisor explained that this had been an ongoing conversation between the DfE and Ofsted. The DfE had written to schools that had no web presence in terms of RE and had said teaching time for RE was zero. It was suggested by the then Minister of State for Education, The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, that SACRE had a role by writing to schools and seeking further clarity as to the level of provision. If there was no provision, this could be escalated to the DfE / Education and Skills Funding Agency. The Quality Assurance Team Manager advised that the Local Authority submit maintained schools' data with Academies providing the information directly.

SACRE members supported the view that this was a matter which should be considered further and asked for a comparison of previous years to establish if there were any trends. The RE Today advisor agreed to undertake this request.

SACRE agreed to write to those schools which either hadn't submitted data or where it wasn't clear what provision there was on the website. It was agreed that the RE Today advisor, together with the Quality Assurance Team Manager, draft letters for sign off by the Chair to establish the current position in terms of RE provision.

Resolved

That:-

1. The Chair to discuss the level of RE provision at Bloxwich Academy and The Studio School.
2. The RE Today Advisor together with the Quality Assurance Team Manager draft letters, signed by the Chair, to those schools that either hadn't submitted data or where it wasn't clear what provision there was on their website.
3. The RE Today Advisor compares previous years' workforce data to identify any trends and provides an update to the meeting in March, 2024.

9. SACRE National Updates from RE Today

A report was submitted.

(See annexed).

The RE Today Advisor drew attention to the recruitment challenges in RE. UCAS data shows that teacher recruitment was down a third of applicants from the last recruitment cycle. As of September 2024, a small bursary would be made available for those wishing to train to teach RE. However, this was less than bursaries for other subjects, expected to be £10k as opposed to those training in other subjects which received up to £25k. This posed a challenge for some that may be switching careers and so were unable to train without sufficient funding, due to responsibilities.

Resolved

That the update be noted.

10. RE in Walsall - OFSTED updates

A report was submitted.

(See annexed).

The RE Today Advisor advised that 2 inspection reports had been published in respect of Hilary Primary School and Rosedale Church of England School but that no comment had been made on RE.

Resolved

That the update be noted.

11. Education in Walsall updates

The Quality Assurance Team Manager highlighted that education in Walsall was improving. In terms of Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 there was only 1 measure where the gap hadn't been closed. In Key Stage 5, results were better than in 2019 and in Early Years and Primary, results were better than in previous years.

The challenge moving forward was phonics and an action plan was in place to visit schools which were below the national average.

The Portfolio Holder for Education explained that the Council had proactively managed the new framework and 89.3% of Schools were now good or better.

The Chair and SACRE congratulated the team on the significant improvements.

Resolved

That the update be noted.

12. Election of Spokespersons for Groups (Teacher Category)

The Chair sought a nomination for the position of spokesperson for the Teacher Category.

Mrs Leadley was nominated and it was:-

Resolved

That Mrs Leadley be appointed as the Teacher representative.

13. Date of Future Meetings:

- 18th March, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.
- 15th July, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7:50pm.

WALSALL SACRE 2023-24 ACTION PLAN

ACTIONS COMPLETED in 2022/23

- Meetings held at a variety of venues including Blue Coat Primary school and the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Willenhall.
- Members received access to NASACRE training.
- Students from Blue Coat Primary School met with SACRE to share their views.
- The chair attended the NASACRE Conference.
- Humanist member appointed to category A
- Constitution reviewed and updated.

ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED IN THE 23/24 ACADEMIC YEAR

- To continue to hold meetings in a variety of venues;
- A member of SACRE to attend the NASACRE Conference;
- Use co-option to ensure the membership is well informed and represents the diversity of the local community;
- Ensure SACRE plays a key role in promoting community cohesion;
- Monitor the early effectiveness of the new agreed syllabus by receiving feedback from teachers;
- Gain information about RE provision in schools and examination entries;
- Gain information regarding the practice of delivering collective worship in schools;
- Establish communication between SACRE and school leaders;
- Develop effective communication with academies;
- Produce a guide for visiting places of worship.

Walsall SACRE News – Spring Term 2024

The role of SACRE is to create and monitor the agreed syllabus for RE in our local area, and to advise the local authority on matters relating to the provision and quality of RE and school collective worship. SACRE is keen to respond to teachers' needs and school requests for RE help.

National RE news for teachers and SACRE members

This paper is a short digest of some useful items of interest about RE in the spring term 2024. Wherever possible we have provided hotlinks to additional web-based resources.

Religious Education in the HMCI Annual report

The [Ofsted Annual Report](#) published at the end of November 2023 presents the organisation's findings for the areas they inspect including schools. NATRE is pleased to see the recognition of the challenges faced by teachers of RE and the impact on children.

Ofsted found the following issues in many schools:

- schools failing to meet the statutory requirement to teach RE to all pupils in all year groups;
- pupils not being taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society,
- non-examination provision typically not being of high quality;
- schools not teaching topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter;

Ofsted recommends a coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools including:

- the provision of high-quality professional development
- curriculum publishers identifying clearly what pupils will learn and when
- the government proving clear expectations about RE provision in schools
- non-statutory guidance for RE needing to be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach

These findings add further weight to the call from NATRE and others for a National Plan for RE and for government support for the National Content Standard published by the RE Council last month.

Extracts from the report relating to RE are quoted in full below:

From the Curriculum Section of the report as follows.

However, some subjects still do not receive the attention they deserve:

- *in many secondary schools, pupils do not benefit from a broad and ambitious music curriculum. In physical education (PE), pupils typically experience a broad range of activities. However, schools do not always ensure that these contribute enough to developing pupils' knowledge and skills.*
- *in too many primary and secondary schools, the religious education (RE) that pupils receive is of a poor quality and not fit for purpose, leaving pupils ill-equipped for some of the complexities of contemporary society.*

Religious education

RE in schools is generally of poor quality. Although it is a statutory subject, schools often consider RE as an afterthought. As a subject on the curriculum, it is under-valued. RE is a complex subject, and the lack of clarity and support from government makes schools' job harder.

Some schools steer through these challenges well, but most do not. We found that:

- *many schools do not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE at all stages*
- *pupils are rarely taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society (where religion and non-religion play different parts in different people's lives)*
- *too often, schools do not teach topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter*

- *non-examined RE is typically not high quality.*

All pupils should develop a broad and secure knowledge of the complexity of religious and non-religious traditions. It will take coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools:

- *schools need high-quality professional development to teach RE well*
- *curriculum publishers need to identify clearly what pupils will learn and when, building on knowledge over time, so that pupils develop a deep knowledge of the chosen religious and non-religious traditions*
- *the government should provide clear expectations about RE provision in schools. Schools should follow these. Current non-statutory guidance for RE should be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach*

National Content Standard for Religious Education

The RE Council of England and Wales has launched its [National Content Standard](#) for Religious Education in England. This newsletter has previously reported on the postcode lottery of RE provision in England, as found in the Ofsted [Research Review](#), the [primary](#) and [secondary](#) surveys from NATRE, and [analysis of the DfE's own data](#). However, until now, there has been no national benchmark to cite when we are asked, "What exactly does high-quality RE look like?"

The purpose is to give a national benchmark that applies to all types of school in England. The NCS is set out in the style of National Curriculum documents, and at the heart of it is the standard, based on the [National Statement of Entitlement](#) from the RE Council's religion and worldviews project.

You can read the National Content Standard [here](#) and a blog about it by Deborah Weston [here](#).

NATRE Secondary survey on RE: results

This is an analysis of the data gathered from a questionnaire on impact of political policies on Religious Education in England, RME in Scotland and RVE in Wales. It relates particularly to the level of provision in different types of school, the experience of teachers in relation to initial teacher training and continuing professional development and the type of examination and non-examination courses offered at key stages 4 and 5. Through publicising this survey, NATRE hopes it can be used widely seeks to make the case for more attention to be paid to the level of provision and quality of our subject in all schools and, in England for there to be a National Plan for RE as recommended by the Commission on RE in 2018.

This tenth survey was conducted during the summer term of 2023 via a number of teacher networks supported by NATRE, and RE Today Services. 241 teachers from different parts of the UK responded.

The report discusses teacher workload, provision at KS3 and KS4, leadership, timetabling and time for GCSE RS, whether RE is taught by specialists and if teachers have had any RE CPD, and the destinations of A level RS students. Access the full report: [NATRE Secondary Survey 2023](#)

Advanced British Standard Consultation

The DfE are currently consulting on the Advanced British Standard, a potential new qualification framework for 16-19 year olds. NATRE have pointed that current plans have not included the statutory position of RE for those studying 16-19 within a school setting, nor is Religious Studies A level – one of the most popular subjects, used as an example in the literature around the proposal. The closing date for the consultation is 20th March 2024. You can respond [here](#).

Parliamentary question on RE: Supporting and funding RE

[Ofsted describes](#) “the lack of clarity and support from the government makes schools’ job harder” in relation to delivering high-quality RE. An example of this can be found in the answer from Minister of State for Education; Damian Hinds, MP [to this written question](#) from Jim Shannon MP:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to take steps to fund network hubs for Religious Education; and if she will make a statement.

Damian Hinds MP, Minister of State for Education responded

“Religious education (RE) is an essential part of a school’s curriculum and remains a compulsory subject in all state-funded schools, including academies, to all pupils up to the age of 18. RE develops an individual’s knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society, as well as serving to inform their own values and behaviour.

Although the Department has not been involved in the establishment of the RE Hubs project, the Department welcomes its work to support teachers and practitioners. The Department currently has no plans to provide funding for the project. The Department does, however, provide support for RE in other ways.”

The answer then goes on to cite spending on the new bursary which was finally reinstated this year but is still very small in comparison to other shortage subjects such as geography and languages including Latin, the Oak National Academy materials which will eventually be rolled out to all subjects and the eight-week funded subject knowledge enhancement courses for potential trainee teachers of RE – again offered to many other subjects.

