



THE LONDON BOROUGH
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DATE: 23 October 2018

To: Members of the
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Reverend R Bristow (Chairman)

Councillors Kevin Brooks, Robert Evans, David Jefferys, Keith Onslow and
Chris Pierce

Church of England: Mrs V Corbyn, Mr C Town and Reverend S Varney

Teachers: Mrs D Angell, Ms H Arnold and Ms S Odusola

Other Faiths: Mrs S Barnett, Mrs P Colling, Mr S Gupta, Mr R Hagley,
Mr S Mahmood, Mr A Nandra and Mrs E Whitman

A meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education will be held at
Bromley Civic Centre on **WEDNESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2018 AT 6.00 PM**

MARK BOWEN
Director of Corporate Services

Copies of the documents referred to below can be obtained from
<http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/>

A G E N D A

- 1 **INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF
SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 3 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH JULY 2018** (Pages 3 - 12)
- 4 **COMPLIANCE OF THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**
- 5 **ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS** (Pages 13 - 46)
 - A.) SACRE Annual Report
 - B.) 'Ramadan 2019 - A Simple Guide for Schools' – Dr Omar Taha

- C.) Commission on Religious Education –
'Religion and Worldviews: the way forward' (Executive Summary)
- D.) NASACRE response to the Clarke / Woodhead report –
'A New Settlement Revised'

The Clarke / Woodhead – 'A New Settlement Revised' report can be accessed via the following link:

<http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Clarke-Woodhead-A-New-Settlement-Revised.pdf>

- E.) Guidance on Managing the Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

6 REVISED BROMLEY AGREED SYLLABUS

7 SCHOOL VISITS & SCHOOL LINKS

8 COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Islamic Competition
- Inter Faith Week – 11th-18th November 2018

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.00pm, Wednesday 27th February 2019

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 4 July 2018

Present:

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)

Councillors Kevin Brooks, Robert Evans and
David Jefferys

Mrs D Angell, Mrs V Corbyn, Mr R Hagley,
Mr S Mahmood, Mr A Nandra and Reverend S Varney

Also Present:

Julia Andrew, LBB Head of School Standards
Carol Arnfield, LBB Head of Service for Early Years,
Schools Standards and Adult Education
Gillian Palmer, LBB Interim Director of Education
Dr Omar Taha, Al-Emaan Centre (Keston Mosque)

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Reverend Roger Bristow be elected as Chairman, and Councillor Kevin Brooks be elected as Vice-Chairman, of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the 2018/2019 municipal year.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Gilliam Palmer, LBB Interim Director of Education attended to express her gratitude for the work the SACRE undertook and offer the Local Authorities continued support. Particular thanks were extended to the Chairman for the presentation he had delivered at the School Governor Forum on 7th June 2018, where he had informed Governors about the SACRE, the role of Collective Worship in schools and strongly promoted the review of the Bromley Agreed Syllabus.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keith Onslow, Councillor Chris Pierce, Samantha Barnett, Christopher Town and Edlene Whitman.

Ray Hagley and Reverend Steve Varney apologised for having to leave the meeting early due to other commitments.

Dr Omar Taha was welcomed to the meeting, and the Chairman advised members that he would be discussing a report that he was currently editing later in the meeting. Dr Taha had initially been due to attend the meeting as

Mr Mahmood's substitute, as he had not expected to be able to be present. The Chairman asked members to consider if they were willing for Dr Taha to attend any future meetings as Mr Mahmood's agreed substitute.

RESOLVED that Dr Omar Taha attend future meetings of the SACRE as Mr Mahmood's substitute.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman informed SACRE members that he had been appointed the Church of England representative on the London Borough of Bromley's Education, Children and Families Select Committee.

4 A) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST MARCH 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

B) MATTERS ARISING

Minute 20: Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members
The Chairman advised that he had been unable to persuade Mr Jed Stone to return as a member of the SACRE.

Minute 24: Oral update & publications – a) SACRE Advisor
The LBB Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education advised members that a meeting had taken place in April 2018 to produce a job description for an RE Advisor to the SACRE, which, following a few tweaks, had been agreed by the LBB Interim Director of Education. Organisations that provided SACRE Advisors had then been contacted, and two had responded and submitted quotes. The LBB Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education was currently writing an exemption from competitive tender report, which, once approved, would allow an RE Advisor to be in post by September 2018.

The Chairman informed members that he had spoken with Mr Kieran Osborne regarding his proposed 'wider schools network' that the SACRE could link in to. Mr Osborne was keen to assist, and it had been agreed to wait until September 2018 to discuss this further, when it was expected that a new RE Advisor to the SACRE would be in post.

