

# AGENDA

## Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: **Tuesday 27 November 2012**

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Time: **2.00 pm**

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Place: **The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,  
Hereford**

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Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

**Paul James, Democratic Services Officer**

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Paul James, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260460 or e-mail [pjames@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pjames@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# Agenda for the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

## Membership

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Councillor J Stone</b>	
	<b>Councillor CNH Attwood</b>	Local Authority
	<b>Mrs. C. Ault</b>	Bahai faith
	<b>Mrs L Barker</b>	Secondary School Teachers
	<b>Revd. P. Barlow</b>	Church of England
	<b>Mr. P. Bowen</b>	Church of England
	<b>Mrs S Bryant</b>	Church of England
	<b>Councillor EMK Chave</b>	Local Authority
	<b>Venerable Tsuiltrim Tenzin Choesang</b>	Buddhist
	<b>Mrs A. Daniel</b>	Primary School Teachers
	<b>Miss Emilie James</b>	Special School Teachers
	<b>Mrs Gurmit Jutle</b>	Sikh Faith
	<b>Rev DT Meachem</b>	Churches Together in Herefordshire
	<b>Sr. D. O'Donnell</b>	Roman Catholic Church
	<b>Ms C Wolfe</b>	Jewish Faith
<b>Non Voting</b>	<b>Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins</b>	Co-opted member
	<b>Ms. K. Mayglothling</b>	Co-Opted Member
	<b>Miss Allyson Taylor</b>	Co-opted Member

## AGENDA

		Pages
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive apologies for absence.	
2.	<b>NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)</b> To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3.	<b>MINUTES</b> To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2012.	1 - 6
4.	<b>RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)</b> To answer any pre-received written questions from members of the public.	
5.	<b>MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE - UPDATE</b> To update SACRE on the membership.	
6.	<b>RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR 2012</b> To consider the Religious studies examination results for 2012.	7 - 10
7.	<b>2013 SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE</b> To consider arrangements for the 2013 SACRE Annual Conference.	
8.	<b>UPDATE ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES OR NEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b> To report any news or further changes to the government's education strategy that may affect the teaching of religious education in Herefordshire schools.	11 - 54
9.	<b>SACRE ANNUAL SURVEY OF SCHOOLS</b> To note the contents of the 2012 Annual SACRE Survey of Primary Schools.	55 - 62
10.	<b>SYLLABUS TRAINING FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS</b> To inform SACRE of the outcomes from the training event for special schools held jointly with Gloucestershire SACRE.	63 - 64
11.	<b>SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/12</b> To comment on the draft SACRE Annual report for the academic year September 2011 to July 2012. (Note: copies of the draft have been issued to Members with the agenda and are available on request.)	65 - 66
12.	<b>DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b> To note that the next meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2013 at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. Further dates have yet to be arranged.	



HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday 13 July 2012 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor CNH Attwood, Mrs L Barker, Councillor EMK Chave, Venerable Tsuiltrim Tenzin Choesang, Mrs G Jutle, Rev DT Meachem and Sr. D. O'Donnell

**Officers:** Ms J Tinsley, Lead Officer to SACRE; Mr S Pett, RE Consultant; Mr P James, Democratic Services Officer.

**106. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mrs C Ault; Reverend P Barlow; Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins; Ms K Mayglothling; Miss A Taylor, and Mrs C Wolfe.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Committee B (Church of England) was unrepresented and therefore the meeting would proceed on an advisory basis.

**107. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Mr GW Ault substituted for Mrs C Ault and Mr J Brown substituted for Ms C Wolfe.

**108. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held 19 March 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.**

**109. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No written questions had been received.

**110. CHANGE OF LEAD OFFICER TO SACRE**

SACRE noted that following changes to work allocation Mrs Wendy Boulter, Senior Secondary School Improvement Advisor had now handed over the role of Lead Officer to SACRE to Ms Judith Tinsley, School Improvement Advisor.

While Mrs Boulter hadn't been Lead Officer to SACRE for very long SACRE thanked Mrs Boulter for her valuable contribution to the work of SACRE and to Religious Education in the County schools.

SACRE welcomed Ms Tinsley to the role of Lead Officer to SACRE.

**111. REPORT ON THE SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012**

SACRE were informed of the outcomes from the SACRE Annual Conference 2012 held at Hereford Academy on 26 June.

The Chairman reported there had been a positive response to the Annual Conference with the meditation session adding an important time of reflection. The Key Note speaker Alan Brine, MHI, on the theme of 'What takes RE from Good To Outstanding' had been excellent and it had been good to have delegates from Shropshire in attendance. He also thanked Lat Blaylock, Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett for their workshop sessions and Stephen for his work in organising the conference.

The Consultant for RE reported that income from attendance had only just made the event viable. He thanked the Hereford Academy for accommodating the event and for supplying lunch. He also thanked the SACRE members who attended for their assistance. He circulated a breakdown of the event evaluation forms and SACRE were delighted to note that delegates had scored the overall value of the conference as 68% excellent, 32% good.

The evaluation also included comments on the conference which included a number of suggestions or requests for future support which would be fed into the future work of SACRE or taken up with schools.

**RESOLVED: That the report on the SACRE 2012 Conference be noted.**

## **112. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN RE**

SACRE received an update on national initiatives in Religious Education.

The Consultant for RE presented an overview of the following national initiatives:

- In the wake of the 2011 campaign to include RE in the E-Baccalaureate (E-Bac) the inaugural meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group had been held on 11 June. The Group, Chaired by Stephen Lloyd MP, comprised of 25 Members of Parliament and 5 members of the Lords with a view to support the provision of RE in education. The work of the Group would be supported by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.
- A second survey on the impact of the E-Bac had been commissioned by NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) and was available via their website. The Consultant for RE requested that secondary schools members bring the survey to the attention of their members.
- Information had been released in June on the National Curriculum Review. The focus would be on knowledge and this had similarities with the current National Curriculum. Effectively exams would be the driver for the curriculum lower down the school. In a way this reflected the 'Back to basics' 1950s-style of schooling. This could mean that 'levels' will be replaced by end of year statements.
- National Review of RE – following the omission from the National Curriculum Review, the REC had set up a parallel review of the subject. It was noted that the DfE had not opposed this parallel review. The Review is being led by Dr Janet Orchard, University of Bristol, with the expert panel (chaired by Dr Bill Gent, University of Warwick) interviewing witnesses and compiling a report with recommendations in October/November covering: the aims of RE; RE curriculum; good practice in RE, and qualifications and achievement in RE. The review holds no statutory force but it may lead to something akin to the Non-statutory National Framework.

SACRE noted that due to government procedural reasons neither of the local MPs were part of the All Party Parliamentary Group. The Chairman offered to write to both MPs to make them aware of SACRE and seek their views on RE in education.

SACRE was made aware of a publication 'The Church School of the Future Review' which may impact on RE teaching and Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development in schools.

SACRE also received a brief report on the RE Quality Mark pilot scheme set up to establish a national quality mark for RE which was aimed at raising the profile of RE in schools and would also serve to help celebrate a commitment to excellence in Religious Education. A number of local authorities had been involved in the pilot which was now being evaluated.

**RESOLVED: That**

- a) **The national initiatives in RE be noted;**
- b) **The Chairman write to both the local MPs to make them aware of SACRE and seek their views on RE in education;**
- c) **The Clerk circulate copies of the publication 'The Church School of the Future Review' for members information.**

**113. NASACRE - REGIONAL & NATIONAL ISSUES**

SACRE received an update on regional and national issues from the NASACRE representative.

The Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang reported:

- That the Minister for Education had requested examples of excellent RE in schools. Information should be submitted in the form of a short report and sent to REC before October. She confirmed that this was not part of the National Review of RE.
- The NASACRE website would be updated to make it easier to use.
- Information could be submitted to NASACRE for inclusion in the quarterly e-publication 'SACRE News'.
- She had compiled a list of commonly used acronyms used in Education/RE which she was happy to share.
- She referred to a recent report on the web concerning a review of collective worship in schools which made an interesting read. SACRE noted that it was still a requirement that all registered pupils attending maintained schools should take part in daily collective worship unless the parent had exercised the right of withdrawal. How this was monitored was the question. The Lead Officer reported that observing collective worship was a part of the Ofsted inspection, however, the resultant Ofsted report didn't usually mention anything unless there was a major problem. The new Ofsted inspection report style may make monitoring easier.
- NASACRE were proposing to organise a regional conference in Birmingham, possibly in Spring 2013, and were interested to hear about best practice in RE. Depending on the cost per delegate she suggested it may be possible to collaborate with Worcestershire SACRE to send a number of delegates by coach.
- She was happy to receive any questions for referral to NASACRE.

**RESOLVED : That the report be noted**

**114. SYLLABUS TRAINING FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

The Consultant for RE reported that unfortunately the joint training event with Gloucestershire SACRE at Tewksbury for special schools had had to be postponed. He reported that the event would now be held on 16 October and that almost all special schools had indicated that they could send a delegate.

**RESOLVED: That the position be noted.**



## 115. FUTURE SUPPORT TO RE TEACHERS

SACRE were invited to consider ideas for supporting RE teachers in 2012/13, including the 2013 SACRE Conference, themes for network group and developing resources.

As reported in an earlier agenda item the 2012 Annual Conference had been a success and the meeting considered a number of possible venues for the 2013 conference e.g. Whitecross High School; 6<sup>th</sup> Form College; Royal National College for the Blind, or in Malvern, however, the availability of conference space, break out rooms and car parking would need to be taken into consideration.

The Consultant for RE suggested holding the conference during the week 17 June which, while a week earlier than this years, he suggested teachers should be available as exams should have been completed. The date was obviously subject to venue and key speaker availability. The theme for the conference should: engage teachers; encourage teachers to make connections; provide practical support and help; direct to resources; and instil enthusiasm.

SACRE were informed about how Gloucestershire SACRE had run a 'Grill a SACRE Rep' event for secondary schools which had involved a range of faith representatives answering a number of important ethical questions from their faiths point of view. The Consultant for RE highlighted that a number of practical issues would need to be considered before such an event could be held. A number of members expressed an interest in being involved.