DfE’s annual report and accounts set out government policy:

“Our main levers to support schools are our Curriculum Hub programmes (music, computing, languages, English and mathematics), the Behaviour Hubs programme and our model curricula guidance ...” (page 72)

It is important to note that music hubs will receive £79m a year until at least 2025 and there is money available for other subject support too. For example, Schools Week [reported](#) on 1st December 2023 that the £320 million PE and sports premium for primary schools will be extended for at least another year from September.

NATRE and others in the RE community ask, if “Religious education (RE) is an essential part of a school’s curriculum and remains a compulsory subject in all state funded schools” and in relation to the RE Hubs project, “the Department welcomes its work to support teachers and practitioners”, why does the government not back up these words with action by funding the subject on a par with other subjects in the curriculum – including [RE Hubs](#)?

Is this a question SACRE should pose to local MPs and prospective candidates?

House of Lords debate quality Religious Education

Religious Education was in the spotlight on January 18th 2024, as the Lords debated standards in RE in the Grand Committee. NATRE worked with the RE Policy Unit to help brief several peers who offered to speak in this debate proposed by Lord Harries of Pentregarth.

In his contribution, Lord Harries of Pentregarth raised concerns about schools’ poor quality of religious education (RE) and quoted data collected by NATRE. He also referenced the damning 2023 HMCI Annual Ofsted report from Amanda Spielman, where RE was described as “poor quality” and “not fit for purpose”.

Ofsted suggested, he said, that RE was "undervalued" and often considered as an "afterthought" by schools and the "lack of clarity and support" from the Government made schools' job "harder".

The peer criticized the lack of government support, citing the survey conducted by NASACRE in August 2023, which found that five authorities declared no spending on RE at all, and a further 34—39 in all, or 31%—stated they did not spend any money supporting RE in schools.

Lord Harries closed his remarks by calling for a National Plan for RE, including a benchmark for the curriculum. He made a list of matters for inclusion in this National Plan.

1. it should include a budgetary provision at least comparable to that received for other subjects such as music;

- the plan should include a benchmark for what is expected from the syllabus,
- that what happens locally should be judged by this benchmark;
- that RE should be taught by people who have qualifications in the subject and who are given regular opportunities to enhance their professional skills,
- that more bursaries and more money for enhanced professional training should be made available to this end.

Various speakers contributed to the debate which can be read in full here: [Religious Education in Schools - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

Listen via Parliament TV [Parliamentlive.tv - Lords Grand Committee](#)

RE Featured in Radio 4's Beyond Belief

On Monday 29th January, BBC Radio 4's Beyond Belief focused upon Religious Education. The episode was entitled [What Should We Teach in RE](#). Guests discussed the subject's importance, what they think should be taught in the subject and how, alongside challenges faced by RE at this time. The panel included Henna Karin-Sayer (RE teacher and TikTok content creator), Fiona Moss (CEO of NATRE, the National Association of Teachers of RE), Stephen Evans (CEO of the National Secular Society) and Rabbi Benji Rickman (Head of RE at King David High School, which has a Jewish faith character).

The episode can be listened to on the [BBC's website](#).

Institute for Jewish Policy Research: Key Findings from National Jewish Identity Survey

[This study](#) provides a up to date profile of how Jews in Britain understand and live their Jewish lives. It is the largest survey of its kind, being conducted among a research panel of nearly 5000 members and is free to download. Headlines include:

- 94% of Jews in the UK say that ethical and moral behaviour make up part of their Jewish identities.
- Nearly 1/3 of Jewish adults had personally experienced antisemitism in the year leading to the survey.
- Over half of British Jewish adults in the UK belong to a synagogue. More than this practice aspects of Jewish religious culture.

The key findings of the report can be found in the film [Who Are Jews in the UK Today?](#).

How can SACRE encourage school RE to reflect the picture of lived religion in this report and in the UK in general?

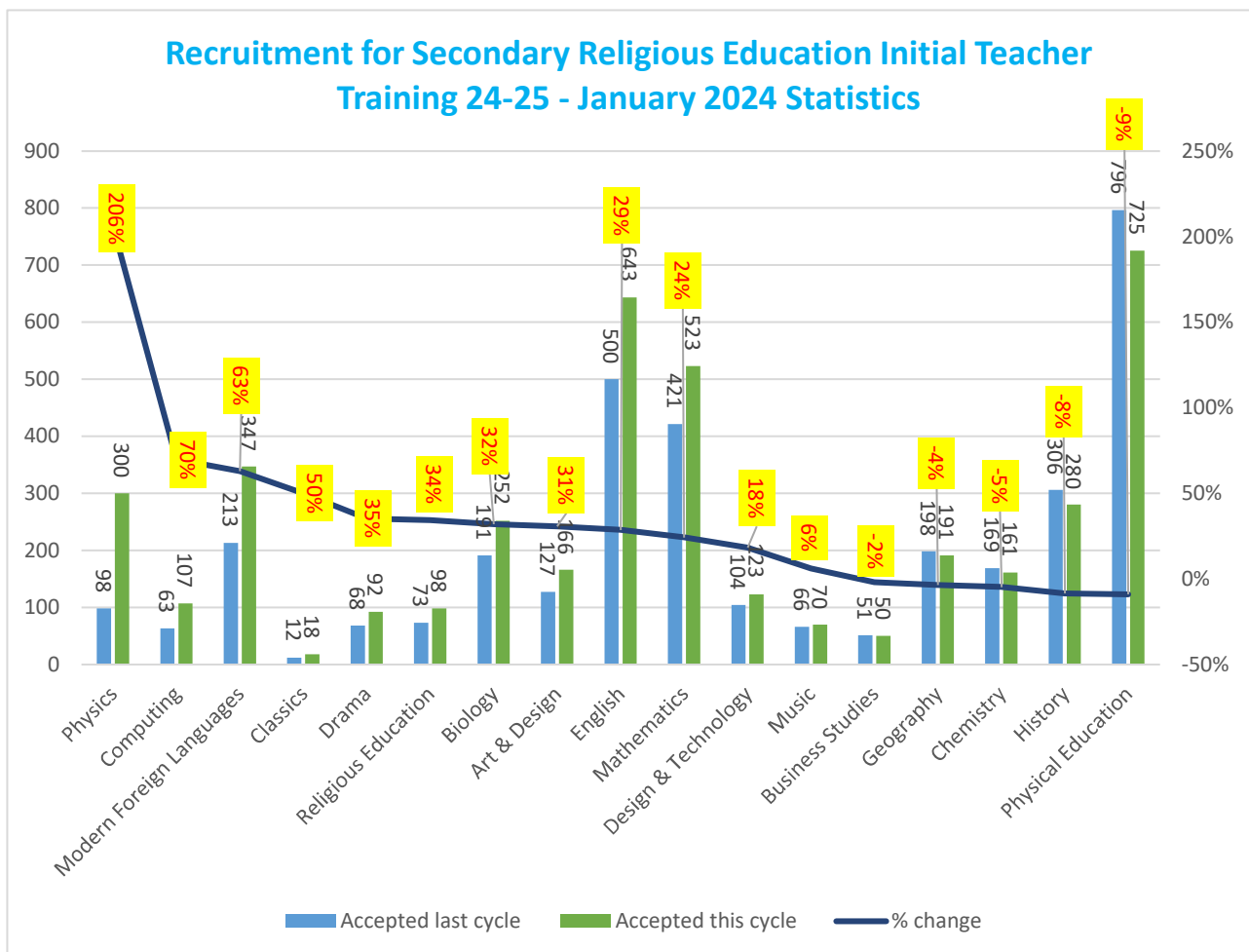
£10,000 training bursary helps boost recruitment for Religious Studies

Secondary initial teacher training recruitment rallies following restoration of £10K bursary.

The graph below shows the number of individuals who have accepted an offer of a place to train as a secondary RE teacher in 2024-25 as of January 2024. This figure is up by just over a third compared to the figure for the same time last year. This boost is potentially good news for schools struggling to fill RE vacancies, but recruitment is still likely to fall short of the target, which last year was 655.

Interesting to note however, that the subjects with the largest bursaries; Physics (28K), Computing (28K) and Modern Foreign Languages (£25K) are also the subjects where the current data shows the largest improvement in recruitment (between 63% and 206%). By contrast, Art and Design, Religious Education and English, each with a 10K bursary are currently recording an increase of between 29% and 34%.

It is unsurprising, especially in the current economic circumstances, those interested in training to be teachers are looking closely at the costs involved and the incentives offered before deciding if and how to train.



Can SACRE members spread the word about the training bursary? What myths about training can be addressed?

Training, networking, resources and other support

Bayt al Fann: exploring art and culture inspired by Islamic tradition

'Bayt al Fann' is Arabic for 'Art House'. It was launched in November 2021 and welcomes all to explore the past, present and future of Islamic art, culture and heritage. Its [website](#) is a huge treasure trove of information and examples of art and culture linked to Islam from ancient scriptures to modern 'calligraphitti' and architecture.

For those who want more, there are events and workshops and a new quarterly periodical with the first edition centred around Islamic pattern. There are regular, detailed social media posts across many platforms including Instagram (baytal.fann), Threads (baytal.fann), TikTok (@baytalfann) and X (@BaytAlFann).

List of Resources to Support Schools with Contentious Topics

Together is a coalition of some of the UK's best known organisations that aim to build a kinder, closer and more connected society. As one of its campaigns, 'Together for Humanity' is building a movement to stand against rising antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate in the UK amidst the conflict in the Middle East. The campaign is working to support schools, universities and councils to build bridges in their communities.

It has created a document containing links and information to offer guidance that schools and teachers may find helpful. There are also some resources that could potentially be used with pupils on this document.