Mr Mahmood enquired what the SACRE was doing to increase the number of teachers that sat on the committee. The Chairman agreed that this was something that needed to be encouraged, and he was actively asking teachers to consider joining the SACRE. A positive response had been received from a teacher at Trinity CE Primary School, to whom the Chairman had suggested that they come along and observe a SACRE meeting, but she had been unable to attend tonight. The Chairman advised members that he had highlighted this to Governors at the School Governor Forum, and asked them to take the message back to their schools that teacher input was needed

on the SACRE. Members suggested that a letter could also be written to Headteachers, particularly of secondary schools, asking them to persuade RE teachers to join the SACRE. **ACTION: Chairman**

Minute 24: Oral update & publications – b) SACRE Annual Report
The Chairman confirmed that the SACRE Annual Report had been submitted to the meeting of Full Council on Monday 9th April 2018.

5 COMPLIANCE OF THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) had come into effect on 25th May 2018. The Chairman informed members that the compliance of the GDPR would be a standing item on SACRE agendas, reminding members to be careful how they handled data. No breaches had taken place, but if necessary, this would be the point during the meeting where they would be reported.

6 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

SACRE members had been provided with a copy of the London Borough of Bromley Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – Terms of Reference, which had been agreed in March 2007 and were last revised in July 2016. The Chairman advised members that these were largely generic points, which were likely to appear on most SACRE's Terms of Reference, although some may add in extra detail.

The Chairman highlighted to members '*2.6 – Decision-making – Voting at SACRE shall be on the basis of one vote per Committee and formal resolutions to the LA shall be passed only if all four Committees are in agreement. Within each Committee, voting shall be by a single majority.*' It was noted that this could be kept as it was, or relaxed to be compliant with other SACREs, who stated that resolutions could be passed with a majority vote.

The Chairman confirmed that the SACRE meetings were considered quorate if one-third of SACRE members were in attendance, currently seven members, with at least one member from each of the Committees A, B, C and D. Following a discussion, members considered that as formal votes very rarely took place, there was no need to change the current voting procedure. It was felt that if there was prior notification to members that a resolution regarding an issue was needed to be made, there would be time to ensure that enough Committee members were able to attend the meeting, or an alternative date could be arranged.

RESOLVED that the SACRE Terms of Reference be agreed.

7 ORAL UPDATE & PUBLICATIONS

The Chairman informed members that he had delivered a presentation to the School Governor Forum on 7th June 2018. A fascinating response had been received from the attendees, and the time for questions had been considerably lengthened as the Governors were engaged and asking good quality questions. SACRE members requested that a copy of the presentation be circulated to the Committee. **ACTION: Clerk**

8 SCHOOL VISITS

The Chairman informed members that as the SACRE did not currently have an RE Advisor, no school visits had taken place since the last meeting.

The Chairman introduced Dr Omar Taha of the Al-Emaan Centre (Keston Mosque) to SACRE members. Dr Taha expressed his thanks for the invitation to attend the meeting and informed members that he was in the process of editing a guide for schools regarding the month of Ramadan, which had been produced by the Lewisham Mosque and Lewisham SACRE. It was hoped this would help the schools develop an understanding about the essence of Ramadan, especially as the fasting month was now falling during the summer when exams, sports days and more extra-curricular activities took place. It would allow schools to work with local community members in regards to Collective Worship and assemblies, and develop more community cohesion.

In response to a question, Dr Taha confirmed that the guide would be generic, and would be relevant for both primary and secondary schools. Members expressed that they felt this was a very good idea – to enhance awareness and impact on schools and the wider community, and it would open up a sensitivity around it.

The LBB Head of School Standards confirmed that she could be contacted with regards to supporting the distribution of the completed school's guide. Members considered that for wider credibility, the document should state that it was endorsed by the Bromley SACRE. Following a discussion, it was agreed that a completed draft of the school's guide would be provided to the meeting of the SACRE on Wednesday 31st October 2018. This would allow for members to comment and clarify anything they felt was unclear, before the final document was provided to the meeting of the SACRE on 27th February 2019, allowing circulation to take place in the months prior to the 2019 month of Ramadan. It was further noted that it may be useful to circulate the finalised document to members of the Health and Wellbeing Board for information.

9 NASACRE CONFERENCE AND AGM

The Chairman had attended NASACRE's 'Silver Jubilee' 25th Anniversary Conference and AGM which was held on Thursday 24th May 2018 in the Merchant Taylors' Hall, City of London. The conference theme was 'Stronger Together – Celebrating the power of Community'. There were two Keynote

Speakers; Rt Hon Charles Clarke, Patron of NASACRE and Dr Vanessa Ogden, CEO of Mulberry Schools Trust, a Multi Academy Trust. SACRE members were provided with NASACRE's summary of the day, and the speeches of the two key speakers.