The Lead Officer commented that ideas for the 2013 Conference would be discussed with teachers.

In relation to developing resources SACRE noted the limited resources to undertake development work.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted and officers be requested to progress arrangements for a 2013 SACRE Conference.**

## 116. ONLINE RESOURCES FOR RE

SACRE considered ways of making resources available to Herefordshire schools.

The Lead Officer reported that she would be meeting with the Council's Website Manager concerning the moving of web content from the Children's & Young Peoples web site to the main Herefordshire Council website.

Questions were asked concerning possible use of Wikis and virtual learning platforms and whether links could be included to various faith web sites.

The Lead Officer reported that once up and running information about the website would be circulated to all schools.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

## 117. SACRE 2012/13 BUDGET

SACRE received information on the 2012/13 budget for SACRE.



The Lead Officer reported that in common with many council budgets this year's SACRE budget had been reduced. It would be used to support the work of SACRE and RE in schools. In accordance with the Council's budget process she would need to submit a business case in the autumn in support of retaining the current level of budget for 2013/14.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**118. SACRE MEMBERSHIP**

SACRE considered its membership.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that initial discussions had been held with a representative from the local Muslim community. The Muslim community were now considering whether to put forward a nomination to serve on SACRE.

The Chairman reported that since the last meeting of SACRE correspondence had been entered into with a representative of the Welsh Marches Humanists concerning the invitation to address SACRE and the possibility of SACRE considering co-opting a Humanist representative.

The representative had expressed reservations about the need to 'explain their point of view to a panel' and being 'disenfranchised when it comes to subsequent policy decisions' as a co-opted member would be a non-voting position.

The Consultant for RE commented that there seemed to be a difference of views within the British Humanist Association concerning their representation at SACREs and whether Humanists represented people who no longer had a religious affiliation.

**RESOLVED: that without prejudicing any future decision of SACRE, the Chairman invite the representative of the Welsh Marches Humanists to attend a future meeting.**

**119. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

SACRE noted the next meeting would be held at 2.00pm on Tuesday 27 November 2012 at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.

The meeting ended at 3.42 pm

**CHAIRMAN**



**People's Directorate**

Blackfriars

PO Box 185

Blackfriars Street

## Religious STUDIES Examination results for 2012

### Summary

#### Results

- Full course GCSE results in Herefordshire are still above the national average and have remained the same in terms of students achieving A\*-C across the county compared with 2011.
- Short Course results at GCSE A\*-C are just below the national average and also remain at the same level as 2011.
- Within the cohort of students taking Religious Studies at KS5 a 100% pass rate has been maintained at both A and AS level.

#### Entry

- There has been a significant overall increase in the numbers of students entered for full course GCSE RE from 2011. Three schools made no entries for full course in 2012.
- There was a another fall in the number of students entered for GCSE short course in 2012 compared to 2011. Six schools made no entries.
- Total entries for any kind of GCSE in RE in 2012 represents 55% of the total cohort, no change from 2011. Some schools had a different entry pattern from 2011.
- In 2012 only one post 16 provider entered students for A level and/or AS level. The numbers taking AS level decreased from 2011.

## Detail of the breakdown of results at KS4 and KS5

Results for the 2012 GCSE and GCE A Level examinations for Religious Studies (subject to final validation) are summarised in Appendix A together with comparative data from 2011.

### Key Stage 4 GCSE Religious Studies

1. In the 2012 full GCSE examination students gained 79.8% A\* - C passes (Boys = 73.2%, Girls = 85.8%) which was above the national average of 72.5% and just below the 2011 results of 79.9% (Boys = 73.5%, Girls = 85.4%).
2. In the 2012 short course GCSE examination students gained 43.1% A\* - C passes (Boys = 29.9%, Girls = 55.6%) which is below the national average of 50.3% and a fraction below the 2011 results of 43.3% (Boys = 36.2%, Girls = 51.0%).
3. 665 students (314 Boys, 351 Girls), 35.4% of all students at the end of KS4 in Herefordshire maintained schools in 2012, entered for the full GCSE, an increase from the 552 students, 28.2% of all students (257 Boys, 295 Girls) in 2011. Six schools increased the number of candidates entered. Three schools decreased the number of candidates entered. Three schools made no entries.
4. 281 students (137 Boys, 144 Girls), 15% of the county's end of KS4 cohort, took the Short Course. This was a decrease on 2011 when 515 students (268 Boys, 247 Girls) 26.3% took it. Eleven schools decreased the number of entries for the short course and increased entries for the full course. One school increased their entries in the short course.
5. Total entries of 1045 (518 Boys, 527 Girls) represented 55.6% of the cohort, a slight increase from the proportion in 2011 which was 1067 (525 Boys, 542 Girls) representing 55% of the cohort. Some schools had a different pattern of entry from 2011..

### Key Stage 4 Entry level accreditation

6. In 2012 two schools entered candidates for an entry level qualification. 99 students (67 Boys, 32 Girls) took Entry Level Qualifications in 2012. In 2011 101 (60 Boys, 41 Girls) students sat an entry level examination.

### GCE A and AS Level Religious Studies

7. In 2012 one post 16 provider entered students for A level and/or AS level. 18 students (4 Boys, 14 Girls) took A level in 2012, which is 55 less than in 2011 when there were 73 (24 Boys, 49 Girls). There were 9 students (4 Boys, 5 Girls) who took AS Level in 2012, which is 20 less than in 2011 where there were 29 (12 Boys, 17 Girls).

(see appendix A for details of results)

**Learning and Achievement Service – Judith Tinsley School Improvement Advisor**

**Data supplied by: Quality and Improvement Team. Paul Cooper and Ian Sockett**

## Appendix A

### GCSE 2012 Results for Religious Studies

#### Religious Studies

	Full Course				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	Number A* to G	% A* to G
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>79.8%</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>99.5%</b>
Boys	314	230	<b>73.2%</b>	314	<b>100.0%</b>
Girls	351	301	<b>85.8%</b>	348	<b>99.1%</b>

#### Religious Studies

	Short Course				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	Number A* to G	% A* to G
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>95.0%</b>
Boys	137	41	<b>29.9%</b>	128	<b>93.4%</b>
Girls	144	80	<b>55.6%</b>	139	<b>96.5%</b>

#### Religious Studies

	ELQ Band C				
	Entered	No. Grds 1-3	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>44.4%</b>
Boys	67	67	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>37.3%</b>
Girls	32	32	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>59.4%</b>

### GCE A' Level 2012

#### Religious Studies

	A Level				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	No. A* to E	% A* to E
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Boys	4	4	<b>100.0%</b>	14	<b>100.0%</b>
Girls	14	13	<b>92.9%</b>	4	<b>100.0%</b>

#### AS Level

	AS Level				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	No. A* to E	% A* to E
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Boys	4	4	<b>100.0%</b>	4	<b>100.0%</b>
Girls	5	2	<b>40.0%</b>	5	<b>100.0%</b>

### GCSE 2011 Results for Religious Studies

#### Religious Studies

	Full Course				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	Number A* to G	% A* to G
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>79.9%</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>99.3%</b>
Boys	257	189	<b>73.5%</b>	253	<b>98.4%</b>
Girls	295	251	<b>85.4%</b>	295	<b>100.0%</b>

#### Religious Studies

	Short Course				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	Number A* to G	% A* to G
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>43.3%</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>95.9%</b>
Boys	268	97	<b>36.2%</b>	251	<b>93.7%</b>
Girls	247	126	<b>51.0%</b>	243	<b>98.4%</b>

#### Religious Studies

	ELQ Band C				
	Entered	No. Grds 1-3	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>
Boys	60	60	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>32.8%</b>
Girls	41	41		<b>43.9%</b>	<b>57.5%</b>

### GCE A' Level 2011

#### Religious Studies

	A Level				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	No. A* to E	% A* to E
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>89.0%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>98.6%</b>
Boys	24	22	<b>91.7%</b>	24	<b>100.0%</b>
Girls	49	43	<b>87.8%</b>	48	<b>98.0%</b>

#### AS Level

	AS Level				
	Entered	Number A* to C	% A* to C	No. A* to E	% A* to E
<b>Boys &amp; Girls</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>51.7%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>86.2%</b>
Boys	12	7	<b>58.3%</b>	12	<b>100.0%</b>
Girls	17	8	<b>47.1%</b>	13	<b>76.5%</b>