[Access resource](#)

Westhill Awards 2024-25

NASACRE is once again joining with Westhill to offer awards of up to £4000 for innovative and enduring projects. Any project should offer young people meaningful opportunities to engage in compelling learning experiences in RE (or Collective Worship), within the broad theme of "education into diversity".

Any SACRE wishing to submit an application is strongly advised to review the briefing notes which accompany the application form. There is a webinar on **16th October** which will look at the application process and give interested SACREs an opportunity to hear from past winners. The application form and the notes can be found and downloaded [here](#).

NASACRE Training for SACRE members

Wednesday 26th June 6.30-8.30 So, you've joined your local SACRE...

Description: A rerun of the September session, to help new SACRE members to understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members make their contribution to SACRE's work.

Free. Other training and resources available on the NASACRE site. [Welcome to NASACRE - NASACRE](#)

New RE Today Learning Zone

RE Today Services are delighted to have launched a new e-learning platform that puts teachers in control of their CPD. Courses already available on the Learning Zone include subject knowledge webinars for both primary and secondary teachers on Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu Dharma, Islam, Judaism, Sikhi and Non-Religious Worldviews alongside the ever-popular Understanding Christianity course for primary colleagues. Teachers of RE can select those courses and webinars most relevant to them – each can be accessed and

used at times convenient for the participants, or even accessed in short bursts over a few weeks or months. More will be added to the Learning Zone over the coming months.

To find out more, please go to [RE Today Learning Zone](#). [Login](#)

RE Hubs – website growing!



RE Hubs website www.re-hubs.uk aims to connect those who can provide resources with those who need them, and create a neutral platform bringing RE professionals together.

Many organisations serve RE/RVE/R&W education in the UK, from places of worship and school speakers to CPD partnerships and resource providers. The website helps teachers to find local places of interest to visit, as well as people who will visit schools. Local training opportunities are listed.

The West Midlands hub is led by Chris Giles.

Culham St Gabriel’s FREE self-study course

Digging Deeper: Subject Knowledge, this short, self-study course builds on the introduction level course and is available for FREE. Find out more here: [Culham St Gabriel's Trust Moodle \(cstg.org.uk\)](http://cstg.org.uk)

Free webinars for primary and secondary ECTs – a taster for NATRE ECT membership

Early Career Teachers have access to a range of free support through a series of online sessions. ‘Café’ sessions give you a chance to talk with experienced teachers and experts from different worldview backgrounds. The taught sessions offer expert input with a focus on practical classroom strategies.

Date – All Mondays 4.00-5.30pm	Speaker	Topic
11 March 2024	Stephen Pett	Exploring Jewish worldviews
8 April 2024	Deborah Weston plus an expert panel	Café NATRE: Pagan traditions
13 May 2024	Lat Blaylock	Using film to deepen learning in RE
10 June 2024	Fiona Moss	Café NATRE: Getting the most from your NATRE membership
8 July 2024	Stephen Pett	Using a religion and worldviews approach in RE

ECT webinars booking link <https://www.natre.org.uk/membership/early-careers-teachers/ect-free-monthly-webinar/>

BBC expands early years RE resources

There are new resources for 4- and 5-year-olds for RE / RME and RVE from BBC Bitesize Reception. These include some simple craft activities and some recipes for festive food with clear and simple ideas to bring the world of religion alive for small children.

The subject is connected to work in the fields of expressive arts and design, helping pupils with their understanding of the world particularly in the field of religion and belief.

These new materials cover Christmas, Easter, Eid Al Adha, Vaisakhi, Divali and more and have now gone live. They include video clips made for the age group, activity sheets and information for teacher-use.

Lat Blaylock, who contributed to the work says: 'I'm really pleased to see that BBC have made such a diverse and well thought out contribution to Early Years learning about religion and belief. Teachers will find this is a little treasure trove.'

Here is a link: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z24kqyc [Religions, festivals and celebrations](#)

RE Today Primary curriculum and NATRE Membership- direct support for teaching

RE Today in partnership with NATRE have created a primary curriculum made up of learning pathways for each half term, lesson by lesson power points, retrieval questions, knowledge organisers and much more.

Schools will receive this if they become NATRE school enhanced members which is an annual subscription currently priced at £270 per school.

www.natre.org.uk/primary/retoday-primary-re-curriculum/

NATRE is the largest membership organisation which promotes, defends and supports RE teachers and RE teaching. It does this through producing high-quality resources and CPD, lobbying government, being involved in conversations with the DfE and Ofsted, LAs and SACREs, telling teachers' stories and experiences and being a voice for all teachers.



Membership packages for students, ECTs, teachers, schools, RE professionals and RE enthusiasts!

Details: www.natre.org.uk/membership

*News update curated by RE Today Services
March 2024*



NATIONAL CONTENT STANDARD FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

JULY 2023
First Edition

National Content Standard for Religious Education

This document sets out a National Content Standard for the subject within the context of National Plan for Religious Education (RE) which would embed the standard into the planning and delivery of the subject in England.

This document draws on The Religious Education Council of England and Wales Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom project, as well as other relevant national publications from the last 5 years. The Draft Resource, published by the RE Council's project, proposes a standard (called a National Entitlement Statement). This document is set out in the style of the National Curriculum and outlines how a National Content Standard for the subject might apply in different types of school. The appendices summarise relevant sources and evidence that have been considered when developing this National Content Standard.

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What is a National Plan for Religious Education?

The proposed National Plan for RE builds on the principles set out in the Commission on RE (2018) and reflects changes that have impacted the education sector since that time, including to initial teacher training and early career development, the expansion of the academy schools programme and a further decline in the level and quality of provision for RE, evidenced for example, in DfE school workforce data and the Ofsted Research Review (2021).

This proposal calls on the government to take action to secure:

1. A refreshed vision for the subject, based on a religion and worldviews approach. So through careful selection of knowledge for the curriculum (see page 6), the subject will explore the nature of religion and worldviews, and the important role that religious³ and non-religious⁴ worldviews play in all human life. This means enabling all pupils to become knowledgeable, open-minded, critical participants in public discourse, who make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion or belief which shape the global landscape. It is a subject for all pupils, whatever their own family background or personal beliefs and practices.
2. high quality teaching for all pupils, in whatever school they attend, planned and delivered by those with a secure knowledge of their curriculum area.

For this reason, it is proposed that:

3. a **National Content Standard** for RE/an education in religion and worldviews be established to set a benchmark for what constitutes high quality in this subject (see page 4)
 - a. Where Academies are free to determine their own curriculum, the Funding Agreement should be amended to specify the nature of the provision required to secure the expected quality of RE/education in religion and worldviews, with the effect that the published syllabus for the subject in these contexts must demonstrate due regard to the National Content Standard.
 - b. systems are established, including through the inspection process, **to hold more effectively to account**, those schools that are failing to have due regard to a National Content Standard.

To support the above two recommendations, a sustained programme of investment in teacher education, linked to the early career framework and ongoing professional development is required. For this reason, is it proposed:

- a. that the proportion of lessons of secondary RE/education in religion and worldviews taught by people who are trained to teach the subject is increased by **reintroducing bursaries and other measures** to recruit trainees
- b. that those training as primary teachers have **sufficient RE/education in religion and worldviews specific training** to feel confident in the classroom
- c. that financial investment is made in **regional RE/education in religion and worldviews hubs** to extend opportunities for schools and teachers to draw upon relevant expertise in their region including through local communities of religion or belief.

Towards a National Content Standard

At the heart of the National Plan for Religious Education is the need to establish a benchmark for what constitutes high quality in the subject – a National Content Standard. Such a benchmark could be used in clarification of regulations about the nature of provision required in Academy schools and may helpfully provide non-statutory guidance for the arms-length curriculum body, Oak National Academy, and its partners, in the upcoming development of a fully resourced curriculum in RE next academic year. Likewise, the National Plan and National Content Standard may support Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and others with responsibility for RE to play their part in raising standards for all children.

In the first instance, we set out National Content Standard (page 5) drawing upon a range of sources and presented in the style of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This approach recognises that, whilst the sources set out in the appendices establish that all state funded schools must teach RE, neither primary legislation nor supplementary documents such as academy funding agreements, provide a benchmark for the breadth, depth and level of ambition of the curriculum. Without a National Content Standard therefore, Religious Education lacks parity with the subjects of the National Curriculum despite its statutory place at the core of the basic curriculum (see Education Act 2002 S80 on page 16). This is followed by a reference section setting out the source selection which provides essential material for the creation of this National Content Standard.

Religious Education programmes of study

In the style of the National curriculum in England

NOTE: Whenever the term ‘worldviews’ is used in this document, it means religious and non-religious worldviews.

Purpose of study¹

An education in religion and worldviews should:

- introduce pupils to the rich diversity of religion and non-religion, locally and globally, as a key part of understanding how the world works and what it means to be human
- stimulate pupils’ curiosity about, and interest in, this diversity of worldviews, both religious and non-religious
- expand upon how worldviews work, and how different worldviews, religious and non-religious, influence individuals, communities and society
- develop pupils’ awareness that learning about worldviews involves interpreting the significance and meaning of information they study
- develop pupils’ appreciation of the complexity of worldviews, and sensitivity to the problems of religious language and experience
- induct pupils into the processes and scholarly methods by which we can study religion, religious and non-religious worldviews
- enable pupils, by the end of their studies, to identify positions and presuppositions of different academic disciplines and their implications for understanding
- give pupils opportunities to explore the relationship between religious worldviews and literature, culture and the arts
- include pupils in the enterprise of interrogating the sources of their own developing worldviews and how they may benefit from exploring the rich and complex heritage of humanity
- provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the relationship between their personal worldviews and the content studied, equipping them to develop their own informed responses in the light of their learning.

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.

