

National RE Update; Herefordshire SACRE, November 2016

Understanding Christianity: major new project material launched

A significant resource to support teaching and learning about Christianity was launched on 26 May. For more details, see www.understandingchristianity.org.uk 29 Units of work from EYFS to Y9, providing a coherent approach across the age range and substantial resources. Access is via training – see website for details. Diocese of Hereford is running training for church and community schools.

GCSE Numbers

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2016 are as follows:

- There were 284,057 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a rise of 0.1% from 2015 (283,756)
- There were 71,299 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 17.7% from 2015 (86,679)
- There were 355,356 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a decline of 4.1% from 2015 (370,435)
- There were 22.9% fewer entries in England for the short course GCSE in RS than there were in 2015. This represents a continuation of a steep decline in entries for the short course, down from 254,698 in 2010 to just 53,093 in 2016.
- In 2014 there were 1,197 schools making no entries for any RS qualification; a rise from 268 in 2010. This echoes research by NATRE (published in January 2016) that found that 30% of community schools and 40% of academies without a religious character are still failing to meet their legal or contractual agreements to provide religious education for this key age group.
- 29.2% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A*
- 19.2% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A*

<http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/highest-number-of-entries-for-full-course-gcse-in-religious-studies-since-2002/>

A-level numbers

The key outcomes of the 2016 A level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:

- 24,966 RS A level entries were recorded, an increase of 6.8% on 2015 and more than double the number in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003)
- The number of entries for RS A level has increased by 124% since 2003, more than for any arts, humanity or social science subject (the nearest subject is Economics with an increase of 69%). Among all subjects, only Further Maths has seen more rapid growth than RS
- 3% of entries for RS A level were awarded an A or an A*
- There were 35,808 entries for RS at AS level, a decrease of 2% on 2015, a far smaller fall than across all subjects where the drop was 14.1%, and still more than double the number in 2003 (15,482 entries were recorded in 2003)

<http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/entries-for-religious-studies-a-level-rising-faster-than-for-any-other-arts-humanity-or-social-science-1/>

Religious Studies examinations update

All GCSE and A level specification were accredited for starting teaching in September 2016. The teaching of two religions at GCSE is challenging some RE teachers.

RE Council for England and Wales: Commission on Religious Education

The RE Council are proceeding with their commission on RE. The commission's purpose is to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE, by a wide-ranging, inclusive and evidence-based process designed to inform policy makers about these areas.

The ultimate aim will be to improve the quality and rigour of religious education and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The timeline looks to have a midway report next summer and a final report in summer 2018. The Commissioners will look at a wide range of evidence and explore key questions of concern in RE, including the nature, purpose and scope of RE, legal structures, teaching and learning, ITT, CPD, right of withdrawal etc.

The Commission has appointed its commissioners and Project Manager (Jon Reynolds). It is beginning the process of following its remit, which is:

- To consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education.
- To identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE, and the barriers that currently limit it.
- To identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE.
- To ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform.

<http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/commission-on-re/news/2016-07-08/commission-on-re-press-release>

New2RE: 3 years of funded support and training for secondary NQTs

NATRE and RE Today, supported by a number of trusts, are into the third year of their New2RE programme. 25 RE NQTs have three years of support, including a mentor over three years and access to a residential conference in the summer term. Cohorts 1 and 2 are well into their RE careers. Cohort 3 has just begun.

<http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Course%20and%20Event%20Flyers/New2RE%20flyer%202016%20FINAL.pdf>

New report on religious literacy

The All-Party Parliamentary Group enquiry into Religious Literacy is another report calling for greater support for RE in schools. <http://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-971-appg-on-re-improving-religious-literacy-full-report.pdf> <http://nasacre.org.uk/useful-documents>

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