**Results from Hereford Sixthform College for 2012:**

**A2 Level**

Subject	Entries	% A-B	% A-C
Theology	61	70.0%	87.0%

**AS Level**

Subject	Entries	% A-B	% A-C
Theology	85	58.0%	76.0%

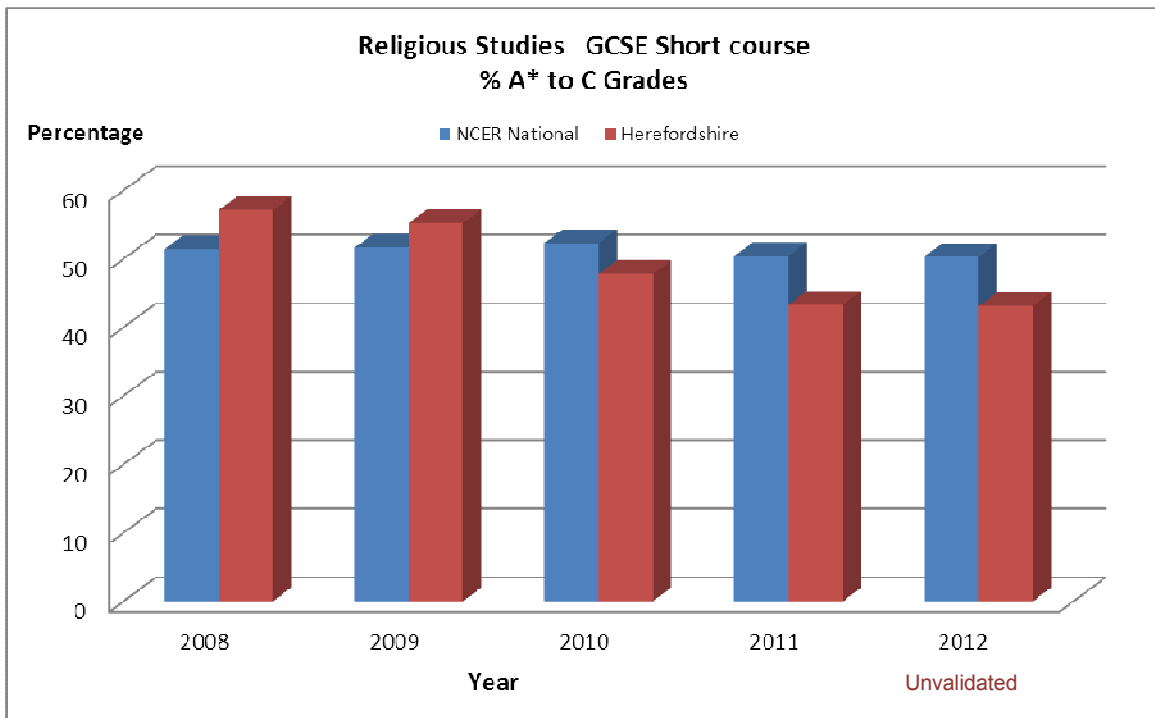
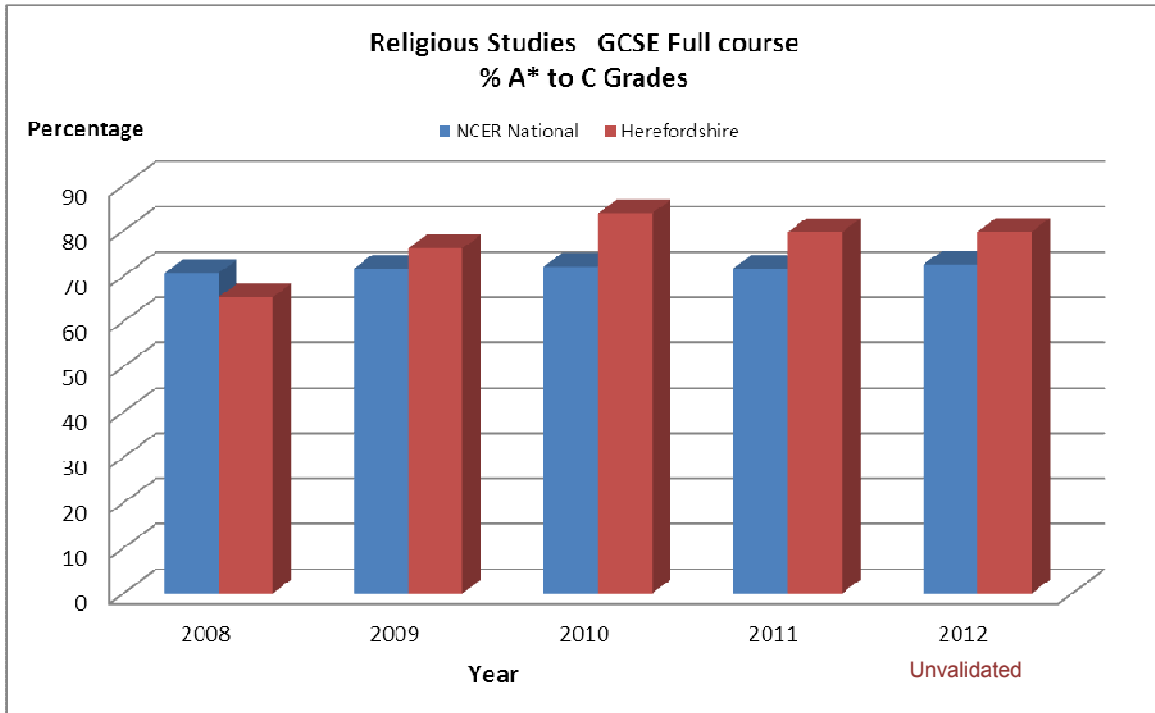
**Results from Hereford Sixthform College for 2011:**

**A2 Level**

Subject	Entries	% A-B	% A-C
Theology	56	71.4%	94.6%

**AS Level**

Subject	Entries	% A-B	% A-C
Theology	26	38.5%	53.8%



## SACRE – 27 November 2012

### Update on any new initiatives or News in Religious Education

Source: <http://www.retoday.org.uk/news>

#### 1. NATRE report on impact of EBacc on RE published

27 September 2012

In a report published on 27 September 2012 the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) suggests that RE in the curriculum continues to decline since the introduction of the English Baccalaureate, especially for young people aged 14 – 16 years. This impact is seen not only in the reduction of past and planned examination entries, but also in the timetable where schools report that even though the subject is legally compulsory for all students unless withdrawn by their parents, students are not always receiving their entitlement to a religious education.

This new research was conducted by NATRE over a period of six weeks in June/July 2012 via an online data gathering tool. Replies were received from 625 individual schools in England, of different types. This followed a similar survey conducted in 2011.

##### The results include:

- 33% of schools reported that legal requirements are not being met in key stage 4 (an increase of 5% on 2011)
- 24% of schools reported a reduction in the number of specialist staff employed to teach RE for 2012/2013, and 82% of these reported that the introduction of the EBacc was the main reason for this change (a 27% reduction in specialist staff was reported for 2011/2012)
- 54% of schools reported that they will have no entries for GCSE Short Course in 2014, a rise of 12% over two years
- 63% of schools that reported a drop in Full Course entries cited the EBacc as the main reason (55% in 2011)
- 20% of schools reported that they are trying to deliver the GCSE RS in less than the recommended teaching time. There is a growing body of evidence, from Ofsted subject surveys, that this practice is detrimental to students' RE
- 71% of schools reported that they had received no subject specific training in school in the 2011/12 academic year; 44% reported that they had received no subject specific training outside of school. Just over 10% reported that they had attended two days or more of training outside of school.

**NATRE recommends that you contact your local MP in response to these findings. Suggestions for action are found on the NATRE website. <http://tinyurl.com/c638heh>**

#### 2. DfE Report in impact of the English Baccalaureate

05 October 2012

The report published on 5 October 2012 by the DfE on the Impact of the English Baccalaureate includes some very positive comments from teachers about RE about the subject.

The report is available from the DfE website. ([DFE-RR249 Impact of EBacc 2012.pdf](#) )

##### Page 19 of the report states:

“Almost all case study schools **questioned the exclusion of RE as an EBacc subject**. This is directly relevant to the take-up of the EBacc: while many teachers are uncertain about the future impact of the EBacc, they **regard RE as an academically rigorous subject that is useful in its own right**. In some of the case study schools, teachers explained they would not steer pupils away from RE into an EBacc-eligible humanity if that is where their interests lay. **RE was a popular subject among many schools and pupils**, and a few schools noted that their EBacc figures would rise if RE were eligible.”



This is good news for RE. There are no surprises here, but it is good to hear this being articulated so clearly in a DfE-funded report. There is a lot of excellent work being done in RE and this report provides a clear indication that the subject is valued and supported by schools and their pupils.

### **3. No training bursaries for RE**

04 October 2012

From the academic year 2013/14 there will be no bursaries for post graduate teacher training graduates according to information published by the DfE on their website

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/funding/postgraduate-funding.aspx>

Targets for recruitment will now focus on recruiting high-quality graduates in subject considered by the government to be 'priority'. Bursaries will therefore be focused on EBacc subjects, computer science, music and PE as well as more specialist maths primary teachers. RE is not the only subject to be excluded from bursaries - Art, Citizenship and Design and Technology are also excluded.

The RE Council have written to the DfE to challenge this development. A copy of their letter can be found on the RE Council website. <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/>

### **4. 2013 Hockerill/NATRE Prize for Innovation in RE**

24 September 2012

NATRE is pleased to announce the launch of the 2013 Hockerill/NATRE Prize for innovation in RE teaching. Details of the Prize and how to apply are found on the Hockerill Foundation [website](#).

The Prize is in two parts:

a) £700 for the school to enable it to purchase new RE materials.

b) £400 as a bursary to the teacher to part fund attendance at a specialist educational course for RE.

The Prize recognises that the needs and requirements of the Primary and Secondary sectors are different and is therefore given separately in each sector.

The closing date for the receipt of entries is **31 January 2013**. Judging will take place in the following two months, with the winners being notified by Easter. The Prize will be presented in the late spring / early summer of that year.

### **5. RE Subject Review:**

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) has initiated a national Subject Review of Religious Education, to parallel the review of other subjects on the curriculum that is currently being undertaken. The preliminary report should be published online in time for the next SACRE meeting, enabling us to have a short discussion about SACRE's response. Dr Janet Orchard, who is Project Manager of the Review, is hoping that we will be able to send feedback as to whether the report accurately portrays the current state of RE and that its recommendations are correct.

<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/>

**Since writing this report the above mentioned preliminary report has been issued and SACRE may want to spend some time debating the contents.**

### **6. RE quality mark <http://www.reqm.org/>**

Do have a look at the new REQM website, and encourage schools to apply for a Bronze, Silver or Gold award.

Stephen Pett  
November 2012



Religious Education Council  
14-22 Elder Street  
London E1 6BT  
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**Working together to strengthen the provision of religious education in schools, colleges and universities**

12<sup>th</sup> November 2012

Dear Colleagues,

### **RE Council RE Subject Review, England, Phase 1 Expert Panel Report**

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

Phase 1 of the review is currently entering an important stage of consultation and we invite you to read the draft report of the Expert Panel and to send us your thoughts and comments.

May I make a few points to help you place the report into context.