¹ RE Council Worldviews Project: Draft Resource 2022, page 17

Selecting content

It is vital that syllabus writers and curriculum developers make wise decisions on the selection of knowledge for a curriculum. Time for RE is limited, and the religion and worldviews approach is intended to avoid a proliferation of content, not least because of the impossibility of comprehensive coverage of the diversity of religious and non-religious traditions. The criteria for deciding content include the following:

1. Legal Framework: The relevant legal requirement operates (see page 11), which for most schools and academies without a religious character is that RE ‘shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain’ (Education Act 1996 Section 375). For most schools and academies with a religious character RE is determined by the governors and in their trust deed or equivalent. This primary legislation along with case law, set an expectation that pupils will develop knowledge and understanding of the matters of central importance for the religious and non-religious worldviews studied.

2. Intention: The National Content Standard must frame the intent behind the content selection. The treatment of that content then contributes to the progression of understanding of the elements in the National Content Standard, and the links between them.

3. Inclusive Principle: Best practice in RE, as well as European and domestic legislation, has established the principle that RE in schools without a religious character should be inclusive of both religious and non-religious worldviews. Schools should ensure that the content and delivery of the RE curriculum are inclusive in this respect (noting that this does not imply equal time between religious and non-religious worldviews). All religious and non-religious worldviews studied must have fair and accurate representation.

4. Contextual Factors: Local context is important, including school character, local community character, pupil knowledge and experience, teacher knowledge and experience. Local context also includes the history of local areas, allowing opportunities for local studies that connect teaching and learning with the geographical and historical background.

5. Collectively Enough Principle: Pupils need to gain ‘collectively enough’ or ‘cumulatively sufficient’ knowledge (OFSTED 2021), not total coverage. In this context, ‘collectively enough’ needs to relate to the National Content Standard, with its three broad strands of content, engagement and position.

6. Coherency: Schools should be able to give a clear account of their curriculum choices and carefully consider how they will enable the construction of a coherent curriculum for pupils.

Subject Content

This exemplar content should be read within the context of the legal framework including the primary legislation cited above for different types of school, and case law which together set an expectation that pupils will develop knowledge and understanding of the matters of central importance for the religious and non-religious worldviews studied.

The material below is indicative of the breadth, depth and ambition of the curriculum content about religious and non-religious worldviews, that is required in a curriculum that would meet this National Content Standard. However, schools are not required by law to teach this exemplar content. The standard builds on the legal framework in its assumption that the content of a curriculum in this subject will be age appropriate and focus on religious and non-religious worldviews rather than on content which is the focus of a different curriculum subject. Likewise, 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 its place as a core component of the basic curriculum.

In relation to religion and belief, pupils must be taught:

Content²

- **Nature/formation/expression:** What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences
- **Organised/individual:** How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews
- **Contexts:** How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change.
- **Meaning and purpose:** How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience
- **Values, commitments and morality:** How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life
- **Influence and power:** How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies

Engagement

- **Ways of knowing:** The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing.
- **Lived experience:** The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people.

² RE Council Worldviews Project: Draft Resource 2022. Expanded statements in the table on page 19f of this document.

- **Dialogue/interpretation:** The field of study of worldviews is to be shown as a dynamic area of debate

Position

- **Personal worldviews reflexivity:** Pupils will reflect on and potentially develop their personal worldviews and make scholarly judgements in the light of their study in the light of their study of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- **Personal worldviews impact:** Pupils will reflect on how their worldviews affect their learning

Making good progress

NOTE: As was stated on page 5, whenever the term ‘worldviews’ is used in this document, it refers to religious and non-religious worldviews.

The National Content Standard is intended to set a standard and a benchmark for an education in religion and worldviews, although there is no single correct way to deliver it. Religious education is part of the statutory basic curriculum and not the National Curriculum. This means that, unlike the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum, there is no single descriptor of the subject content which must be followed for schools to which the National Curriculum applies. Furthermore, the legal framework for RE in different types of school, means that responsibility for setting the curriculum content, rests with different authorities.

For all these reasons, the national content standard does not recommend one model for making good progress. Instead, one possible example is offered here which demonstrates the breadth, depth and ambition of subject content around which progression needs to build. Two further examples may be found in the Draft Resource pages 42-45.

Standards for EYFS

4-5 year olds might use photographs to observe home lives of some people from a religious tradition, from at least two different contexts. They notice some things that are the same in the homes and some that are different. They notice that some things in their own homes are the same and some are different, and that not everyone is the same. (a, c, g, h, j)*

Standards for Key stage 1

5-7 year olds might look at some religious artwork from a diverse range of contexts (such as pictures of Jesus from around the world) and connect them with some stories or texts that help to interpret the artwork (e.g. gospel accounts pictured). They notice how the different ways of expressing the stories in art are more or less familiar and think about why (e.g. according to their own contexts). They are introduced to a selection of voices to help them find out that such stories may be important in some people’s lives as part of organised worldviews, and find out why (e.g. they may include important people, and ideas about how to live). They find out that all kinds of different people may see the stories as important, but not everyone, and that sometimes this is to do with belief in God. (a, b, c, g, j)

Standards for Lower Key stage 2

7-9 year olds might ask questions about meaning and purpose in life, expressing their own ideas and saying where these ideas come from. They might explore how religious worldviews help some people make sense of life and affect how they live day to day. For example, they might talk to adherents about what it means to believe there is a God, or to believe in salvation, or submission, or karma and samsara – how these ideas can transform

a person's life. They might examine some texts and stories that illustrate these big concepts and find out ways in which they are interpreted. They may reflect on the difference it makes to these interpretations if someone is an adherent or not, including pupils' own perspectives. (a, c, d, g, h, j)

Standards for Upper Key stage 2

9-11 year olds might ask a question about the difference that context makes to one's worldview. For example, after thinking about their own context, they might use and interrogate data, interviews and visual images to examine the differences it makes to be a Muslim in a Muslim majority country (e.g. Indonesia) and a Muslim minority country (e.g. UK), including opportunities and challenges, and how these shape their lived experience – not just intellectual ideas. They might reflect on whether it is similar if someone is non-religious (e.g. Humanist) in a secular society or a religious society. They might reflect on their own context again and consider how it influences their own worldviews. (a, c, e, g, h, j, k)

Standards for Lower Key stage 3

11-12 year olds might ask a question such as 'what is religion?' They might examine a range of common features of religion and carry out some research into their importance in the lives of members of the school and local community, and reflect on the role any of these features play in their own lives. By analysing these, they get an insight into the flexible role of religion in people's lives and worldviews, including their own responses. Having looked at the diversity of expression of religion in people's lives, they can then analyse and evaluate a range of contested academic definitions of religion, reflecting on the impact of a person's worldview on their understanding of 'religion'. (a, b, c, g, h, i, j, k)

Standards for Upper Key stage 3

12-14 year olds might ask questions about how religions change over time. They might explore how significant concepts developed through the ages (e.g. using theological methods to understand Trinity as expressed in art, or theories of atonement in Christian traditions; or the miraculous nature of the Qur'an in Islamic traditions) and how practices develop in place (e.g. RS methods to explore how the Buddha's teaching was adapted as it spread to, for example, Sri Lanka, China, Tibet and the West, exploring how the importance of the story of the life of the Buddha varies across these contexts). They might use these studies to inform their understanding of how such ideas shape cultures and worldviews and enable them to examine questions of power and influence. They might reflect on which methods were most effective in getting to the heart of the matter, and examining why they think so, reflecting on the impact of their personal worldviews on their choices and responses. (a, c, f, g, j, k)

Standards for Key stage 4

Note: Religious education is statutory for all pupils at key stage 4, unless withdrawn by their parents, whether or not they study a course leading to an accredited qualification in the subject, such as GCSE Religious Studies. This National Content Standard assumes that all pupils will have the opportunity to make progress in RE, just as would be expected if they continued to study any other subject in the curriculum, and that teaching time will be provided commensurate with its status as part of the basic curriculum.

14-16 year olds³ might examine the relationship between institutional and individual religious and non-religious worldviews by exploring ethical issues (e.g. Roman Catholic doctrines on sanctity of life and data on Catholic people's attitudes to birth control), or by considering how religion/non-religion is presented in RE in comparison with lived realities (e.g. textbook presentations of religions alongside sociological data on the diverse adherence and practice of religions in India; data on the permeable boundary between religion and non-religion in the UK). They suggest different explanations for these relationships, reflecting on questions of tradition, continuity, change, power and culture. They select and apply appropriate disciplinary tools to evaluate the explanations, recognising the impact of context. Throughout the unit, they reflect on the sources of their own worldviews in the light of their learning. (b, c, e, f, g, j)

Standards for Key Stage 5

Note: Religious education is statutory for all pupils at key stage 5, whether or not they study a course leading to an accredited qualification in the subject, such as A level Religious Studies. The exception to this rule is that pupils may choose to withdraw themselves from the subject once they reach 18 years of age or parents may withdraw them before this age.

16-19 year olds⁴ might reflect on the legal and political dimensions of worldviews, in relation to religious, ethical and social concerns. They might examine the influence of religious and non-religious traditions on attitudes to the environment, to medical advances, to justice and equality in relation to gender, sex and race, and account for the changes across different contexts, using theological and philosophical methods and applying ethical theories (e.g. changing interpretation and application of ancient texts/ teachings to accommodate technological advances and societal changes; contrasting responses between secular and religious contexts to the growth of Pentecostalism in, for example, the USA, Britain, Africa or East Asia). Students might examine their own worldview assumptions and how they affect their responses to these issues, with a growing awareness of the impact of context on their own and others' worldviews. (b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j)

³ and ⁵ Adapted from RE Council Worldviews Project: Draft Resource 2022, page 44 Note: Three models are provided in the Draft Resource and each serve as an example of what progress might look like using the National Content Standard (NCS).

How the National Content Standard would be applied in different types of school.

