

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also in the timetable where schools report that even though the subject is legally compulsory for all students unless withdrawn by their parents, students are not always receiving their entitlement to a religious education.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