

## Herefordshire SACRE National Update: Summer 2018

### Funding from Government for SACRE

SACREs will be funded through the central school services block (CSSB) from 2018-19, which is one of the blocks of funding in the national funding formula. For further information, see the [NFF Policy Document](#) and the [2018-19 Operational Guidance](#) (specifically paragraph 133).

### NATRE primary RE survey

NATRE needs primary teachers/headteachers to fill in its national primary RE survey. This takes under 10 mins to complete. On completion, each participant receives a £5 voucher for materials from RE Today and is entered into a FREE draw for a year's platinum NATRE membership (worth £250).

### [Complete the survey](#)

### Position of RE in all schools and complaints – Parliamentary answer March 27 2018

Answer to question by Stephen Timms MP:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether (a) his Department and (b) other public bodies have commissioned research into the practices of schools in relation to their statutory obligation to provide religious education since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

Answered by Nick Gibb, MP

Religious Education (RE) is compulsory for all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools, at all key stages. The Department investigates complaints made about schools not fulfilling their statutory duties in respect of RE.

The Department does not gather data on schools' level of compliance with the requirement. One formal complaint was made to the Department about a school's non-compliance with its statutory duties in respect of RE in the period since 2010-2011.

Faith schools are required to arrange a separate inspection of denominational religious education and collective worship, leading to published reports. Ofsted does not inspect individual curriculum subjects, but is required to report on whether the curriculum offered by the school is broad and balanced and promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

If an individual is concerned that a school is not meeting its duty to provide religious education they should follow that school's complaint procedure in the first instance. If the complaint is not resolved, then the issue can be escalated to the Department's School Complaints Unit for maintained schools, or the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academies, free schools, university technical colleges or studio schools. Information about complaint procedures for schools can be found at [www.gov.uk/complain-about-school](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school).

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education has a range of powers to ensure schools comply with their statutory obligations. The powers used will depend on the nature of the statutory duty in question and the potential impact of any failure to comply. These powers include a direction under section 497 of the Education Act 1996, a performance and standards warning notice under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and a referral to Ofsted for an inspection. Where academies are subject to the same statutory duties as maintained schools, the Secretary of State has powers to enforce compliance via the terms of the funding agreement.

## Academy funding agreements

**NATRE** are delighted to report that following their negotiations, the DfE has raised the profile of Religious Education in the revised academy funding agreements published recently. By placing RE alongside the core subjects that **MUST** be included in a 'balanced and broadly based' curriculum, no one can be in any doubt of the expectations.

The information on RE has been made clearer and has moved considerably earlier in the document

### Curriculum

- 2.1 The curriculum is the responsibility of the Academy Trust.
- 2.2 The Academy Trust must ensure that the curriculum provided in each Academy to pupils up to the age of 16 is balanced and broadly based. In respect of **Mainstream, Special Academies, UTCs and Studio Schools**, the Academy Trust must ensure that the curriculum includes English, mathematics, science and (subject to the provisions in clause 2.V of the Mainstream academy and free school: supplemental funding agreement), (subject to the provisions in clause 2.V of the UTC and Studio School supplemental funding agreement) and (subject to the provisions in clause 2.HH-JJ of the Special School: supplemental funding agreement) **religious education**. In respect of **Alternative Provision Academies** the Academy Trust must ensure that the curriculum includes English, mathematics and science.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-multi-model-master-funding-agreement>

### DfE guidance on RE in academies

At the end of March 2018, minister for schools, Nick Gibb MP responded to a parliamentary question about RE. In the response he said the following: "Where academies are subject to the same statutory duties as maintained schools, the Secretary of State has powers to enforce compliance via the terms of the funding agreement." NATRE subsequently wrote to the DfE in an attempt to clarify what sort of matter might result in a Secretary of State using these powers in relation to RE. NATRE asked: 'Can you please provide us with some guidance about how you might judge a complaint about the failure of an academy to meet its funding agreement in relation to RE?'