The Chairman said that it had been an interesting conference, and the presentation by the Rt Hon Charles Clarke had been powerful and well put together. Dr Vanessa Ogden had delivered a well-researched and full presentation, and a copy of the PowerPoint could be viewed on the NASACRE website. Overall it had been a good day, the highlight of which had been the session which allowed SACREs to share things that they had produced. This had included Lewisham SACRE sharing its guide for school about Ramadan, as mentioned by Dr Taha previously, and other SACREs had produced calendars listing religious festivals, and contacts within the community.

Members queried the reference to the removal of the faith schools' cap in the speech of the Rt Hon Charles Clarke. The Chairman responded that the previous cap had been 50%, but that he understood that the present Government had removed it. *(Subsequent to the meeting, the LBB Head of School Standards advised that with reference to the cap, "the Government had decided to retain the 50% cap. However, there is a capital scheme to support the creation of new voluntary aided schools. Faith voluntary aided schools may have 100% faith-based oversubscription criteria in their admissions. Information on arrangements by which proposer groups could apply for capital funding is expected later in 2018." – Faith Schools in England: FAQs, House of Commons Library – Briefing Paper, 6th June 2018).*

10 SACRE SELF EVALUATION

It was suggested that prior to the meeting, members look at the following sections of the SACRE Reporting and Evaluating Toolkit and come ready to discuss their thoughts:

Group A members (representatives of other faiths and Christian denominations) were asked to focus on Section 5 – Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community.

Group B members (representatives from the Church of England) were asked to focus on Section 3 – Collective worship.

Group C members (teachers) were asked to focus on Section 2 – The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus.

Group D members (Councillors) were asked to focus on Section 4 – Management of SACRE.

The LBB Head of Services for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education and LBB Head of School Standards would complete Section 1 – Standards and Quality of Provision of RE.

At the meeting SACRE members were invited to divide into their membership groups to discuss and come to a consensus. Results of the self-evaluation can be seen in the table appended to these minutes.

Additional points arising from the discussion are listed below.

Section 2 – The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

The teaching group highlighted that for *Key Area 2A – The review process*, only the developing criteria could currently be met due to budget restrictions. *Key Area 2D – Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus*, was considered to just meet the established criteria, as it was felt that currently the SACRE only met the basic membership requirements, as with three teachers they did not feel there was enough representation on the Committee.

Section 3 – Collective worship

The Church of England group noted that for *Key Area 3A – Supporting pupil entitlement*, the SACRE met the lower end of the established criteria, as although publications had been given to schools, they were in a hard-copy format, which could have been misplaced, and the SACRE was unable to evaluate the impact of its advice and support. *Key Area 3C – Responding to requests for determinations* remained in the same criteria as previous years as no determinations had been received.

Members enquired if the 'Reflective Pools – Refreshing Collective Worship in Bromley Schools' publication could be provided in an electronic format. The LBB Head of School Standards confirmed that it was available on Fronter, and would see if a PDF version could be produced.

ACTION: LBB Head of School Standards

Following a discussion, members considered that they would like to be provided with further information regarding determinations, and it was agreed that this could be an agenda item at a future SACRE meeting.

ACTION: Chairman / Clerk

Section 4 – Management of SACRE

The Councillors group considered that *Key Area 4B – Membership and training*, currently fell within the developing criteria, as the SACRE fulfilled its basic statutory obligations, and there were limited introduction and training opportunities for members. *Key Area 4D – Professional and financial support* was felt to be in the established criteria as the SACRE had a modest budget, and communication was maintained with the clerk, Chairman and SACRE members between meetings. *Key Area 4G – Relations with the Academies sector*, was considered to just about reach the establish criteria as there was no specific academy group representation on the SACRE. Teachers attended, but no 'decision makers' from any Academy Trusts were present at SACRE meetings.

Section 5 – Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

The other faiths group considered that for *Key Area 5A – SACRE's membership*, Bromley SACRE met the advanced criteria as Group A

(representatives of other faiths and Christian denominations) had the largest number of members and was inclusive. *Key Area 5C – SACRE’s engagement with the community cohesion agenda* was felt to be at the higher end of the established criteria through visits to schools and the Chairman’s presentation to the School Governor Forum. It was also suggested that the same presentation could be delivered to Headteachers.

11 SACRE DRAFT ACTION PLAN

The Chairman advised members that the SACRE Draft Action Plan for 2018-19 that had been provided, was produced to reflect that the SACRE did not currently have an RE Advisor. As it was hoped that an RE Advisor would now be in place by September 2018, members were asked to consider which areas they would like to see added to.