#### **Background**

1. This report seeks to summarise accurately and comprehensively the perceived state of play in RE and to make recommendations for future action. Phases Two and Three will be developmental and take the review process forward.
2. The [Scoping Report](#) commissioned for the RE review proposed four foci for the review. These are: Aims and Purposes; Curriculum; Exemplifications of Good Practice; and Assessment and Qualifications. The REC's Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications Committee (CAQC) accepted the findings of the Scoping Report, with certain modifications, and it was also approved by the REC Board. These form the framework within which the REC RE Review operates.
3. The Phase 1 Expert Panel's report has been put to the REC CACQ Group, which acts as Steering Group for the project (Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October). A wider Reference Group, including members from all the REC member bodies, considered the report at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **Wider Public Consultation Procedure**

1. Please print or download [draft 2 of the Phase 1 Expert Panel report](#) and [Addendum](#).
2. We invite public responses to this report in writing, in one of 3 formats:



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Web: [www.religiouseducationcouncil.org](http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org)

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

- a. By letter, addressed to me as Chair of the Steering Group of the RE Subject Review for England, via the REC Offices.
- b. By [questionnaire](#), available on the REC website
- c. By questionnaire, following this link to Survey Monkey  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/REReviewSurvey12012>

There is considerable pressure of time on the RE review process, due in large part to the financial constraints within which the REC is working. The Government has refused to fund the RE Review in the way it is funding the review of the National Curriculum, so the REC has been entirely dependent upon voluntary donations to support the process. With regret, wider public consultation will take place electronically during a three week period from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November – Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December during which we hope you and/or any organisation to which you belong will contribute your responses to the Report. Please play your part by inviting others, including pupils and students studying RE, to make their contribution.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mike Castelli  
Chair of Steering Group  
RE Subject Review, England

## Addendum: Examples of issues raised during two preliminary REC consultation meetings (31.10.12 & 7.11.12)

1. Reference to core skills and understanding (eg Recommendation 2) should also include reference to skills.
2. An overarching statement of the purpose and aims of RE (see Recommendation 1) may be neither possible nor desirable. It may be best for the review to focus on aims and purposes for RE in non-denominational schools as a resource that might be accessed/useful for faith-based schools if they chose to draw upon it.
3. The term 'religion and belief', used in many recent RE documents, is more inclusive than reference to 'religion' alone. The subject area is Religion and Belief', RE being the mechanism through which these are studied.
4. Principle 3 assumes that the current system of local determination of RE will continue. Some believe that this is detrimental to RE and standards achieved by pupils.
5. More evidence needs to be included of current views and perceptions held within the faith-based sector of schooling
6. Too much emphasis has been placed on the 2004 *Non-Statutory Framework* for RE at the expense of later initiatives and documentation (eg relating to the new primary curriculum and secondary curriculum) which marked further development.
7. The report sometimes implies confusion over aims whereas the issue is really diversity.
8. Work on Recommendation 1 needs to identify the different groups with whom we are communicating (eg governors, teachers, parents, faith groups, business, the public). It might be useful to think about what makes a child religiously literate and its value for life and employment.
9. Recommendation 9 relates to what has been central in the work of the RE Council. But we also have to recognise that we are living in a changed environment and there are other routes which might become more urgent and effective.
10. The idea of 'entitlement' to RE is missing (eg in Principle 10).
11. In Principle 3, how does 'authoritative' sit with recognition of diversity?
12. Is RE a discipline? Engaging with the nature of the subject is what RE is about.
13. There does need to be some kind of document that acts as a central reference point, but the nature of this document will need careful consideration.
14. What about the significance of RE's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (particularly as this remains a focus of Ofsted inspections)? Should there have been an additional recommendation linked to this?
15. In phase 2, the review needs to have one expert/writing group rather than separate task forces working in discrete ways to produce something coherent.
16. Recommendation 7 could be widened further to include actual and potential providers. The RE community could also forge links with those not currently offering qualifications – like universities – and also become involved in vocational qualifications.
17. The whole area of legislation relating to RE is missing from the report; should it be?





**SUBJECT REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
IN ENGLAND**

**PHASE 1**

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT PANEL**

**DRAFT**

**Draft report for consultation only**

**12 November, 2012**

## RE Expert Panel Members

**Lat Blaylock**

**Bill Gent (Chair)**

**Julian Stern**

**Karen Walshe**

## Acknowledgements

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

- Dr Janet Orchard, the project manager of the whole REC RE Subject Review, for her constant support, encouragement, advice and back-up;
- Dr Sarah Smalley, REC Executive Officer, who, amongst other things, showed a remarkable gift in minute-taking during the two long, face-to-face meetings of the panel; and
- each of the expert witnesses who submitted detailed notes and comments and/or who provided oral evidence.



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## Introduction

### *The origin of this report*

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

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

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

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

The REC is committed to wide consultation among all of the various stakeholders with a direct interest in RE and beyond. Hence, a second draft of the phase 1 report was considered in early November 2012 by an Extraordinary General Meeting of the REC which represents the views of its 59 member bodies, including professional and faith-based groups. A third draft of the report is now being placed in the public domain for a period of three weeks in November and December 2012 for general consideration and

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

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

comment. A further revision will then be made to take account of these soundings and this final version of the report will be presented to the REC Board and the steering group for ratification.

### *The report's style, layout and length*

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

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

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

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

### *Underlying principles of the panel's work*

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

1. The RE Subject Review for England should defend and enhance the place of RE in the curriculum of English schools.
2. The RE Curriculum in schools in England should reflect wider educational aims, including the aims of the new National Curriculum. It should respect the principles of freedom, responsibility and fairness, and show commitment to raising expectations of the quality of RE received by all children.
3. Local determination of the curriculum has been recognised in the statutory arrangements for RE over many years. The Expert Panel has worked on the assumption that any new guidelines for the subject must continue to balance the value to RE of wide national compatibility with that of vesting power in local communities.
4. The Expert Panel is committed to diverse forms of high quality RE; its members recognise that the subject, like religion itself, is contested. Plural traditions of RE in

England have integrity and value, and their practice should be encouraged and developed. Common to these traditions is a widely shared commitment to being educative rather than coercive, each in their own way.

5. At the same time, Religious Educators need to be much clearer about the reasons which make the plural aims of RE legitimate and how these relate to the overall purpose of the subject.
6. RE's place in the curriculum will be strengthened if its role and importance are communicated as widely, effectively and meaningfully as possible to all stakeholders.
7. RE in England compares favourably with equivalent curricula in high performing jurisdictions around the world and the Expert Panel has regarded it a privilege to reflect on some of the best collective wisdom about how children learn in RE and what they should know.
8. The RE Curriculum should embody rigour, high standards and coherence. There are diverse interpretations of high standards and rigour in RE but one key element is the opportunity all children should have to acquire core knowledge and understanding particular to this curriculum area.
9. This requires a well-trained workforce of teachers with continuing professional development to support them and adequate time in which to teach the subject.
10. RE continues to be a statutory requirement for maintained schools and should remain a national benchmark of excellence for any school. Any school aspiring to be a good school should aspire to offer good RE.
11. The Expert Panel seeks to work in a spirit of generosity towards all those who teach and care about RE. Contributions to the RE Subject Review from many perspectives have been wholly welcome and gladly received. It has summarised and synthesised that expertise for the good of RE, based on a careful reading of documentation in relation to the four foci identified.

## Executive summary

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

1. **that clear and cogent aims for RE, applicable across the range of school settings, are proposed, as well as ways of communicating them to different stakeholders;**
2. **that clear accounts that re-evaluate the core knowledge and understanding in RE, appropriate to pupils in particular age groups and stages, are produced;**
3. **that guidance on pedagogy and learning methods in RE are developed for teachers and curriculum-shapers, that promote high quality teaching and learning in RE while allowing for diversity;**
4. **that evaluative principles are developed and published that enable teachers to make sound professional judgements about what constitutes good professional practice, promoting high standards of learning in RE;**
5. **that strategies are explored through which the collective efforts and wisdom of the individuals and groups which make up the RE community can be brought together and made known effectively for the benefit of the subject and the young people studying it;**
6. **that new instruments for describing achievement in RE are created that teachers can use working alongside the DfE's new descriptions of achievement in subjects like English, mathematics and science;**
7. **that maximum influence is sought with the relevant examination Awarding Bodies in order to promote:**
  - (a) **coherence and progression between 4-14 programmes and public examinations used at 14-19; and**
  - (b) **the study of religions in religious studies<sup>3</sup> qualifications 14-19, in appropriate relation to studies of, for example, ethics and philosophy;**
8. **that the 2004 *Non-Statutory National Framework* for RE is reviewed and replaced with an updated and recast document;**
9. **that increasingly influential links are built and used with the DfE in order to promote RE in all schools, in line with the REC subject review's work and recommendations (above), challenging and encouraging government to act to improve RE.**

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<sup>3</sup> At public examination level, RE is referred to as religious studies (RS).

## Focus 1: The Aims of RE

### Recommendation 1

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

### Aims: Background

- 1.1 The nature and purpose of RE are not easy to define in straightforward, unequivocal ways. The reasons for this are many. People's ideas about the role of both 'religion' and 'education' in society have changed over time. Moreover, religion itself is a complex concept, fundamental to the lives of some citizens whilst highly problematic for others, so that the issue of whether religion has a part to play in a nation's public education system at all is contested.
- 1.2 A consistent feature in many of the submissions that the Expert Panel received was a strong perception that, despite the considerable amount written on the nature, purpose and aims of RE in all kinds of documentation, many people still don't 'get it'.<sup>4</sup> That this was often linked to a sense of persistent frustration on the part of members of the RE community was demonstrated well in the document reporting a meeting of key members of the RE community that took place in late 2011: 'A lack of consensus on the rationale and purpose of RE, and a failure to find a simple accessible way of explaining RE to the public, media and government, struck many present as the most serious weakness'.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.3 A strong feeling persists, therefore, that both the purpose of RE as well as its aims need further articulation in ways and forms that people of all backgrounds can better understand and relate to. ('The issues are not in the aims themselves', said one expert witness, 'but in the communication of them'.) Is the RE community itself partly to blame for the confusion that exists? A recent major research project, *Does RE Work?* concluded bluntly that RE has tried to do too much<sup>6</sup>, re-inventing itself to include within its brief additional whole-school priorities – 'community cohesion', for example – and seeking to provide social, moral and values education so that the sense of a substantive core or essence of the subject has been eroded.
- 1.4 There is some concern about the title of the subject itself. At a national level, the term 'religious education' has been enshrined in legislation since 1988 (superseding the term 'religious instruction'). Some secondary school departments in particular have been experimenting with alternative titles which they judge to be more appealing to

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: IPPR (2004) *What is Religious Education for? Getting the National Framework Right*.