The letter NATRE received in response this week included the following six points:

1. In most non-religiously designated academy funding agreements, the requirement to provide religious education is in line with S.375(3) of the Education Act 1996 – religious education that reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are Christian, whilst taking into account the practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain;
2. Academies may choose to use an agreed syllabus in full or part to meet their requirements to provide RE. They may also choose to develop their own syllabus that meets the requirements in their funding agreement (including S.375 above);
3. We would expect that all schools provide pupils with a curriculum that is high quality and promotes progression through the key stages, including in RE;
4. ... head teachers should ensure that "the subject is well led and effectively managed, and that standards and achievement in RE, and the quality of the provision, are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;

5. If inspectors become aware that a school is not delivering the curriculum that it is expected to be offering, this will be reflected in the assessment of the leadership and management of the school, which in turn will inform the overall effectiveness of the school;

6. ...if the department is made aware of an academy that is not meeting the requirements for providing RE as outlined above, the complaint would be passed onto the operational team where the academy was located. The operational team would work with the policy team to understand the arrangements and specific situation in that school, and work with the school to resolve the matter.

The implication of these points is that when academies publish details of their curriculum for RE for each year group (as they are required to do following statutory guidance) the curriculum must be clear about:

a) how it reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (S.375(3) of the Education Act 1996)

b) which specific syllabus is followed e.g. A local Agreed Syllabus or other Syllabus that includes sufficient clear information to allow teachers, parents and others to be clear about what content is to be taught in each year of each key stage? (Note: a previous complaint about a syllabus for RE has secured this working definition of a syllabus with support from DfE lawyers)

c) how progression in knowledge, understanding and skills is secured in Religious Education as pupils move from one-year group to another

### **Ofsted is scrutinising school workforce data:**

Last year NATRE received an invitation to meet with Ofsted in London to discuss the potential of school workforce data with senior officers. Predictably, professional data analysts were able to identify even more potential in the data. In view of this, it is not surprising that Sean Harford (Ofsted National Director, Education) has stated that Ofsted is including the school workforce data in its new computer based risk assessment of good and outstanding schools. 'The new computer model uses progress and attainment data from the Department for Education, enhanced with school workforce census data and Parent View responses, to produce scores for each school, ranging from the lowest risk up to the highest risk'.

Failure to take proper account of published data can have serious consequences for a school. With a renewed focus on the curriculum very much part of OFSTED's agenda, all schools need to take recording of data very seriously and that includes the school workforce census.

### **RE in Ofsted reports**

NATRE are pleased to note an increase in mentions of RE in Ofsted reports this term. Please see the three examples below. Is your school providing good RE for all pupils on role?

#### **School 1: Community Primary school**

The quality of pupils' work in some foundation subjects is variable. For example, science reporting lacks structure and content in some year groups. While religious education and PSHCE books have examples of extended writing with the same high expectations of presentation and spelling as in English books, the good-quality presentation and focus on writing skills are not evident across books in all subject areas. History and geography books show that pupils' work is variable in quality. In these subjects, the most able pupils in history, geography and science are not always provided with an appropriate level of challenge to achieve as well as they could.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, strong teaching in art enables pupils to study artists from around the world, focusing on the features of the traditions and different cultures their work represents. School leaders have built up strong links with local churches and promote links with local charities.

### **School 2: Community Primary school**

The school continues to provide a curriculum which enriches the whole child. The well-trained subject leaders ensure that their pupils learn well in subjects across the national curriculum. The school environment is enhanced by pupils' excellent work, for example in history, geography and religious education. Provision for music and the arts is strong and the curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of additional clubs and visits, including to diverse places of worship.

### **School 3: Secondary School**

The curriculum is inadequate. It does not include some essential elements, such as religious education

### **Commission on RE (CORE)**

The final report will be launched on September 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **New SIAMS Schedule**

From September 2018 there will be a new inspection schedule for Church of England schools. The categories will be renamed Excellent/Good/Requires Improvement/Ineffective as a church school. It is assumed the majority of schools will be good – this is different to previously (currently about half outstanding).

### **20:20 RE Practice, Policy and Powerful Words in Religious Education**

Four RE professional associations (NASACRE, AULRE, AREIAC and NATRE) are collaborating to produce an exciting conference on Religious Education. There will be 40 top quality breakout sessions with a balance between policy, theory and practice including some sessions aimed particularly at primary and some at secondary, with others relevant to all.

The conference will held on **Saturday 13 October – Sunday 14 October 2018 in Crewe.**

**Click [here](#) to book a place.**

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RE Today/NATRE  
Herefordshire SACRE  
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