Members queried which SACREs were anticipated to be involved in *Objective 5 – share best practice with local SACREs*. Members suggested that those boroughs neighbouring the London Borough of Bromley should be considered, and highlighted that there would be benefits to speaking with boroughs with similar circumstances, as well as those that were very different. In response to a question, the Chairman confirmed that the Annual Reports of SACREs should be able to be sourced, and that it would be good to invite neighbouring boroughs to attend future SACRE meetings.

ACTION: Chairman / Clerk

The teacher representative noted that for *Objective 6 – provide information on curriculum to school*, Fronter was not the best platform to use. The Head of School Standards agreed, and confirmed that other ways to provide the information were being considered.

Following a discussion, the Chairman suggested that once appointed, he would meet with the new RE Advisor, the LBB Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education and LBB Head of School Standards, to consider what it would be feasible to deliver. A revised Action Plan would then be presented to members at the SACRE meeting on 31st October 2018.

ACTION: Chairman

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

13 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

6.00pm, Wednesday 31st October 2018

6.00pm, Wednesday 27th February 2018

The Meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman

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Bromley SACRE Self Evaluation July 2018 results

Key Area		Developing	Established	Advanced
Standards and Quality of Provision of RE				
1A	RE provision across the LA		x	
1B	Standards and achievement		x	
1C	Quality of learning and teaching		x	
1D	Quality of leadership and management	x		
1E	Recruitment and retention of skilled specialist RE staff	x		
1F	Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools		x	
The effectiveness of the locally Agreed Syllabus				
2A	Review of the Agreed Syllabus	x		
2B	The quality of the Agreed Syllabus		x	
2C	Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus	x		
2D	Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus Conference		x	
2E	Developing the revised agreed syllabus		x	
2F	Making best use of National Guidance		x	
Collective Worship				
3A	Supporting pupil entitlement in LA's schools		x	
3B	Enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship		x	
3C	Responding to requests for determinations		x	
Management of SACRE				
4A	How purposeful, inclusive, representative and effective are SACRE meetings?		x	
4B	Membership and Training	x		
4C	Improvement/development planning		x	
4D	Professional and financial support		x	
4E	How well informed is SACRE to be able to advise the LA appropriately?	x		
4F	Partnerships with key stakeholders		x	
4G	Relations with the Academies sector		x	
Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community				
5A	Representative nature of SACRE in the local community			x
5B	SACRE's understanding of the local community in its religious, cultural and ethnic dimensions		x	
5C	SACRE's engagement with the community cohesion agenda		x	
5D	SACRE's Links to LA initiatives promoting community cohesion	x		

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RAMADAN 2019

A Simple Guide for Schools



Ramadan 2019: A Simple Guide for Schools

Overview

This simple guide for schools during the month of Ramadan has been produced by **Al-Emaan Centre (Keston Mosque)** in collaboration with **Bromley SACRE** in order for schools to recognise and build upon the essence of Ramadan without compromising the normality of everyday school life. Bromley SACRE plays a pivotal role in promoting the understanding of different faiths in schools by monitoring the content of Religious Education and its delivery. This guide seeks to encourage schools to utilise this opportunity in teaching pupils about Ramadan and inviting guest speakers to shed light on the subject, in a bid to foster diversity and engagement.

This year, Ramadan ran between May 17th 2018 to June 15th 2018 resulting in an overlap with the traditional exam season in May and June. Since Ramadan continues to fall during the peak periods of exams and the summer months, acknowledging pupils' needs may contribute to fostering good relations, and promoting understanding between different groups.

This Guide outlines considerations that schools may take with regards to the month of Ramadan, along with suggestions at the end on what features may constitute best practice in schools.

Ramadan: The Month of Fasting

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar; a month during which the Qur'an was first revealed. Fasting is prescribed for all healthy males and females once they attain the age of puberty (this is relative based on the physiological and psychological make-up of each individual). Certain circumstances and conditions in which Muslims are exempt from fasting include menstruating women, those pregnant or breast-feeding, those for whom fasting has a detrimental effect on their overall well-being, those who depend on medication for their health, and a traveller facing hardship due to fasting. Any missed fasting days are made up by fasting on days outside of Ramadan, or feeding the poor if one is unable to fast.

Fasting is an act of worship of great spiritual, moral and social significance to Muslims. The physical dimension of fasting involves completely abstaining from drinking, eating, smoking and sexual activity; from dawn to sunset - for the whole month. The spiritual and moral dimension of fasting involves God-consciousness, exercising self-control, patience, appreciation of food & drink, empathy towards the poor, having appropriate dealings with others, giving charity and observing additional worship.