<sup>5</sup> St Gabriel's (2011) RE Community Conference 2011, 16.

<sup>6</sup> See: [www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/research/currentresearchprojects/doesreligiouseducationwork/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/research/currentresearchprojects/doesreligiouseducationwork/)

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

- 1.5 The publication of the *NSNF* for RE in 2004 was a milestone in the history of English RE. In particular, its statement on 'the importance of RE'<sup>7</sup> was an attempt to provide coherence for the subject at a national level while respecting the value of the subject's adaptability to local needs and requirements without inappropriate and unhelpful levels of prescription. There have been criticisms of the *NSNF*; some, for example, have suggested that, no matter how 'educational' such guidelines are, there is still the assumption that it is better to be religious than not. Others criticise the *NSNF* for encouraging a single view of RE and undermining the independence of local determination. Nonetheless, the *NSNF* was ground-breaking because it gained the broad agreement across the full range of professional RE associations and faith communities. About 150 local agreed syllabuses have followed it in varying ways.<sup>8</sup>
- 1.6 Although RE is a statutory requirement for all state schools, in schools with a religious character the understanding of the nature and purpose of RE might be promoted in slightly different ways to that in a community school. At worst – as one expert witness pointed out – this can lead to a kind of 'us and them' mentality with the underlying assumption that the only 'proper' RE is that which takes place in schools without a religious character. However, members of the expert panel agree that diversity of provision has considerable advantages; the purpose and aims of RE can be expressed in ways that respect the varied integrities of RE practice in different schools and different contexts.

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<sup>7</sup>*NSNF*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> The expert panel is aware of less than 10 local authorities and SACREs that have chosen not to use the *NSNF* to support the development of their locally agreed syllabus.



## Aims: Main strengths

- 1.7 A tradition of inclusive and multi-faith RE has developed over time in England so that it is held in high esteem internationally. An expert witness with strong international links pointed out that, 'Specialists in religion and education from many countries appreciate the attempts in England, Wales and Scotland to have an *inclusive* form of religious education, which is 'open'. They also appreciate the fact that Britain ... has regarded religion as a legitimate subject for public discussion, including within education'.
- 1.8 The wide acceptance of the 2004 NSNF indicates some broad agreement about the nature of RE in schools. As one expert witness commented: 'Remarkably, it did provide an agreed reference point intended to be relevant not only for LA ASCs [Local Authority Agreed Syllabus Conferences] and SACREs [Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education] but also for those responsible for shaping RE in schools of a religious character'.
- 1.9 Teachers of RE have often made a strong contribution to the delivery of whole-school policies, including community cohesion and respect for all, critical thinking and citizenship. In its long subject report of 2010, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) identified the contribution of RE to the promotion of community cohesion as a strength of the subject in most of the schools that had been visited.<sup>9</sup>
- 1.10 The existence of a widely based professional 'RE community' consisting of RE practitioners including teachers, advisers and consultants, professional bodies and interested faith community groups. Such groups and individuals represent a diverse group of people and organisations whose common bond is a commitment to supporting and promoting the educational aims of RE.
- 1.11 The legislative requirement that each local authority determines its own agreed syllabus for RE is considered a strength by some expert witnesses. At its best, this has meant that local groups of educational professionals, faith, and community representatives have thought through the purpose and aims of RE together and reached agreements about the best possible curriculum for children and young people in their particular areas. This is in the spirit of current national policies to devolve power over the curriculum to local stakeholders.

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<sup>9</sup> Ofsted (2010) *Transforming religious education*, 47-49.

## Aims: Main Weaknesses

- 1.12 There is still widespread public uncertainty about the nature and purpose of RE. This is evident among a significant number of teachers<sup>10</sup> as well as the wider public. Some expert witnesses judged there to be too much diversity, complexity and variation in articulating the aims of RE. They went on to argue that this became more confusing still in aims statements that failed to distinguish between general aims of schooling, to which RE made a contribution, and particular aims specific to RE.
- 1.13 There is a lack of confidence and subject knowledge<sup>11</sup> among a significant number of teachers and practitioners. In increasing numbers of primary schools Higher Level Teaching Assistants are teaching and leading RE rather than teachers: their capacity to operate as fully functioning teaching professionals in the subject is severely limited. Furthermore, a lack of continuing professional opportunities in RE for all teachers and practitioners limits the scope for them to further develop their practice.
- 1.14 There is evidence of agreement that the development of knowledge and understanding of religion/religions is a core element of RE, and a widespread belief that pupils' knowledge and understanding is increasingly insecure. This point was made very strongly in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) / Warwick University report on *Materials Used to Teach About World Religions* (ref) and commented on frequently by expert witnesses.
- 1.15 Though the NSNF was a milestone in the development of RE in England and Wales, it now needs to be updated and its usefulness extended in order to take account of the many changes that have taken place since 2004<sup>12</sup>, both within RE and the wider educational scene. Furthermore, its statement about the 'importance of RE' in particular is not yet sufficiently clear or direct to be fully fit for purpose.
- 1.16 The locally determined nature of the RE curriculum is regarded as a weakness by some well-respected commentators. For them, this is a matter of urgency; they believe that the future well-being of RE is dependent upon radical reform of the legislation governing RE. The need to review this issue is heightened by recent radical revisions of local authority control over education. With increasing numbers of schools moving to academy status, thus outside local authority control and the requirement to follow the local agreed syllabus for RE, the future viability of SACREs is under threat, particularly in smaller districts and areas.

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<sup>10</sup> See, for instance: Ofsted (2010) *Transforming religious education*, 51, n147.

<sup>11</sup> As one of the expert witnesses pointed out, this would include 'pedagogical knowledge' – that is, an understanding of why and how I am teaching RE so that pupils make progress.

<sup>12</sup> Including subsequent key projects and documents from Government and its agencies which largely follow the settlement that the framework achieved.

## Focus 2: The RE Curriculum

### Recommendation 2

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

### Recommendation 3

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

## Curriculum: Background

- 2.1 As a result of progress made in recent decades, many parents and teachers now think of RE as a 'subject', alongside other subjects of the curriculum. However, questions remain about what *is* and what *ought to be* taught in the RE curriculum. On the one hand, there appears to be a relatively widespread expectation that the key focus of a subject called 'RE' will be on studying 'religion/s', particularly Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (usually named as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism). On the other, a further relatively well-established expectation is that the RE children receive in school will equip them for living in a plural society made up of people who, to a lesser or greater extent, follow many religions and beliefs. Beyond this, agreement is less certain. Hence the various meanings of 'religious education' and its associated concepts have been the legitimate subject of often intense debate within the RE community and beyond. This was apparent in many of the key documents and submissions received from expert witnesses.
- 2.2 Sometimes, these debates reflect wider concerns about how to structure learning and teaching which affect the curriculum as a whole. For instance, the need for a school curriculum to be organised around traditional 'subjects' has been challenged at the level of principle<sup>13</sup> as anachronistic, and in practice because it leads to needless repetition of certain topics which do not fit neatly into any one subject's schemes of work. Experienced primary school teachers who began their careers using a 'theme'- or 'topic'-based model to plan the curriculum, were then later encouraged to focus on 'subjects'. Later still, they were encouraged to use more 'creative' styles of planning which, in spite of official rhetoric to the contrary, seemed

<sup>13</sup> See: White, J (2004), Wright, A (2004), and material related to the 2008 New Secondary Curriculum.

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

- 2.3 Within RE, the idea that the principal focus of teachers should be on the RE 'curriculum' has been challenged on a number of levels. Some have pointed to an undue emphasis on subject content resulting in 'curriculum overload'. A number of expert witnesses were of the view that there has been too much emphasis on 'curriculum' at the expense of 'pedagogy'. This begs the questions, of course, as to what both the words 'curriculum' and 'pedagogy' mean and their relationship, there being evidence that there is often a lack of clarity in the use of both of these terms.<sup>14</sup>
- 2.4 There is strong evidence that, particularly since the publication of the *NSNF* in 2004, there has been a greater uniformity across local agreed syllabuses for RE – in their adoption, for instance, of the notion that the dynamic of RE is bound up with the twin processes of 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion which provides a basis for describing pupils' 'levels of attainment' across their school careers. However, there is still substantial variation across local agreed syllabuses with a small number of notable examples which enshrine a very particular or original approach to RE: that, in essence, for example, RE aims at the development of individuals and of society across a range of 'dispositions'.<sup>15</sup> In another example, RE is framed as an exploration of the question, 'what does it mean to be human?'<sup>16</sup>
- 2.5 Even when the assumption that RE is primarily concerned with the study of 'religion/s' is broadly agreed, both the meaning of the concept of 'religion' and the most fruitful way of studying it are hotly contested. Within the English RE community, there has been an on-going debate between those academics who regard 'religions' as 'substantial social facts' and those who regard 'religion' as a flawed, outmoded concept. Those of the former view regard the concept of 'religion' as helpful in discussing such things as religious truth claims. Those of the latter view are wary of the term in that they think that it encourages people to think of 'religions' as fixed entities disregarding real life evidence that 'religions' are changing, internally diverse and have blurred boundaries.<sup>17</sup>
- 2.6 It follows from the identification of the principal religions to be included in RE (see 2.1 above), that there will be some dissatisfied by apparent exclusion. Members of religious communities that are globally significant, but have small numbers of members in the UK would like to see study of their faith traditions included in the curriculum. Atheists and agnostics – of whom those in the British Humanist Association (BHA) are the most visibly well-organised – draw attention to the fact that religious practice in the UK is a minority occupation, with many or most living as

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<sup>14</sup> One expert witness suggested that the title of Michael Grimmitt's well-known book, *Pedagogies of Religious Education* (Great Woking: McCrimmons, 2000), was really about 'methods' rather than 'pedagogies'.

<sup>15</sup> See the 2007 Birmingham agreed syllabus: [www.faithmakesadifference.co.uk](http://www.faithmakesadifference.co.uk)

<sup>16</sup> See the 2011 Lancashire agreed syllabus: [www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/re/index.php?category\\_id=136](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/re/index.php?category_id=136)

<sup>17</sup> See: Wright (2008) & Jackson, R (2008).