Content Standard sets a benchmark for the minimum standard of Religious education that all parents can expect following an education in a state funded school. Schools with the freedom to plan their own syllabus for Religious education would be expected to ensure that their syllabus was similar in breadth, depth and ambition to the national content standard. The following table shows how this Standard would be applied in different types of school.

Type of school	Curriculum Legislation as it relates to Religious Education	Standard		
		Standards set out by their governors and in their trust deed or equivalent.	Church of England Statement of Entitlement on Religious Education, Religious Education Directory (CES) Other entitlement statements for schools with a religious character	National content standard for RE
(a) Community, foundation and VA or VC schools without a religious character that follow an Agreed Syllabus	Statutory	Not applicable	Not applicable	Recommended to the Agreed Syllabus Conference as a benchmark for high quality RE
(b) Academies and Free Schools without a religious character	Statutory	Not applicable	Not applicable	Comparable in breadth, depth and ambition to the NCS
(c) Academies which are former VC or Foundation schools with a religious character that followed an Agreed Syllabus	Statutory	Not applicable	Expected	Comparable in breadth, depth and ambition to the NCS
(d) Academies with a religious character, current and former VA schools with a religious character	Statutory	Statutory	Expected	Comparable in breadth, depth and ambition to the NCS
(e) Foundation and Voluntary Controlled Schools with a religious character that follow an Agreed Syllabus	Statutory	Statutory	Expected	Recommended to the Agreed Syllabus Conference as a benchmark for high quality RE

[End of the National Content Standard]

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Appendix A: Sources and Evidence

These sources are quoted for reference in their original form, and do not form part of the National Content Standard.

1. Primary Legislation and Funding Agreements on RE in different types of school

A. Introduction: Religious Education in English Schools (2010)

This section is an extract from the most recent government guidance on Religious education.

The RE curriculum in different types of schools

In all maintained schools RE must be taught according to either the locally agreed syllabus or in accordance with the school's designated religion or religious denomination, or in certain cases the trust deed relating to the school.

Community, foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled schools without a religious character

RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the LA by which the school is maintained.

Foundation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character

RE provision in foundation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character is to be provided in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. However, where the parent of any pupil at the school requests that RE is provided in accordance with provisions of the trust deed relating to the school (or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, in accordance with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character), then the governors must make arrangements for securing that RE is provided to the pupil in accordance with the relevant religion for up to two periods a week unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so.²⁶

Voluntary-aided schools with a religious character

In these schools RE is to be determined by the governors and in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed relating to the school or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character.

However, where parents prefer their children to receive RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, and they cannot reasonably or conveniently send their children to a school where the syllabus is in use, then the governing body must make arrangements for RE to be provided to the children within the school in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so. If the LA is satisfied that the governing body is unwilling to make such arrangements, the LA must make them instead.²⁷

Academies

Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools managed by independent sponsors, established under Section 482 of the Education Act 1996. Some academies have a religious character.

All academies are required, through their funding agreements (see page 17), to teach RE.

26 Schedule 19(3), School Standards and Framework Act 1998

27 Schedule 19(2), School Standards and Framework Act 1998

B. Primary Legislation on Religious Education

A Education Act 1996, Section 375

(3) Every agreed syllabus shall reflect 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.

B School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Schedule 19

Required provision for religious education.

Introductory

1(1) In this Schedule “the required provision for religious education”, in relation to a school, means the provision for pupils at the school which is required by [F1section 80(1)(a) or 101(1)(a) of the Education Act 2002] to be included in the school’s basic curriculum.

(2) In this Schedule “agreed syllabus” has the meaning given by section 375(2) of [F2the Education Act 1996].

Community schools and foundation and voluntary schools without a religious character

2(1) This paragraph applies to—

(a) any community school; and

(b) any foundation or voluntary school which does not have a religious character.

(2) Subject to sub-paragraph (4), the required provision for religious education in the case of pupils at the school is provision for religious education in accordance with an agreed syllabus adopted for the school or for those pupils.

(3) If the school is a secondary school so situated that arrangements cannot conveniently be made for the withdrawal of pupils from it in accordance with section 71 to receive religious education elsewhere and the [F3local authority] are satisfied—

(a) that the parents of any pupils at the school desire them to receive religious education in the school in accordance with the tenets of a particular religion or religious denomination, and

(b) that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the provision of such education to those pupils in the school, and for securing that the cost of providing such education to those pupils in the school will not fall to be met from the school’s budget share or otherwise by the authority,

the authority shall (unless they are satisfied that because of any special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so) provide facilities for the carrying out of those arrangements.

(4) If immediately before the appointed day the school was a grant-maintained school (within the meaning of the Education Act 1996), and in relation to the school or any pupils at the school the appropriate agreed syllabus as defined by section 382 of that Act was a syllabus falling within subsection (1)(c) of that section, then until—

(a) the end of such period as the Secretary of State may by order prescribe, or

(b) such earlier date as the governing body may determine,

the required provision for religious education in the case of the school or (as the case may be) those pupils is provision for religious education in accordance with that syllabus.

(5) No agreed syllabus shall provide for religious education to be given to pupils at a school to which this paragraph applies by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of a particular religious denomination (but this is not to be taken as prohibiting provision in such a syllabus for the study of such catechisms or formularies).

Foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character

3(1) This paragraph applies to any foundation or voluntary controlled school which has a religious character.

(2) Subject to sub-paragraph (4), the required provision for religious education in the case of pupils at the school is provision for religious education—

(a) in accordance with any arrangements made under sub-paragraph (3), or

(b) subject to any such arrangements, in accordance with an agreed syllabus adopted for the school or for those pupils.

(3) Where the parents of any pupils at the school request that they may receive religious education—

(a) in accordance with any provisions of the trust deed relating to the school, or

(b) where provision for that purpose is not made by such a deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 69(4),

the foundation governors shall (unless they are satisfied that because of any special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so) make arrangements for securing that such religious education is given to those pupils in the school during not more than two periods in each week.

(4) If immediately before the appointed day the school was a grant-maintained school (within the meaning of the Education Act 1996), and in relation to the school or any pupils at the school the appropriate agreed syllabus as defined by section 382 of that Act was a syllabus falling within subsection (1)(c) of that section, then until—

(a) the end of such period as the Secretary of State may by order prescribe, or

(b) such earlier date as the governing body may determine,

that syllabus shall be treated for the purposes of sub-paragraph (2)(b) as an agreed syllabus adopted for the school or (as the case may be) those pupils.

Voluntary aided schools with a religious character

4(1) This paragraph applies to any voluntary aided school which has a religious character.

(2) The required provision for religious education in the case of pupils at the school is provision for religious education—

(a) in accordance with any provisions of the trust deed relating to the school, or

(b) where provision for that purpose is not made by such a deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 69(4), or

(c) in accordance with any arrangements made under sub-paragraph (3).

(3) Where the parents of any pupils at the school—

(a) desire them to receive religious education in accordance with any agreed syllabus adopted by the [F3]local authority], and

(b) cannot with reasonable convenience cause those pupils to attend a school at which that syllabus is in use,

the governing body shall (unless they are satisfied that because of any special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so) make arrangements for religious education in accordance with that syllabus to be given to those pupils in the school.

(4) Religious education under any such arrangements shall be given during the times set apart for the giving of religious education in the school in accordance with the provision for that purpose included in the school's basic curriculum by virtue of [F4]section 80(1)(a) or 101(1)(a) of the Education Act 2002].

(5) Any arrangements under sub-paragraph (3) shall be made by the governing body, unless the [F3]local authority] are satisfied that the governing body are unwilling to make them, in which case they shall be made by the authority.

(6) Subject to sub-paragraph (3), the religious education given to pupils at the school shall be under the control of the governing body.

C. Education Act 2002 Section 80

Basic curriculum for every maintained school in England

(1) The curriculum for every maintained school in England shall comprise a basic curriculum which includes—

(a) provision for religious education for all registered pupils at the school (in accordance with such of the provisions of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (c. 31) as apply in relation to the school),

(b) a curriculum for all registered pupils at the school [F1]who have ceased to be young children for the purposes of Part 1 of the Childcare Act 2006] but are not over compulsory school age (known as "the National Curriculum for England")

D. Extracts from relevant Case Law (text in bold added for clarity)

[Fox versus the Secretary of State for Education \(2015\)](#) and [Bowen versus Kent County Council \(2023\)](#)

A. The key paragraph in **the Fox case** in relation to this document is as follows:

*The Strasbourg jurisprudence shows that the duty of impartiality and neutrality owed by the state do not require equal air-time to be given to all shades of belief or conviction. An RE syllabus can quite properly reflect the relative importance of different viewpoints within the relevant society. The same would seem to follow for a region or locality. The duty might therefore be described as one of “due” impartiality. No criticism can be or is made therefore of s 375(3) of the 1996 Act. In addition, of course, a generous latitude must be allowed to the decision-maker as to how that works out in practical terms. But **the complete exclusion of any study of non-religious beliefs for the whole of Key Stage 4, for which the Subject Content would allow, would not in my judgment be compatible with A2P1.(74)***

B. The Bowen case builds on the Fox judgment and Justice Constable takes Justice Warby’s conclusions a step further. He states:

*“it is plain from Fox that a religious education curriculum must, in order to be compliant with the HRA 1998, cover more than religious faith teaching. **The content of religious education teaching must include, at least to some degree, the teaching of non-religious beliefs (such as humanism)**” [68].*

C. It is important also to note Justice Warby’s description of the application of his judgment as follows:

*“I should make clear, for the avoidance of doubt, that the above conclusions have been arrived at with reference to the position of **schools or academies which do not have a religious character**. Schedule 19 of the 1998 Act makes different provision as to RE in schools that do have a religious character (see paras 3 and 4).” (82)*

2. Academy Funding Agreements:

The Funding Agreement is the contract between the Secretary of State for Education and the academy that sets out the terms on which the academy is funded. The Funding Agreement specifies how the academy is run, its duties and the powers the Secretary of State has over the academy. The model funding agreements up to 2010, included the following statement in relation to RE in Academies that were previously required to follow the local agreed syllabus:

“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]”

After the closure of QCDA, the section in italics above was removed, with the consequence that the only expectation on Academy Schools was that they provide RE in each year group but with no definition of what constitutes RE or the standards that should be expected.