Schools can play a pivotal part in the development of the spiritual, moral and social aspects of their pupils by recognising and building upon the spirit of Ramadan. Schools may wish to consider inviting pupils or guest speakers to share their knowledge and experience in fasting Ramadan during classes and assemblies. This will in turn boost pupil confidence and positive self-image, while also nurturing mutual understanding and respect amongst one another. Al-Emaan Centre has collaborated with several schools throughout the Borough in providing speakers for workshops and talks, along with welcoming several schools to visit the mosque. If you would like to arrange a talk or visit to the mosque please email on info@al-emaan.org.uk

Primary School Pupils

It is a common practice for Muslim children to begin fasting before they attain puberty, to become progressively accustomed to the act. Although fasting for the entire month is not prescribed until the age of puberty, many children aged 10 and 11 (years 5 & 6) may be seen observing the daily fast for the entire month. Some children may be encouraged by their parents to fast only on certain days of the week, especially the weekends. It is also important to be aware that young children are more likely to fast when Ramadan falls in the winter months, when the days are shorter, and the climate is cooler.

Secondary School Pupils

As this year's GCSE/A Level examinations fall during the month of Ramadhan, secondary schools may need to anticipate in advance to prepare the pupils in achieving their best.

Having to take examinations on top of long hours of fasting over the summer period may be a challenge for some students. Schools may need to know which pupils are fasting or not through liaising with parents and carers to offer guidance on the best way to avoid dehydration, eating nutritious food, getting appropriate rest periods, organising revision sessions, and extra-curricular activities. Families and students will normally look to make a decision thereafter on whether fasting would be manageable in such circumstances.

Since fasting pupils have plenty of spare time during lunch break, schools can support Muslim students by providing a quiet room during break times where they can pray, rest or revise between examinations and classes. In addition, fasting pupils can also utilise the long gap between the end of the school day and *Iftar* (breaking of the fast), by having a good rest and balancing it with revision periods.

In the event that the school notices any indications of dehydration or fatigue in a child during statutory exams, the child should be asked if they are fasting and advised to drink water immediately. The child should be reassured that in their current situation, they can break their fast and make it up later. Schools may need to notify the pupils of this allowance during exams briefing or incorporate it into their exams instructions.

Prayers during Ramadan

Ramadan is a time when Muslims try to spend more time in prayer and religious contemplation.

Schools are encouraged to set aside a quiet room for prayers, particularly for mid-afternoon 'Dhuhr' prayers (during lunch break). This prayer changes its time to reflect different seasons. In winter time this is likely to be between 12.00pm - 1.00 pm, whilst in summer it is likely to be between 1.00 pm - 2.00 pm. Students will also typically need to use washing facilities to prepare for the prayer, known as ablution. This includes washing the visible parts of the body like the face, hands and feet.

Schools should be sympathetic to pupils' desire to offer prayers at prescribed times. This opportunity for offering prayers during school time is encouraged to be available throughout the year. A full prayer timetable for the year outlining timings for a Muslim's 5 daily prayers can be found at www.al-emaan.org.uk

Muslims also regularly offer extra prayers every night during the month of Ramadan, called Taraweeh prayers. Many Muslims, including some children, will stay up late saying prayers and reading the Quran. Schools are encouraged to liaise with parents to reduce any subsequent impact on their children's academic performance during the day.

Celebrating Ramadan

Muslims approach Ramadan with enthusiasm and it is customary for Muslims to congratulate one another on its arrival. Schools can value and build on this spirit by having themes based on Ramadan at collective worship or assemblies, and by organising communal *Iftar*, where pupils, parents, community members and teachers join in breaking of the fast and eating together. While a communal *Iftar* in summer is not possible within school hours due to the long fasting hours, Al-Emaan Centre regularly opens its doors to the local public to share in the *Iftar* experience in the evening. Those interested in attending are encouraged to email the mosque on info@al-emaan.org.uk

Teachers can also take the opportunity of Ramadan by teaching the pupils about the month and inviting guest speakers from the Muslim community to explain the subject or encourage mosque visits – **Al-Emaan Centre** would be happy to be a liaison. This will help in promoting diversity, and in enhancing mutual understanding on respective faiths.

Pupils who fast and engage in extra charitable activities during Ramadan may be seen positively and their achievements acknowledged for their efforts. Schools may consider incorporating Ramadan into the Religious Education Programme, encouraging teachers to utilise opportunities across the curriculum to develop knowledge and understanding of the basic tenets of Islam.