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

- 2.7 In terms of the historical and social phenomenon of 'religion', the once common Western idea that religion will gradually 'die out' has been increasingly challenged by research into what has been called 'the persistence of faith'.<sup>18</sup> In its place, religion is increasingly seen as a key global phenomenon which is expressed in many and varied ways. A number of key documents<sup>19</sup> and expert witnesses expressed concern that the concept of religion as used in RE has not kept pace with such developments.
- 2.8 In addition to the challenges to any simple notion of a straightforward RE 'curriculum' already highlighted, contemporary changes (or emerging changes) in the national educational field need to be taken into account: the insistence of the DfE 2010-2012 that schools should have greater freedom to innovate and to devise their own curricula at school and community level, for instance. Expert witnesses commented that not only may a subject such as RE be left to wither in some schools, but also, the very idea of organising the curriculum into subjects will be set aside by others. So RE in the future will have to rely less on being a mandatory subject for all pupils by legislation, and much more on the *intrinsic worth of the learning opportunities it offers*. For example, academies will need to be convinced of the merit of the locally agreed syllabus if they are to choose to use it. The RE subject review should take these radical insights seriously.

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<sup>18</sup> See: Sachs, J (1990) *The Persistence of Faith* (London: Continuum).

<sup>19</sup> See, for instance: Ofsted (2007) *Making Sense of Religion*, 7.

## Curriculum: Main strengths

- 2.9 The 2004 *NSNF* provides an outline of the RE curriculum in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills to which most RE professionals could consent and from which almost all local agreed syllabus conferences have drawn in devising their own agreed syllabuses. Really weak agreed syllabuses appear less common, post-*NSNF*, than they were before.
- 2.10 Though the continuing usefulness of the terms ‘learning about’ and ‘learning from’ religions has been challenged<sup>20</sup>, they have nevertheless become embedded in the thinking of many primary and secondary teachers who, as a result, understand that RE consists of more than just ‘content’. This recognition of the need for balance is particularly significant in the context of the current national emphasis on the need for the identification of ‘bodies of core knowledge’ within subjects.
- 2.11 Evidence suggests that, since Ofsted began inspecting RE in 1994, more and better RE is being taught in more primary schools. Provision remains patchy, but inspection reports suggest a decline in the once common total neglect of the subject in many schools, and this improvement may have been helped by the five-yearly cycle of agreed syllabus review.
- 2.12 One way the strength of the RE teaching force has been developed and shown is through the 2008-2010 RE contribution to the New Secondary Curriculum through which 1016 secondary schools, involving over 1500 teachers, received professional development from 25 regional RE subject advisers.

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example: Ofsted (2007), 38



## Curriculum: Main Weaknesses

- 2.13 The lack of curriculum time made available to RE in many schools combined with the use of 'creative curriculum planning'. In some primary schools, for instance, teaching assistants<sup>21</sup> (or Higher Level Teaching Assistants) have been used to teach RE, sometimes in PPA time<sup>22</sup>, lowering the status and the probable impact of RE in the school (REC 2007, p. ?). Many teachers have identified a lack of understanding of, and support for, RE among senior school leaders and policy-makers as a significant cause of weakness in RE provision.
- 2.14 Within the secondary phase, the recent decision of the DfE not to include RE as one of the humanities subjects of the 'English Baccalaureate' ('EBacc') has compromised the future of RE in secondary schooling. A series of National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) surveys of English secondary school RE departments<sup>23</sup> revealed widespread unsettlement, reporting a general feeling that RE had been unfairly 'downgraded' within the school curriculum as a result. The October 2012 Ipsos Mori report on *The Effects of the English Baccalaureate* reported that, 'Almost all case study schools questioned the exclusion of RE as an EBacc subject'.<sup>24</sup>
- 2.15 The limited opportunities for teachers and other practitioners to increase their professional knowledge, understanding and expertise through RE-specific initial and continuing professional development. Many local authorities and SACREs no longer make any provision for continuing professional development in RE, due to reduced resources and/or a lack of subject-based advisory support.
- 2.16 The frequent misrepresentation of religion in both teaching and the literature produced to support RE in schools.<sup>25</sup> There is often concern with 'coverage of religions', noted one expert witness, 'rather than a commitment to understanding and impact'. Another pointed to the tendency to 'sanitise' religions leading to an avoidance of diversity and controversy.

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<sup>21</sup> REC (2007) *Religious Education Teaching and Training in England: current provision and future improvement*, p35, identified a need for training for teaching assistants in RE.

<sup>22</sup> The Workload Agreement guarantees teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales ten per cent of their timetabled teaching to be set aside as preparation, planning and assessment (PPA) time during the school day.

<sup>23</sup> See NATRE website: [www.natre.org.uk](http://www.natre.org.uk).

<sup>24</sup> DfE (September 2012) *The effects of the English Baccalaureate*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> See, in particular: DCSF/Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (2010) *Materials used to Teach about World Religions in Schools in England*.



## Focus 3: Exemplification of good RE

### Recommendation 4

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

### Recommendation 5

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

## Exemplification: Background

- 3.1 Good quality RE grows where best practice is widely known and understood. The term 'exemplification of good practice' is far-reaching, however, and the panel therefore took a broad view of what this category required it to address. With more time, the panel would have attempted to define the field more tightly.
- 3.2 Primary teachers have often looked to local SACREs and agreed syllabuses as well as commercially-published resources for their classroom approaches; notions of good practice have often been drawn from practice in other subjects. At the same time, poor subject knowledge and understanding and low confidence have often undermined the quality of primary RE practice.
- 3.3 Secondary teachers, in those schools in which teachers with other specialisms are in a majority, can be more influenced than they realise by the quest for parity with history and geography at both Key Stages 3 (11-14) and 4 (14-16). Advantages and disadvantages stem from these comparisons. Secondary schools have generally been less concerned than primary schools to implement their local agreed syllabus. In the case of new-style academies, the link with local arrangements for RE (including resources) is currently loosely defined.
- 3.4 In the last eight years, guidance produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)<sup>26</sup> has been widely used, though this has improved good practice less than would have been wished. The marginal position of RE within the curriculum and small amounts of curriculum time account for much of the weakness of teaching and learning which HMI observe in RE.

<sup>26</sup> Such as the New Secondary Curriculum Initiative and work on Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) in Foundation Subjects to define and exemplify levels.

- 3.5 There are many national projects which provide high-quality exemplification, some originating in research, some funded and supported by RE's major donors, funders and agencies. Various REC member bodies have also produced exemplification material, such as the Islamic Council of Britain's package for learning about Islam, the BHA's 'Humanism for Schools' website, and the Jewish Way of Life exhibition. In general, these are less well known than they deserve and probably lack widespread impact, even where they would meet needs widely.
- 3.6 An increasing amount of material is available digitally via the internet and, in the context of increased globalisation, from a wide range of international sources. However, such material is unregulated and raises issues – particularly for those lacking subject knowledge or confidence – about resource selection, balance and quality. Furthermore, best practice would suggest that such material has to be tailored to the particular situation in which it is going to be applied; an exercise that requires professional judgement, flair and expertise.
- 3.7 RE has relied on agencies of government for exemplification of good practice. Key examples include HMI, QCD, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa). Local agencies – SACREs being the key example – have also often made a contribution to exemplification. Following the closure of some of these agencies<sup>27</sup> and in view of the current austerities which affect many (though not all) SACREs, the RE community must look to other sources for the support of exemplification of good practice.
- 3.8 One particularly significant factor has been the reduction in the number and availability of 'experts' (including specialist RE advisers, advisory teachers and advanced skills teachers) to support teachers and schools. Where they continue to exist, local subject-specific groups of teachers have been a lifeline for many with meetings often focused on sharing examples of good practice. Some faith communities, such as Roman Catholic and Anglican dioceses, have continued to offer support to their own networks, sometimes beyond. However, many teachers of RE report feeling isolated, and do not feel well placed to see how exemplification of good practice can help them practically.
- 3.9 Some 'pull factors' have been having a good impact, but usually only on schools numbered in their hundreds at best.<sup>28</sup> These include quality marks and awards (such as the RE Quality Mark<sup>29</sup> and the Hockerill/NATRE prize for Innovation in RE Teaching<sup>30</sup>); competitions (such as those associated with 'Spirited Arts'<sup>31</sup>); and

<sup>27</sup> BECTa, for example, was closed down on 31 March 2011.

<sup>28</sup> The evaluation report on the RESilience Project, for example, noted that, 'The number of English schools that chose to participate was disappointing. This was due in part to external factors but the final number fell far short of the revised aspirational target of 400'. *An Evaluation of Resilience/At Gyfnerthu 2009-2011*, 25.

<sup>29</sup> A recently introduced award aimed at 'recognising outstanding learning in religious education'. See: [www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org)

<sup>30</sup> Now in its third year. See: [www.hockerillfoundation.org.uk/Prize.aspx](http://www.hockerillfoundation.org.uk/Prize.aspx)

projects and initiatives (such as the Celebrating RE Month held in March 2011<sup>32</sup> and developing students as ‘ambassadors of faith and belief’<sup>33</sup>). These initiatives, which require opting into, often feature schools who already exhibit good practice in RE.