[Mainstream Supplemental Funding Agreement Curriculum](#)

- 2.U The Academy Trust must provide for the teaching of religious education and a daily act of collective worship at the Academy.
- 2.V The Academy Trust must comply with section 71(1)-(6) and (8) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if the Academy were a community, foundation or voluntary school, and as if references to “religious education” and “religious worship” in that section were references to the religious education and religious worship provided by the Academy in accordance with clause [2.W]/[2.X]/[2.Y]**[select as appropriate]**.

[Clauses 2.W – 2.Y reflect the requirements for religious education and daily collective worship – mark the clauses that do not apply as ‘Not used’]

- 2.W **[This clause applies where an academy is designated with a religious character but was not previously a VC school or a foundation school designated with a religious character. Please also use this clause if an academy was previously a VC school but has gone through a significant change process to adopt VA characteristics in parallel with converting to an academy]** Subject to clause 2.V, **where the Academy is designated with a religious character** (in accordance with section 124B of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 or further to section 6(8) of the Academies Act 2010):
- a) provision must be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy in accordance with the tenets of the Academy’s specified religion or religious denomination. This is subject to paragraph 4 of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which applies as if the Academy were a voluntary aided school with a religious character;
 - b) the Academy Trust must comply with section 70(1) of, and Schedule 20 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if the Academy were a foundation school with a religious character or a voluntary school, and as if references to “the required collective worship” were references to collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Academy’s specified religion or religious denomination;
 - c) the Academy Trust must ensure that the quality of religious education given to pupils at the Academy and the contents of the Academy’s collective worship given in accordance with the tenets and practices of its specific religion or religious denomination are inspected. The inspection must be conducted by a person chosen by the Academy Trust, and the Academy Trust must ensure that the inspection complies with the statutory provisions and regulations which would apply if the Academy were a foundation or voluntary school designated as having a religious character.
- 2.X Subject to clause 2.V, **where the Academy has not been designated with a religious character** (in accordance with section 124B of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 or further to section 6(8) of the Academies Act 2010):
- a) provision must 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;
 - b) the Academy must comply with section 70(1) of, and Schedule 20 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if it were a community school or foundation school without a religious character, except that paragraph 4 of that Schedule does not apply. The Academy may apply to the Secretary of State for consent to be relieved of the requirement imposed by paragraph 3(2) of that Schedule.
- 2.Y **[This clause only applies where an academy was previously a VC school or foundation school designated with a religious character. If an academy was previously a VC school but has gone through a significant change process to adopt VA characteristics in parallel with converting to an academy then please use clause 2.W instead]** Subject to clause 2.V, the requirements for religious education and collective

worship are as follows:

- a) subject to paragraph 3 of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which will apply as if the Academy were a foundation school or voluntary controlled school with a religious character, provision must 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;
- b) the Academy Trust must comply with section 70(1) of, and Schedule 20 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if the Academy were a foundation school with a religious character or a voluntary school, and as if references to “the required collective worship” were references to collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Academy’s specified religion or religious denomination;
- c) ***[Additional sub-clause to be added if the academy is designated with a denominational religious character - CE etc. rather than ‘Christian’]*** the Academy Trust must ensure that the quality of the religious education given to pupils at the Academy and the contents of the Academy’s collective worship, given in accordance with the tenets and practices of its specific religion or religious denomination, is inspected. The inspection must be conducted by a person chosen by the Academy Trust and the Academy Trust must secure that the inspection complies with statutory provisions and regulations which would apply if the Academy were a foundation or voluntary school designated as having a religious character.

2.Z The Academy Trust must comply with paragraph 2A of the Schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 in relation to the provision of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.

2.AA The Academy Trust must prevent political indoctrination, and secure the balanced treatment of political issues, in line with the requirements for maintained schools set out in the Education Act 1996, and have regard to any Guidance.

3. Summary of a National Statement of Entitlement

The following summary was developed by the Religion Education Council of England and Wales Education Committee and the RE Policy Unit in 2020. It aimed to provide a summary of the Commission on RE (2018) National Statement of Entitlement. It was included in public documentation in what was commonly known as ‘[CoRE on a Page](#)’. It has been used between 2020 and 2022 by teachers, advisers and other stakeholders to explain the basis of a religion and worldviews approach. It has largely been superseded by the Draft Resource (see p.14)

A summary of the proposed National Entitlement to Religion and Worldviews

Pupils are entitled to be taught, by well qualified and resourced teachers, knowledge and understanding about:

- a. what religion is and worldviews are, and how they are studied;
- b. the impact of religion and worldviews on individuals, communities and societies;
- c. the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews in society;
- d. the concepts, language and ways of knowing that help us organise and make sense of our knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews;
- e. the human quest for meaning, so that they are prepared for life in a diverse world and have space to recognise, reflect on and take responsibility for the development of their own personal worldview

4. Ofsted Research Review Series: Religious Education

The purpose of this review [published in 2021](#), was to identify factors that contribute to high-quality school RE curriculums, the teaching of the curriculum, assessment and systems. Ofsted stated that it would then use this understanding of subject quality to examine how RE is taught in England's schools where RE falls under Ofsted's inspection remit. Both in terms of evidence-led policy making and the inspection process, this would suggest that, a National Content Standard would need to be informed by the findings set out below.

Summary of features that may be found in high-quality RE according to recent research:

1. Curriculum progression and debates about knowledge in RE

- A consideration of the knowledge that pupils build through the RE curriculum, because accurate knowledge about religion and non-religion can be beneficial for achieving different purposes and aims for RE.
- High expectations about scholarship in the curriculum to guard against pupils' misconceptions. What is taught and learned in RE is grounded in what is known about religion/non-religion from academic study (scholarship).
- Carefully selected and well-sequenced substantive content and concepts.
- 'Ways of knowing' are appropriately taught alongside the substantive content and are not isolated from the content and concepts that pupils learn.
- A consideration of when pupils should relate the content to their own personal knowledge (for example, prior assumptions).

2. Substantive content and concepts in RE

- 'Collectively enough' substantive content and concepts in the RE curriculum to enable pupils to grasp the complexity of a multi-religious, multi-secular world. This substantive knowledge is a representation and reconstruction of religious and non-religious traditions and concepts.
- Representations of religious and non-religious traditions that are as accurate as possible. Leaders and teachers might use scholarship to construct representations so that pupils do not learn misconceptions.
- Depth of study in certain areas of the RE curriculum to provide pupils with detailed content that is connected with the concepts and ideas that they learn. Without this, more complex discussions about religion and non-religion will be superficial. Leaders and teachers can make intelligent selections for depth of study to indicate a range of religious and non-religious ways of living.
- Detailed knowledge of specific religious and non-religious traditions (such as their stories, narratives, texts and testimonies) in the RE curriculum to enable pupils to make useful connections between content.
- A well-sequenced RE curriculum that prepares pupils with the prior knowledge (including content, concepts and vocabulary) they need for subsequent topics. The importance of this is very clear in the case of controversial and sensitive topics. Leaders and teachers might identify the necessary background knowledge that pupils need to learn for a topic and make sure that the curriculum is ordered to accommodate this.

3. 'Ways of knowing' in RE

- A curriculum design that includes 'ways of knowing' as a form of knowledge that pupils build through the RE curriculum. This helps pupils learn about the construction of substantive knowledge, its accuracy, its reliability and how provisional that knowledge is. Pupils are therefore prepared to think in critical and scholarly ways about the representations of religion and non-religion that they learn through the curriculum and encounter in the world beyond.
- A sequenced RE curriculum that includes scholarly methods and tools that pupils learn.

- Subject leaders and teachers who make good decisions about which ‘ways of knowing’ pupils need to learn and who match the ‘ways of knowing’ to the substantive content.
- Curriculum impact that includes pupils recognising the type of specialist discourse they are engaging in when asking questions, using methods and making claims about different content in the RE curriculum. This might have been achieved, for example, because pupils have learned how disciplinary discourses construct knowledge about religion/non-religion or how groups or families of methods explore religious and non-religious traditions.

4. ‘Personal knowledge’ in RE

- An RE curriculum that does not induct pupils into any religious tradition (in settings where the EIF applies to RE).
- A curriculum that builds pupils’ awareness of their own assumptions and values about the content that they study (‘personal knowledge’).
- Precise, detailed and fruitful content (substantive content and concepts) that subject leaders and curriculum designers have selected to build pupils’ ‘personal knowledge’. Not all substantive content is equally appropriate to select as the basis for developing pupils’ ‘personal knowledge’.
- Subject leaders and teachers who adeptly identify specific content for the development of ‘personal knowledge’ because they recognise that some pupils may not otherwise see the immediate value of that content.

5. Interplay, end goals and competencies

- A curriculum that focuses pupils’ learning on ambitious subject-specific end goals, rather than covers excessive amounts of content superficially.
- Curriculum impact that is achieved by pupils building up accurate knowledge about the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion. This provides pupils with many of the ingredients for cultural and civic competencies that are important to many RE teachers.
- Clear curriculum content that subject leaders and curriculum designers have planned to illustrate ‘ways of knowing’ and to develop pupils’ ‘personal knowledge’.
- A clear connection between the ‘ways of knowing’ that pupils learn, the ‘personal knowledge’ that pupils develop through the curriculum and the substantive content and concepts on which both depend.
- Subject leaders of RE who are aware of the ways that the RE curriculum can be susceptible to distortion and have ensured that it does not become distorted.