Physical Education

Whilst the discipline and the challenge of fasting is to continue with the normality of everyday life, staff should exercise a degree of understanding, by encouraging pupils to avoid excessive exertion in Physical Education to prevent dehydration. Strenuous activity during fasting may make some children feel tired or drowsy, or possibly develop headaches

due to dehydration. Some pupils may need to reduce physical exercises during fasting while others may wish to continue as normal, according to their tolerance levels.

Swimming during Ramadan

Participation in swimming is an acceptable activity whilst fasting. The potential for swallowing water may be an issue for some, while others will deem accidental water as acceptable. It is advised that schools should take an understanding approach where an activity might be construed by the pupil or their parents as breaking the fast.

Medication

Anyone needing regular medication during fasting hours is exempt from fasting. Guidance should be sought from local Muslim organisations on specific issues where necessary.

Absence from School due to Religious Holidays

The day after the month of Ramadan marks the celebration of the Islamic holiday of *Eid ul-Fitr*. Muslims cannot be specific in advance regarding its date - as it is generally dependent on visual moon sighting. It is advised that schools follow their own policies on holidays for religious and cultural needs, and at the same time consider those parents/carers who request further days. Al-Emaan Centre customarily provides updates on its website regarding the days of Ramadan and Eid, found at www.al-emaan.org.uk

Features of good practice in schools

- ✓ Staff awareness of the key points in this guide to help build upon the essence of Ramadan, and to help foster good relations and engagement.
- ✓ Acknowledgment and celebration of the spirit and values of Ramadan through collective worship, assembly themes and communal breaking of the fast.
- ✓ Schools may wish to consider inviting guest speakers to share their knowledge and experience in fasting Ramadan during workshops and assemblies. If you would like to arrange a talk or visit to the mosque, please email on info@al-emaan.org.uk
- ✓ Pupils who fast and engage in extra charitable activities during Ramadan should be seen positively and their achievements acknowledged.
- ✓ The provision of prayer facilities during the month of Ramadan and beyond.
- ✓ Cohesion and clear communication between the school, parents and students, particularly in anticipation of the exam period to help enhance academic performance while fasting.
- ✓ The school is mindful of requests by fasting pupils to be exempt from particular physical activities.
- ✓ Schools have in place guidance on holidays for religious and cultural needs.

References

1. <http://www.religionlaw.co.uk/MCBSchoolsreport07.pdf> (Accessed 17/10/2018)

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Commission on
Religious Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS: THE WAY FORWARD

A national plan for RE

SEPTEMBER 2018



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION: THE CASE FOR CHANGE

1. The study of religious and non-religious worldviews is a core component of a rounded academic education. This has long been recognised as essential in Britain. Indeed, one could argue that it is more important now than ever. Young people today are growing up in a world where there is increasing awareness of the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews, and they will need to live and work well with people with very different worldviews from themselves. One need only glance at a newspaper to know that it is impossible fully to understand the world without understanding worldviews – both religious and non-religious.
2. This report reaffirms the central importance of learning about religious and non-religious worldviews for all pupils, regardless of their background, personal beliefs or the type of school they attend. Knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews is an essential part of all young people’s entitlement to education. This report seeks to articulate that entitlement.
3. Despite its central importance, Religious Education (RE) in too many schools is not good enough to prepare pupils adequately for the religious and belief diversity they will encounter, nor to support them to engage deeply with the questions raised by the study of worldviews. Our report sets out a National Plan to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to an academically rigorous and rich study of religious and non-religious worldviews. This National Plan has three core elements.
 - a. There is a need for a new and richer vision of the subject. Our vision preserves the best of current practice and demands new developments drawn from the academic study of religious and non-religious worldviews as well as broader social changes in England and globally. We discuss this new vision below, and propose that the subject should be called *Religion and Worldviews* to reflect the new emphasis.
 - b. Too many pupils are not currently receiving their entitlement to knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews. This is an essential subject for all pupils, so we propose that there should be a statutory National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews which applies to all publicly funded schools and is subject to inspection. This entitlement reflects our vision for the subject, which is widely shared among teachers and subject experts, while retaining the flexibility for schools of all types to interpret it in accordance with their own needs, ethos and values.