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

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<sup>31</sup>Including ‘Art in Heaven’, an annual art competition which, since 2004, has involved 250,000 pupils. See: [www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts/](http://www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts/)

<sup>32</sup> See: [www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/blogcategory/51/81/](http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/blogcategory/51/81/)

<sup>33</sup> See, for example: <http://www.save-glasbury.org/aims.php>

## Exemplification: Main strengths

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

## Exemplification: Main Weaknesses

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

## Focus 4: Assessment (including Qualifications)<sup>34</sup>

### Recommendation 6

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

### Recommendation 7

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

- (a) coherence and progression between 4-14 programmes and public examinations used at 14-19; and**
- (b) the study of religions in religious studies<sup>1</sup> qualifications 14-19, in appropriate relation to studies of, for example, ethics and philosophy.**

## Assessment: Background

4.1 There has been substantial work on assessment in RE in recent years, to which many expert witnesses have drawn attention. The most recent reference point is the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) assessment working group. The work of the HMI and of QCDA's Assessing Pupil Progress in RE work is also pertinent. Though there is clearly 'unfinished business' in the area of assessment and RE, there is evidence that, with skilful and knowledgeable handling, the use of levels can promote progress in RE but that, generally, too few teachers and schools have the confidence or expertise to use assessment techniques well. From the pool of schools that has been visited in recent years, HMI judges assessment in RE overall to be relatively weak in relation to other subjects<sup>35</sup>. There is also divided opinion over the usefulness of the 'learning about' and 'learning from' dichotomy as a means of carrying out assessment. At best, it has been suggested, it gives people a good sense of the subtle nature of RE and 'learning from religion' provides a strong starting point for higher order thinking in RE, including skills of critical and personal evaluation. At worst, however, it leads to a narrow interpretation of each element so that "learning about' becomes synonymous with 'facts' and

<sup>34</sup> The title of the fourth focus as given to the Expert Panel was 'qualifications and assessment of RE'. Following discussion, however, panel members decided that it was helpful to reword this as 'assessment (including qualifications)' and to interpret 'qualifications' as applying predominantly to the GCSE and GCE public examinations in religious studies (RS) available to pupils at school.

<sup>35</sup> See the two long Ofsted reports (2007, 2010) on RE in schools visited.



'learning from' with 'feelings'. Many expert witnesses stated that some teachers are confused about what the terms actually mean<sup>36</sup>.

- 4.2 A review of qualifications in RE/RS<sup>37</sup> also presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, there has been a spectacular increase in the number of students taking RE/RS public examinations in recent years<sup>38</sup>, both at GCSE and GCE levels, with solid rates of achievement being recorded. Evidence suggests that the worth of RE/RS examinations has risen in the esteem of students, many of them seeing the kinds of issues-based RE/RS examinations that have developed as being helpful for living in the modern, plural world. The increased popularity of RE/RS examinations has also meant that they have become a significant commercial factor for the examination Awarding Bodies: RE/RS has, in short, attained a strong market position. On the other hand, there are currently significant and fast-moving changes taking place in the national examination scene, some expert witnesses voicing concerns that there is a danger the RE community will not be able to respond quickly enough so as to influence decisions that will impact on the future of RE/RS as an examination subject.
- 4.3 There is also evidence, however, that the rapid growth in the number of candidates for RE/RS public examinations has come at a cost. For example, concerns have been expressed by some expert witnesses that: the GCSE short courses lack rigour and challenge; the full GCSE courses are too content-based so that they encourage 'teaching to the exam'; and that the popularity with students of A level philosophy and ethics-type RE/RS courses has led to a belief that 'anything goes' (in terms of argument) and that 'philosophy' and 'philosophy of religion' (which usually means Western philosophy) have become conflated so that both become distorted. There is also a much-repeated concern that, all through the school years – but particularly in Key Stages 4 and 5 when examinations predominate - pupils exhibit a diminishing understanding of the nature of religion in general as well as of the basic theological positions of particular religious traditions and the questions that they raise. In the words of one expert witness: 'The focus on so-called 'philosophy and ethics' has reduced religions at Key Stage 4 to providers of proof texts, learnt by heart, to illustrate religious attitudes to "issues"'.
- 4.4 If the above factors are, to a lesser or greater extent, within the control of RE/RS and examination professionals, the same cannot be said for changes that emanate from decisions made at government level and which can leave educational professionals feeling helpless, frustrated and often angry. Such has been the case with the decision not to include RE/RS as one of the humanities subjects which combine with others to form the measure of school examination performance termed the 'EBacc'.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example: Teece, G (2010).

<sup>37</sup> The term RE/RS has been used in this section as a reminder that, at public examination level, RE is termed 'religious studies' (RS).

<sup>38</sup> Over 450,000 students have been certificated at GCSE each year in the last six years. In the last 15 years, over 25,000 students have sat the AS level in Religious Studies.

Recent surveys<sup>39</sup> have demonstrated that this one move has done much to undermine the status and staffing of RE in a significant number of English secondary schools. It is, many have claimed, a cruel example of damaging RE 'by default'; that is, educational decisions not specifically related to RE nevertheless having a negative impact on RE, thereby undermining its position in schools. Some expert witnesses also expressed concern at RS not being listed as a 'facilitating subject' by the Russell Group of universities, saying that this has fuelled negative perceptions of RE amongst some pupils and members of the wider public.

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

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<sup>39</sup> Particularly the four surveys, each of which attracted a significantly high number of responses from English secondary schools, which were conducted by NATRE 2010-2012.



## Assessment: Main strengths

- 4.6 The quality and wide use of the RE eight-level scale from the Framework is not without problems, but is perceived to be a strength of the subject by many teachers and syllabus-makers. By offering a common platform with subjects such as history and geography, the eight-level scale has led to greater coherence and rigour in the ways that teachers describe achievement and progression in RE for 5-14s.<sup>40</sup> It has also been suggested that self-assessment and peer-assessment has become more popular in RE, giving pupils greater agency and ownership.
- 4.7 It is a strength that RE has for over a decade shared parity of language and structures for describing assessment with, for example, history, geography and art. This has had a benefit for the strength of the subject's assessment work and for the status of RE in the eyes of teachers, parents and pupils.
- 4.8 The spectacular increase in recent years in the number of students taking examination courses at both GCSE and GCE levels, the short course GCSE being particularly strategic in helping schools to fulfil the legislative requirement for all students to take RE (unless withdrawn by parents or carers) at Key Stage 4.
- 4.9 The raised status of RE amongst 14-18 pupils, particularly with the popularity of issues-based/philosophy and ethics-type GCSE and GCE courses.

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<sup>40</sup> One example of the impact of the scale is that over 2,600 teachers have benefitted from continuing professional development courses on assessing RE organised by RE Today.

## Assessment: Main Weaknesses

- 4.10 The general standard of assessment in RE is relatively weak in relation to other subjects. Contributory factors include including lack of teacher confidence, decreasing opportunities for initial and continuing professional development, lack of curriculum time, the unrealistic amount of assessment required of some teachers, and lack of clarity about the aims of RE.
- 4.11 The debilitating impact of RE not being included as one of the humanities subjects of the EBacc, evidence suggesting that it is making some schools question the value of running RS short/full GCSE courses or even to eliminate such courses entirely. In such schools, the negative impact on the perception of RE's value and on the morale of teachers can be marked.
- 4.12 There is widespread concern that the popularity of philosophy and ethics examination courses post-14, at the expense of a study of world religions or religious texts, has led to a shallower understanding of the nature of religion/s. This, in turn, will impact on the knowledge and understanding of future entrants into the teaching profession.
- 4.13 Since 1997, the GCSE short course in religious studies has been the most popular of all short courses, meeting a real need to certificate the core learning in legislatively required RE. If it were to continue, reform is needed because of a perceived lack of rigour<sup>41</sup> (a perception that is also widely applied to the full GCSE course), There is a need to clarify the relationship of the short course with other qualifications (such as, presently, the full RS GCSE course, or any successor qualification). But, if the short course in RS were to be abolished, then another way of accrediting the learning entitlement of the RE required by legislation will be needed. The accreditation of learning at 16 or in Key Stage 4 (14-16) is currently a weakness in RE provision.

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<sup>41</sup> See, for instance: Ofsted (2010), 5.

## Two Further Recommendations

### **Recommendation 8**

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

### **Recommendation 9**

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

### Note

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

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

## A Final Word

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

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

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

Bill Gent

Chair of RE Expert Panel

November 2012

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## Annex 1: Expert Witnesses Consulted

*Written submissions were received from the following:*

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

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

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

## Annex 2: Key Documents Consulted

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

### **DfE-related**

National Curriculum Expert Panel Report (Dec 2011)

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

Government response to Expert Panel Report (June 2012)

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

### **REC-related**

Scoping Exercise Report (Feb 2012)

### **RE-focused (excluding journal/magazine articles)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NATRE (June 2011) *Second Teacher Survey*

Ofsted (1997) *Making Sense of Religion*

Ofsted (2010) *Transforming Religious Education*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **RE-focused (journal/magazine articles)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Annex 3: Pen Portraits of RE Expert Panel Members

### Lat Blaylock

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

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

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

### Bill Gent

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

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

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



## Julian Stern

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

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

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

## Karen Walshe

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

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

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



## RE REVIEW PHASE ONE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for helping us to evaluate the Phase One Report of the RE Review. Please spend a few minutes considering and answering the following questions. The information we gather from you will give us valuable insights into how we can further improve the final version of the Phase One Report and ensure that the processes we are putting in place to review RE are fair and inclusive.

The questionnaire is available online on <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/REReviewSurvey12012>. It would be very helpful to us in analysing the responses if you could complete the questionnaire online. However, if this is impractical for you for any reason, please email your response to [info@religiouseducationcouncil.org](mailto:info@religiouseducationcouncil.org) or post it to the REC, 14 – 22 Elder Street, London E1 6BT. Please note that due to the limited resources available to support the RE Review we cannot promise to review any responses received after **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012**.

No one's responses will be identified by name from this process, either in the evaluation or the Review; nor will the names of respondents be shared with anyone external to those evaluating the Review.

### Section 1: Background details

1. What is your occupation?
  - a. RE teacher
  - b. RE-related educational professional
  - c. Educational professional
  - d. Employee of a religion or belief organisation
  - e. Other
  
2. What is your religion/belief affiliation?
  - a. Baha'i
  - b. Buddhism
  - c. Christianity
  - d. Hinduism
  - e. Islam
  - f. Jain
  - g. Judaism
  - h. Paganism
  - i. Sikhism
  - j. Zoroastrian
  - k. Non-religious world view
  - l. None
  - m. Other
  - n. Prefer not to say

## Section 2: Responses to the report

3. The Review assesses the present situation in RE accurately

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

4. The Review assesses the present situation in RE clearly

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

5. The Review is fair, balanced and credible

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

6. The Review makes a valid case for the actions proposed

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

7. The Review represents all stakeholders views without bias

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8. The Review represents dissenting views in a fair and balanced way

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

9. The Reviews recommendations are the right ones

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

10. Please feel free to make any additional comments in the box below

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of these important questions for RE  
Dr Lorraine Peck, RE Review External Evaluator; Dr Janet Orchard, RE Review Project Manager



## **SACRE ANNUAL SURVEY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2012**

**Report By: Democratic Services Officer**

### **Purpose**

1. To note the contents of the 2012 Annual SACRE Survey of Primary Schools.

### **Report**

2. In 2011 SACRE requested the local authority to undertake a survey of schools to find out key information about the teaching of RE in Herefordshire. The authority undertook a limited survey and the results were reported earlier in the year. Building on the results of last year's survey and picking up on the request by SACRE to include questions on Collective Worship, the Lead Officer for SACRE and the Consultant have compiled the appended survey for 2012.
3. The following web link is provided so that SACRE members can try out the survey online before the meeting.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BVYCD5S>

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT SACRE note the content of the 2012 SACRE Annual Survey and receive a report on the results in due course.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified.