6. Teaching the curriculum

- Leaders and teachers who consider, when they select classroom activities, how the activities will enable pupils to remember the RE curriculum in the long term.
- Teachers whose judgement about classroom activities is informed by insights from cognitive science about learning, as well as subject-specific insights about the nature of the RE content to be learned. These 2 insights are more important than generic concerns about whether activities are superficially ‘engaging’.
- Leaders and teachers of RE who ensure that, in choosing an appropriate classroom activity, they are clear about what pupils are supposed to learn from it (the curriculum object).
- Teachers who recognise that the success of classroom strategies, methods and procedures depends, to an extent, on whether pupils have sufficient prior RE knowledge (from the curriculum) to succeed at the activity.
- Teaching activities that will continue to draw on, and to remind pupils of, parts of the RE curriculum that pupils have already covered. This enables pupils to learn the RE curriculum in the long term.

7. Assessment

- Different types of assessments are used appropriately:

- Formative assessments can help teachers identify which pupils have misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge, and what those specific misconceptions or gaps are. This can inform teachers about common issues, so they can review or adapt the curriculum as necessary. Formative assessments are less useful in making judgements about how much of the whole curriculum has been learned and remembered.
- Where summative assessments are used for accountability purposes, leaders can ensure that they are sufficiently spaced apart to enable pupils to learn the expanding domain of the curriculum.
- The purpose of the test should guide the type of assessment, the format of the task and when the assessment is needed.
- RE assessment needs to relate to the curriculum, which sets out what it means to 'get better' at RE.
- Leaders and teachers can consider whether existing assessment models in RE do in practice treat the curriculum as the progression model.
- Leaders and teachers can design RE assessments that are fit for purpose, in that they are precisely attuned to the knowledge in the RE curriculum that they intend for pupils to learn.
- Leaders who ensure that assessments are not excessively onerous for teachers.
- Professional development opportunities for leaders and teachers to reflect on how different assessment questions and tasks in RE can frame teachers' and pupils' expectations about engaging with religious and non-religious traditions.

8. Systems, culture and policies

- Sufficient curriculum time allocated to RE in order for leaders to deliver an ambitious RE curriculum.
- Subject-specialist staffing, so that pupils are taught RE by teachers with appropriate subject professional knowledge.
- Access to high-quality in-service training for leaders and teachers of RE to develop their professional subject knowledge.
- Subject leadership that can identify high-quality sources of training (for example, through subject associations and organisations) to further their RE knowledge in policy, subject content, subject pedagogy and RE research.

5. Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom: developing a worldviews approach. A Draft Resource for curriculum developers

The Draft Resource sets out a rationale for a religion and worldviews approach, building on the developments since the 2018 Commission report. It was primarily written to inform three Framework Development Teams, working over 18 months to apply the Handbook guidance to their own contexts. During this process, the Draft Resource is being tested and revised as necessary, before the publication, scheduled for 2024, of a final Handbook, three example frameworks, sample units of work and pupil responses.

At the heart of the Commission on RE final report, was a National Statement of Entitlement indicating that all children in schools are entitled to an education in religion and worldviews. This national statement of entitlement provides a shared vision for the subject that will be interpreted for, and applied in, a variety of different contexts by syllabus writers and curriculum designers.

- reflects the changing religious and secular non-religious diversity of the UK and the world
- is inclusive of, and relevant to, children and young people, whose worldviews may range across the secular religious and non-religious
- approaches the subject from the perspective of worldviews (incorporating religious and non-religious worldviews, personal and communal, individual and organised, plural and diverse) to help pupils navigate the diverse, complex world around them, in relation to religion and belief. The place for this education in religion and worldviews is the subject currently called Religious Education in legislation in England.



To meet this entitlement, pupils must be taught to understand the nature of worldviews, in relation to religion and belief, including:

CONTENT	
<i>Core statements</i>	<i>Expanded statements</i>
a. Nature/formation/expression What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences	The nature and variety of worldviews, and how people's worldviews are formed through a complex mix of influences and experiences, including (for example) rituals, practices, texts, teachings, stories, inspiring individuals, the creative arts, family, tradition, culture, and everyday experiences and actions. How these may also act as ways of expressing and communicating worldviews.
b. Organised/individual How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews	How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews (e.g. how individual worldviews may be consciously held or tacit; how individual and organised worldviews are dynamic; how individual worldviews may overlap to a greater or lesser extent with organised worldviews)
c. Contexts How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change.	How worldviews have contexts, reflecting their time and place, shaping and being shaped by these, maintaining continuity and also changing; how they are highly diverse and often develop in interaction with each other. (This applies to organised worldviews as well as to individual worldviews.)
d. Meaning and purpose How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience	How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience, such as questions of existence, meaning, purpose, knowledge, truth, identity and diversity. How worldviews may play different roles in providing people with ways of making sense of existence and/or their lives, including space for mystery, ambiguity and paradox.
e. Values, commitments and morality How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life	How worldviews may provide a vision of, and guidance on, how to be a good person and live a good life, and may offer ideas of justice, right and wrong, value, beauty, truth and goodness. How individuals and communities may express their values through their commitments.
f. Influence and power How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies	How worldviews influence people (e.g. providing a 'grand narrative' or story for understanding the world) and influence the exercise of power in societies (e.g. on social norms for communities, or in relation to conflict or peace-making). How society and people can also influence and shape worldviews.

ENGAGEMENT	
<i>Core statements</i>	<i>Expanded statements</i>
g. Ways of knowing The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing.	The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing. Questions and methods should be carefully chosen, recognising that there are different understandings of what knowledge is deemed reliable, valid, credible, truthful etc.
h. Lived experience The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people.	The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people (e.g. religious, non-religious, embodied, diverse, fluid, material, experiential) in relation to local and global contexts, recognising the complex reality of worldviews as they are held, shared and expressed by people in real life.
i. Dialogue/interpretation The field of study of worldviews is to be shown as a dynamic area of debate.	The field of study of worldviews is to be encountered as a dynamic area of dialogue and debate, and one which engages with practices of interpretation and judgement within and between religious and non-religious communities.
POSITION	
<i>Core statements</i>	<i>Expanded statements</i>
j. Personal worldviews: reflexivity Pupils will reflect on and potentially develop their personal worldviews in the light of their study.	Pupils will come to understand their own worldview in greater depth, and how it relates to the worldviews of others, becoming more reflective and reflexive. As they develop this awareness of their positionality in relation to that of others, they will make informed judgements on how (far) this understanding prepares them for life in a diverse world
k. Personal worldviews: impact Pupils will reflect on how their worldviews affect their learning	Pupils will develop their understanding of how their encounters with the subject content of RE are affected and shaped by their worldviews, whether conscious or not, and that this is also true for everyone else. They will reflect on how (far) their learning may have an impact on their worldview.

6. Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Toledo Guiding Principles

The following is taken from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office website:

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a human right which has been guaranteed under international law within the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#) since 1966. Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states that ‘everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion’.

FoRB is not just the freedom to hold personal thoughts and convictions, but also being able to express them individually or with others, publicly or in private. It includes the freedom to:

- subscribe to different schools of thought within a religion
- change one’s religion or beliefs, including to leave or abandon religions
- hold non-religious beliefs

No-one should experience discrimination for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief. This right prohibits the use of coercion to make someone hold or change their religion or belief. It also protects a person from being required to state an affiliation with any particular religion or belief.

As with all human rights, FoRB belongs to people, whether alone or as members of a group, and not to the religion or belief itself. This means that it does not protect religions, or religious figures, from criticism.

In July 2022, the FCDO hosted an International Ministerial on FoRB. At this conference a Statement on FoRB and Education was made, of which the UK Government was a signatory. The full statement is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-of-religion-or-belief-and-education-statement-at-the-international-ministerial-conference-2022/statement-on-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-and-education>

This statement says that signatories will commit to:

- prioritising inclusive curricula and teaching, matched to all students' needs, regardless of their background, that provides foundational skills for all. In addition, curricula should provide positive and accurate information about different faith and belief communities and combat negative stereotypes
- support teaching that promotes the equality of all individuals, regardless of their religion
- protecting education establishments and ensuring all students have access to education regardless of their faith or any other characteristic. This includes ensuring access to safe alternative spaces for education in emergencies and protracted crises
- promoting international efforts to support education reform, emphasising the benefits of pluralism and the importance of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. Regular evaluation of education materials and practices should be carried out to ensure that these standards are always maintained

In addition, the Toledo Guiding Principles (2007) published by the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and ODOHR (Organisation for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) are relevant in this context. The introduction to the principles states that:

The Guiding Principles are designed to assist not only educators but also legislators, teachers and officials in education ministries, as well as administrators and educators in private or religious schools to ensure that teaching about different religions and beliefs is carried out in a fair and balanced manner.

The Key Guiding Principles set out in the document are:

Whenever teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools is provided in OSCE participating States, the following guiding principles should be considered:

1. Teaching about religions and beliefs must be provided in ways that are fair, accurate and based on sound scholarship. Students should learn about religions and beliefs in an environment respectful of human rights, fundamental freedoms and civic values.
2. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should have a commitment to religious freedom that contributes to a school environment and practices that foster protection of the rights of others in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding among members of the school community.
3. Teaching about religions and beliefs is a major responsibility of schools, but the manner in which this teaching takes place should not undermine or ignore the role of families and religious or belief organizations in transmitting values to successive generations.
4. Efforts should be made to establish advisory bodies at different levels that take an inclusive approach to involving different stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of curricula and in the training of teachers.

5. Where a compulsory programme involving teaching about religions and beliefs is not sufficiently objective, efforts should be made to revise it to make it more balanced and impartial, but where this is not possible, or cannot be accomplished immediately, recognizing opt-out rights may be a satisfactory solution for parents and pupils, provided that the opt-out arrangements are structured in a sensitive and non-discriminatory way.

6. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should be adequately educated to do so. Such teachers need to have the knowledge, attitude and skills to teach about religions and beliefs in a fair and balanced way. Teachers need not only subject-matter competence but pedagogical skills so that they can interact with students and help students interact with each other in sensitive and respectful ways.

7. Preparation of curricula, textbooks and educational materials for teaching about religions and beliefs should take into account religious and non-religious views in a way that is inclusive, fair, and respectful. Care should be taken to avoid inaccurate or prejudicial material, particularly when this reinforces negative stereotypes.

8. Curricula should be developed in accordance with recognised professional standards in order to ensure a balanced approach to study about religions and beliefs. Development and implementation of curricula should also include open and fair procedures that give all interested parties appropriate opportunities to offer comments and advice.

9. Quality curricula in the area of teaching about religions and beliefs can only contribute effectively to the educational aims of the Toledo Guiding Principles if teachers are professionally trained to use the curricula and receive ongoing training to further develop their knowledge and competences regarding this subject matter. Any basic teacher preparation should be framed and developed according to democratic and human rights principles and include insight into cultural and religious diversity in society.

10. Curricula focusing on teaching about religions and beliefs should give attention to key historical and contemporary developments pertaining to religion and belief, and reflect global and local issues. They should be sensitive to different local manifestations of religious and secular plurality found in schools and the communities they serve. Such sensitivities will help address the concerns of students, parents and other stakeholders in education.

7. Statutory requirements for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and Fundamental British Values.

All maintained schools must meet the requirements set out in section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of their pupils. Through ensuring pupils' SMSC development, schools can also demonstrate they are actively promoting fundamental British values.

Accountability

As part of a section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors must consider pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development when forming a judgement of a school. However this advice should not be read as guidance for inspection purposes. Ofsted publish their inspection framework and handbook, which set out how schools are assessed in relation to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Schools should refer to Ofsted's documents to understand what inspectors look for in assessing this."

[Ofsted School inspection handbook EIF 2022](#) - Updated 11 July 2022

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

299. Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the

school's activities, but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

300. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

8. Statutory Guidance: What schools must publish online

This guidance places a responsibility on schools to ensure that parents and carers have access to information about what their children are learning in each subject of the curriculum. The publication of the curriculum can also be accessed by Ofsted inspection teams as an aspect of making judgements about the breadth, balance and ambition of the curriculum or, if concerns are raised, lead to a decision to carry out a section 8 inspection (See extract from the Ofsted Handbook for inspection below.)

The guidance is copied below:

Curriculum

You must publish:

- the content of your school curriculum in each academic year for every subject - this includes mandatory subjects such as religious education, even if it is taught as part of another subject or subjects, or is called something else

[Ofsted Handbook for inspection extract](#)

37. As is the case for all schools, a good or outstanding school may still receive an urgent inspection (carried out under section 8) at any time in certain circumstances (see part 4). For example, we may decide that we should inspect a school earlier than its next scheduled inspection if:

- concerns are identified about the breadth and balance of the curriculum (including whether the statutory requirement to publish information to parents is not met).

SACRE - 18 March 2024

Inclusion Update

1. Inclusion Consultation

Since September 2023 various conversations and consultations have been undertaken to develop a ten-year inclusion strategy and plan, with the targeted launch date of June 2024.

2. Methodology:

- One to one interviews of key individuals
- Service user interviews
- Service Delivery staff and volunteers
- Community members / groups
- Group consultation with service users
- Locality based Facebook group questions
- Google survey
- Commissioned targeted group to group consultation surveys
- Commissioned group to group face to face consultation
- Reviews of recent consultations
- Event attendance – focused interviews

3. Groups and individuals consulted include:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Elderly | Young People |
| • Disability | Carers |
| • Care Leavers | Gypsy, Travellers and Roma |
| • Homeless | Addiction services |
| • All Community Associations | Europeans |
| • Africans | British Caribbeans |
| • Sikh | Hindu |
| • Christians | Muslims |
| • LGBTQ+ | Mental Health |
| • Young Parents | Deaf / Hearing impaired |
| • Vision impaired | White British |

4. School Related Considerations:

Secondary schools should consider how they consider the wellbeing of minority groups or minority individuals. Racial, religious and homophobic / gender fluency - based bullying is reported to be commonplace and difference is often an indicator of risk of been treated differently or bullied.

Current issues in Palestine are also having an impact on faith relations.

5. Faith Based Findings

All faiths where people of colour worship reported regular racism but were not reporting to police.

Christianity

- The foodbank is making a huge difference with those in or on the edges of poverty
- Romanian Orthodox have no appropriate place of worship
- Beliefs and language barriers
- Faith important to newly arrived residents and Europeans – not as secular as existing UK (Walsall) residents.
- African Christians felt inclusive from a nationality perspective
- Forgiveness of racism (pray for them)
- African Caribbean Christian tension (Africans made to feel inferior)
- Use places of worship to disseminate information / services.
- Food banks / poverty solutions / volunteering done through faith / church.
- Young People feel connected to church but not the UK
- In school, Caribbean heritage children make it clear their peers are African and not Caribbean
- Faith awareness needs to be increased on Christianity and the diversity of the faith

Hinduism

- Young People felt elders are judgemental and non-inclusive
- Elders feel community is very welcoming.
- Judgemental of Muslims
- Hindu celebrations are important but not celebrated – need to do more
- Suffered racism and prejudice
- Impact and influence of social media
- Hindu Form – pro Modi (why important as key players are key individuals in statutory sector)
- Temple against Modi
- Good Sikh / Hindu relations, less so Islam

Islam

- Israel / Palestine is influencing school experience and raising division
- Tensions exist between different schools of Islam
- Cultural gender inequality
- Islamophobia increasing
- Food banks and homeless charity is undertaken weekly
- International charity is common place

Sikhism

- Elders did not respond
- Young People – faced racism and discrimination.
- Small and trusted friend circle – Sikhs or Indian
- White people are perceived to be racist or prejudice

- MLSS / homeless feed key to people in poverty
- Gurdwara feed homeless
- Volunteering linked to good deeds and service
- Free food dropped off at Vasaki (in April) to local homes – procession homes or watching parade
- Covid / vaccinations – inclusive
- Limits who they engage with – Muslims / Pakistani grooming.
- Long standing religious related tensions – linked to mogul empire / partition.
- Really good interfaith relations linked to a shared racism experience from white communities
- Unreported racism – more ambassadors needed

Review of OFSTED reports of Walsall Schools

The following inspection reports have been published between **19th September 2023 and 4th March 2024**

As this is a voluntary aided church school no curriculum deep dive into RE can take place

Abu Bakr Girls School (Independent School) 7 November 2023 Good

Pupils have opportunities to learn about different faiths and religions. They also discuss and understand different types of families and relationships. The school promotes learning about other cultures, and pupils show respect when talking about their learning.

Abu Bakr Boys School (Independent School) 10 October 2023 Inadequate

Leaders make sure that pupils benefit from a range of trips and visits to museums, libraries and places of worship. These opportunities enrich pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths.

Chuckery Primary School 13 and 14 September 2023 Good

This is a harmonious school with happy pupils. Leaders embrace the cultural richness of pupils in the school. They ensure they celebrate the many different faiths and backgrounds of the pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported, and thrive here.

The Jane Lane School, A College for Cognition & Learning 24 and 25 October 2023 Good

No comment on RE

New Leaf Centre (PRU) 13 and 14 September 2023 Inadequate

No comment on RE

Pool Hayes Primary School 11 and 12 July 2023 RI (RE Deep dive)

Pupils enjoy learning about different religions. They talk confidently about their knowledge of differences and similarities between religions.

St John's Church of England Primary School 10 and 11 October 2023 Good

No comment on RE

Whetstone Field Primary School 3 to 4 October 2023 Good

No comment on RE

SACRE Action Tracker
18 March 2024

Meeting date	Agenda Item	Action	Person	Update
23/10/2023	SACRE Action Plan	The clerk emails members of SACRE to seek volunteers to attend an online meeting to develop a questionnaire in respect of Collective Worship and the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus.	Edward Cook	In progress. Clerk in process of arranging meeting with volunteers.
23/10/2023	SACRE Action Plan	The Councils Integration Lead be invited to the next meeting of SACRE to discuss Community Cohesion and lists of places of worship.	Edward Cook	Report to be presented on 18 March.
23/10/2023	SACRE Action Plan	The Quality Assurance Team Manager circulates details of the National Database to schools in the weekly briefing. School workforce data and school census.	Nick Perks	Submitted.

23/10/2023	SACRE Action Plan	The RE Today Advisor provides the clerk with a list of training dates for circulation to members of SACRE.	Fiona Moss / Edward Cook	Complete.
23/10/2023	SACRE Annual Report	That the SACRE annual report be approved with the inclusion of a quote from the Humanist representative in the chairs foreword.	Edward Cook	The quote was included before the final version was submitted.
23/10/2023	SACRE Annual Report	That the Quality Assurance Team Manager circulates the Annual Report to Headteachers.	Nick Perks	Completed.
23/10/2023	School Workforce Data	The Chair discuss the level of RE provision at Bloxwich Academy and The Studio School.	Dave Lomax	
23/10/2023	School Workforce Data	The RE Today Advisor together with the Quality Assurance Team Manager draft letters, signed by the Chair, to those schools that either hadn't submitted data or where it wasn't clear what provision there was on the website	Nick Perks	

23/10/2023	School Workforce Data	The RE Today Advisor compares previous years workforce data to identify any trends and provides an update to the meeting in March, 2024.	Fiona Moss	
23/10/2023	Election of Spokespersons for Groups (Teacher Category)	That Mrs Leadley be appointed as the Teacher representative	Edward Cook	Note of decision recorded.