- c. The study of religious and non-religious worldviews requires high-quality, well-informed specialist teaching. Religious and non-religious worldviews are complex, diverse and plural. Understanding them requires a nuanced, multidisciplinary approach. Therefore, there will need to be sustained investment in developing knowledgeable teachers, as well as investment in high quality curriculum materials to support them, particularly at primary level. Local communities have often played a key role in supporting teachers, and they form an essential component of our recommended structures to develop and support high-quality teaching.
4. Academisation and the move towards a school-led system have transformed the educational landscape. The structures and systems supporting Religious Education have not kept pace with these changes. The evidence that we have gathered confirms the need identified in many previous reports for a change to the structures supporting Religious Education so that the subject is taught well across all schools in all localities. The National Entitlement is a direct response to this need, as are our recommendations for developing and supporting teachers nationally and locally.
5. We have carefully analysed the evidence that we have received. Our recommendations set out a coherent structure which preserves the best of the excellent practice that exists in some schools and localities, and strengthens the subject across all schools and localities.

RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS: THE CASE FOR A NEW VISION AND A STATUTORY NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT

WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

The English word ‘worldview’ is a translation of the German *weltanschauung*, which literally means a view of the world. A worldview is a person’s way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. This includes how a person understands the nature of reality and their own place in the world. A person’s worldview is likely to influence and be influenced by their beliefs, values, behaviours, experiences, identities and commitments.

We use the term ‘institutional worldview’ to describe organised worldviews shared among particular groups and sometimes embedded in institutions. These include what we describe as religions as well as non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, Secularism or Atheism. We use the term ‘personal worldview’ for an individual’s own way of understanding and living in the world, which may or may not draw from one, or many, institutional worldviews.

6. It is one of the core tasks of education to enable each pupil to understand, reflect on and develop their own personal worldview. This is a whole-school responsibility and the explicit, academic study of worldviews is an essential part of it. Through understanding how worldviews are formed and expressed at both individual and communal levels, the ways in which they have changed over time, and their influence on the actions of individuals, groups and institutions, young people come to a more refined understanding of their own worldview – whatever this happens to be – as well as those of others. Currently, this study takes place mainly through RE.
7. Studying religious and non-religious worldviews gives young people the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding and motivation they need to engage with important aspects of human experience including the religious, spiritual, cultural and moral. It provides an insight into the sciences, the arts, literature, history and contemporary local and global social and political issues. The young people we have spoken to have told us that RE enables them to have better friendships and to develop greater respect and empathy for others. Learning about worldviews helps young people to deal positively with controversial issues, to manage strongly held differences of belief and to challenge stereotypes. In an increasingly diverse society, understanding religious and non-religious worldviews has never been more essential than it is now.
8. The nature of RE has changed over time to reflect new understandings and new social realities. At the time of the 1944 Education Act, it was known as Religious Instruction, was limited to Christianity and was the only compulsory subject. Over time, subject experts came to recognise that young people needed to understand both a wider range of religious and non-religious worldviews and the idea of diversity within worldviews. This was reflected in the Education Reform Act of 1988, which also changed the name of the subject to Religious Education. Thirty years on, the local, national and global religious landscape and academic understandings of the subject have changed significantly.
9. The presentation of religious worldviews in schools has not always placed enough emphasis on their diverse and plural nature and the ways that they have changed over time. While many teachers and subject experts do present diversity within religions, this can often be reduced to crude differences between denominations. RE has sometimes inadvertently reinforced stereotypes about religions, rather than challenging them¹. As we learn more about diversity and change within religious worldviews, it becomes even more important that the presentation of worldviews in schools reflects this.

¹ See, for example, *Thobani (2011). Islam in the school curriculum: symbolic pedagogy and cultural claims. London, Routledge.*

10. Non-religious worldviews have also become increasingly salient in Britain and Western Europe. According to the most recent British Social Attitudes survey, over 50% of adults identify as not belonging to a religion, with 41% identifying as Christian. The proportion of adults identifying as not belonging to a religion has increased from 31% in 1983 and has remained fairly stable around 50% since 2009². While some of these individuals may identify with non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, many have looser patterns of identification or do not identify with any institutional worldviews.
11. Deeper academic study of the experience of those who hold both religious and non-religious worldviews suggests that the distinction between religious and non-religious worldviews is not as clear-cut as one might think. Individuals may draw on aspects of both religious and non-religious worldviews in their own personal worldviews.³
12. The time is right for a new vision for the subject if we are to prepare children and young people for living in the increasingly diverse world in which they find themselves. We need to move beyond an essentialised presentation of six ‘major world faiths’ and towards a deeper understanding of the complex, diverse and plural nature of worldviews at both institutional and personal levels. We need to ensure that pupils understand that there are different ways of adhering to a worldview – you may identify with more than one institutional worldview, or indeed none at all. More still needs to be done to ensure that a wider range of institutional worldviews is taught, particularly Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism, which are sometimes neglected. And there needs to be a greater understanding, at a conceptual level, of how worldviews operate, the accounts they provide of the nature of reality, and how they influence behaviour, institutions and forms of expression. It is this powerful, conceptual knowledge that all pupils need to have.
13. This is why we have set out a statutory National Entitlement for all pupils in all publicly funded schools. The National Entitlement makes clear the central importance of understanding religious and non-religious worldviews as well as the conceptual categories which lead to this understanding. It sets out a clear purpose and core knowledge which all pupils across all schools must gain. It also reflects the new vision that we have outlined here, which will effectively prepare all pupils for the world of religious and belief diversity in which they find themselves.