## How is RE taught in your school?

### 1. How is RE delivered in your school?

(Select more than one as appropriate)

- Discrete lessons
- Within cross-curricular topics
- Off-timetable RE half-days or days
- RE-led project weeks
- Not taught
- Other (please specify)

### 2. Which method is used most commonly in each year group?

	FS	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Discrete lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within cross-curricular topics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Off-timetable RE half-days or days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RE-led project weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not taught	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Taking the variety of methods of delivering RE into account, how much time is there for RE in your school?

	KS1	Lower KS2	Upper KS2
Less than one hour per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
About an hour per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than an hour per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Herefordshire SACRE Primary RE survey 2012

## 4. Who teaches RE in your school? (Select more than one as appropriate)

- Class teacher
- PPA teacher
- Head teacher
- HLTA
- Other (please specify)

## The RE curriculum

### 5. How confident are you about implementing the recently revised Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE (2011)?

- Very confident
- Confident
- Confident in aspects
- Unsure in aspects
- Not confident

### 6. How far would you say your school has got in implementing the syllabus?

- Fully implemented
- Partially implemented
- Many aspects still to be implemented

## The revised Agreed Syllabus

# Herefordshire SACRE Primary RE survey 2012

## 7. Are there particular areas of your RE provision that have been enhanced by the revised agreed syllabus? (Select more than one as appropriate)

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not helpful	No comment
Understanding the aims of RE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning using the key questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning your own questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment using levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pupil progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creative activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing thinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing enquiry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify as appropriate)

## CPD and teacher support

### 8. Have you been able to take advantage of the Agreed Syllabus implementation training offered by the Local Authority/Diocese? (Select more than one as appropriate)

- Launch conference 2011
- Termly twilight network meetings
- Annual SACRE conference 2012
- Diocesan Courses
- Special School RE day 2012
- None

Other (please specify)

## 9. What are the key training needs for teachers of RE in your school? (Tick more than one option as appropriate)

- Understanding the aims of RE
- Planning RE
- Developing creative classroom activities
- Assessment in RE
- Developing thinking through RE
- Cross-curricular RE
- RE and values
- Spiritual development
- Subject knowledge

Other (please specify)

## Your school

### 10. What type is your school?

- LA community school
- Academy
- Voluntary Aided school
- Voluntary Controlled school
- Church academy

Other (please specify)

### 11. Do you have examples of good or excellent RE in your school?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

### 12. May we contact you or your RE subject leader for more information about this?

- Yes
- No

# Herefordshire SACRE Primary RE survey 2012

## 13. If yes to Question 12, please give details:

School:

Subject leader name:

Contact email:

## 14. SACRE also have responsibility for supporting and monitoring collective worship. Please tell how you deliver collective worship in your school. (Select more than one, as appropriate)

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Whole school
- In classes
- Head teacher leads
- Teachers lead
- HLTA leads
- Visiting speakers
- Open the Book

Any other comments:

## 15. What would be the most helpful support with collective worship you would like from SACRE? Please add your comment here.

## 16. If you have not already included your contact details for Q.13 above, it would be helpful for us to be able to keep in contact and inform you of training and resources to support you.

School name

Contact name

Email address

Thank you for taking part in this survey. The data collected will be used to help Herefordshire SACRE and the Local Authority to support RE teaching and learning, and collective worship.



**Gloucestershire/Herefordshire SACRE Special RE Day October 2012**  
**RE in special schools: promoting spiritual development**  
**EVALUATIONS (15 delegates; 12 schools plus 3 LA/Diocesan advisers).**

	excellent	good	satisfactory
<b>Overall evaluation of the day</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>How was the venue?</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	
<p><b>Specific comments about what you liked:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas for how to plan for 5 important areas of RE</li> <li>• Fantastic ideas and resources I can take back and share. Thank you.</li> <li>• Very positive approach – looking forward to trying some new things.</li> <li>• Great to have learning and teaching materials specifically which are appropriate for SEN pupils. Great planning framework from Anne. This will help me when I revise current schemes of work.</li> <li>• Sharing of ideas, networking and discussing how the syllabus can be adapted.</li> <li>• Anne’s idea of 5 Keys into RE would make an excellent planning tool. Ani-la’s meditation techniques can be adapted and used across the school.</li> <li>• Having an excellent practitioner lead the day.</li> <li>• Really like the 5 Keys into RE planning sheet. Practical meditation session and how to adapt for SEN.</li> <li>• Calm approach to the day (not whistle-stop exhausting). Opportunities to talk to other delegates. Good central venue.</li> <li>• Pace, range of activities, practical, sensory, visual, interspersed with listening and absorbing information. Made me think in a different way. Lovely atmosphere. Left me wanting more!</li> </ul>			
<p><b>How will you make use of the ideas you have encountered today?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitely share ideas on how to plan on paper which should then focus lessons on the important issues</li> <li>• Use planning structure to help me evaluate current SoWs and adapt/write new ones. Implement teaching resources shared.</li> <li>• New to RE subject leader role. Many ideas can be used across the school (4-19), particularly music and movement.</li> <li>• As I visit schools I can share some of these wonderful ideas.</li> <li>• The planning sheets – easy to understand and implement.</li> <li>• Use practical ideas; try mindfulness with a few pupils who are very anxious.</li> <li>• This will help to inform my planning and practical classroom environment.</li> <li>• Pass on ideas to colleagues. Discuss the day with colleagues at teachers’/staff meeting. Link with another special school?</li> <li>• So refreshing to have something aimed at special schools, so good not to have to adapt information to meet our needs. Intend to take and aspect/aspects, try it, monitor it and evaluate it.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>How has this conference helped you to apply the revised agreed syllabus?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Permission” to focus on what our pupils can do rather than just learning about faiths.</li> <li>• Having just taken on the role (TLR) it has given me some confidence to go back and inject some enthusiasm, into the subject</li> <li>• I have been able to liaise with other special schools and look at planning together (feeder school and my school). Today has given me more clear ideas on how to structure SoWs.</li> </ul>			

- 5 Keys into RE gave me a real insight into how to apply the syllabus
- With key ideas and handouts to help plan lessons and deliver the syllabus effectively.
- Lots of ideas for activities. Focus on key skills. Importance of reality/real RE, not just pleasing Ofsted. Clear differentiation of RE and SMSC. How we can use filming and showing work as evidence and for pleasure.
- Helped me re-think planning – not just adapt a mainstream model. Lovely ideas to take forward and reassuring that we do not have to deliver irrelevant material – we can go to the meaningful core.

#### **How might we improve a future event?**

- More EY/primary ideas (mostly more able/secondary)
- Perhaps share current teaching practices in our schools so we can evaluate and magpie ideas
- Could we open it up to Special Needs across the mainstream too? Many schools have pupils with quite complex needs in mainstream.
- It was great to see the videos and photos of pupils doing RE. Perhaps we could gather views of pupils about RE, their ideas, likes, dislikes, etc and use these as a basis for devising the day?

#### **Any further comments?**

- Lovely day – going away feeling more positive
- Thank you – more please
- I thoroughly enjoyed my day! More of the same please.
- Very interesting event. Nice to have an event like this centred around Special Education rather than having to adapt.
- Invite other leaders in religion to share their experiences/ideas in special schools.
- A wonderful day – thank you for inviting me.
- A good way to network and discuss good practice.
- Really helpful especially as an NQT in an EBD school teaching RE.
- Today was so relevant to what we do and the needs we cater for. Wonderful.
- Thanks to Anne for some wonderful insights, ideas, tips and information. The day worked on so many levels. The best courses sent you out with an urgent enthusiasm to get back into school and try it out with the kids.
- A huge thank you to Anne for her skill and inspiration, gentle and encouraging delivery, clear explanation, so motivating and moving. Wonderful.

#### **Suggestions/requests for future support**

- More of the same please – advertise it for non-specialist teachers
- Could we have an annual special school RE network meeting?
- Any training available specifically for RE?
- Special schools to meet on a regular basis!
- Opportunities to share ideas and resources.

Stephen Pett  
16 October 2012



## **DRAFT HEREFORDSHIRE SACRE ANNUAL REPORT – ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/12**

**Report By: Democratic Services Officer**

### **Purpose**

1. To comment on the draft SACRE Annual Report for the academic year September 2011 to July 2012.

### **Report**

2. Members will recall that SACREs are required to produce an annual report for submission to QCDA (formerly QCA). The Government decided to close QCDA as part of its wider reform of education (part of the Education Bill). Following the demise of QCDA the DFES has indicated that an annual report it still required to be produced.
3. The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) has requested that they be provided with copies of reports.
4. Therefore to comply with the current understanding of the requirements a draft annual report indicating the work of Herefordshire SACRE during the academic year September 2011 to July 2012 has been produced. Copies of the draft have been issued to members of SACRE with the agenda and are available to the public on request from the below contact.
5. In the absence of further guidance the standard report template has been used for this years report.
6. SACRE will have received at this meeting a report on the results of Religious Education examinations in the County and these details, together with any appropriate comments made by SACRE, will also be included in the final document.
7. Information from the agendas and minutes of your meetings have been used by officers to complete the report in accordance with the report template.
8. Final proof reading will be undertaken prior to finalising the report.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT subject to any comments by SACRE and final proof reading the SACRE Annual Report 2011/12 be approved and a copy be forwarded to NASACRE.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified.