2 NATCEN (2017). *British Social Attitudes Survey*. www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2017/september/british-social-attitudes-record-number-of-brits-with-no-religion/

3 Wallis, S (2014). *Ticking ‘no religion’: a case study amongst ‘young nones.’* *Diskus* 16:2. Woodhead, L (2016), *‘The rise of “no religion” in Britain: The emergence of a new cultural majority’*, *Journal of the British Academy*, 4: 245–261. DOI 10.85871/jba/004.245

14. Our new vision is also signified by a new name for the subject: Religion and Worldviews. The shift in language to ‘worldviews’ captures, as best we can, the shifts in vision that we have outlined above, in particular the complex, diverse and plural nature of worldviews. The name also removes the ambiguity in the phrase ‘Religious Education’, which is often wrongly assumed to be about making people more religious. We are keeping the word ‘religion’ in the subject name both to provide continuity and to signify that young people need to understand the conceptual category of ‘religion’ as well as other concepts such as ‘secularity’, ‘secularism’ and ‘spirituality’.

THE CASE FOR IMPROVED SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

15. As we have stated above, the structures supporting RE have not kept pace with the changes to the education system. This has led to a situation in which, despite pockets of excellent practice in some schools and localities, the provision and quality of RE is not good enough in too many schools.
16. The quality of RE is highly variable across all school types. The last Ofsted subject review (2013) found RE to be to be less than good in just under half of secondary schools and in six out of ten primary schools observed by Ofsted.⁴ In *Making a Difference*, a review of standards in RE in Church of England schools, the reviewers found that RE was good or better in 70% of secondary schools, but only 40% of primary schools⁵. No evidence was forthcoming on the quality of RE in Catholic schools or other schools of a religious character. Since 2013, there has been no mechanism to gather evidence on the quality of RE in primary and secondary schools at a national level. The evidence that we have gathered suggests that there has been little positive change in the past five years and that the situation has got worse in some areas.
17. One reason for this variability in quality is some confusion over the purpose of RE, which we hope will be resolved through our new vision for the subject and the common National Entitlement which provides clarity on the aims and purposes of RE.
18. Another key reason for this variability in quality is the lack of adequate training and support for teachers. A majority of recently qualified primary teachers received fewer than three hours of subject specific training for RE

4 Ofsted (2013). *Religious Education: Realising the potential*. www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-realising-the-potential

5 *Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, Education Division (2014). Making a Difference: a review of Religious Education in Church of England schools*. http://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2014_making_a_difference_-_a_review_of_religious_education_in_church_of_england_schools_web_final.pdf

during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE)⁶. At secondary, almost three times⁷ as many RE lessons as History lessons are taught by non-specialists. We therefore set out plans for improving training and support for teachers, so that they have the knowledge that they need to teach this important subject.

19. Successive surveys of teachers, especially at primary level, have shown that teachers lack confidence to teach RE and to tackle the sensitive and controversial issues that are the lifeblood of the subject.
20. An increasing number of schools, particularly academies, offer no provision for RE at Key Stages 3 and 4. In 2016, 33.4% of all schools did not offer any RE at Key Stage 4 and 23.1% did not offer any RE at Key Stage 3. This represents nearly 900 schools offering no RE at Key Stage 4, and a significant increase from 22.1% (nearly 600 schools) in 2015.⁸ Curriculum time for primary is also limited, with nearly 30% of schools which responded to the 2016 NATRE primary survey offering less than 45 minutes per week.
21. There is a clear, and increasing, disparity between school types in terms of provision of RE. For example, the percentage of schools without a religious character offering no RE at Key Stage 4 in 2016 (38.9%) is almost four times that of schools with a religious character (11.2%)⁹. If something is not done urgently to re-establish the subject, there is a real risk that it could disappear from schools without a religious character, depriving pupils of their entitlement to this vital area of knowledge.

6 NATRE (2016). *An Analysis of the provision for RE in primary schools*. www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf

7 NATRE (2016). *An Analysis of the provision for RE in primary schools*. www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf

8 Source: *School Workforce data 2015 and 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.*

9 Source: *School Workforce data 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.*

Figure 1: Schools offering no RE at Key Stage 3¹⁰

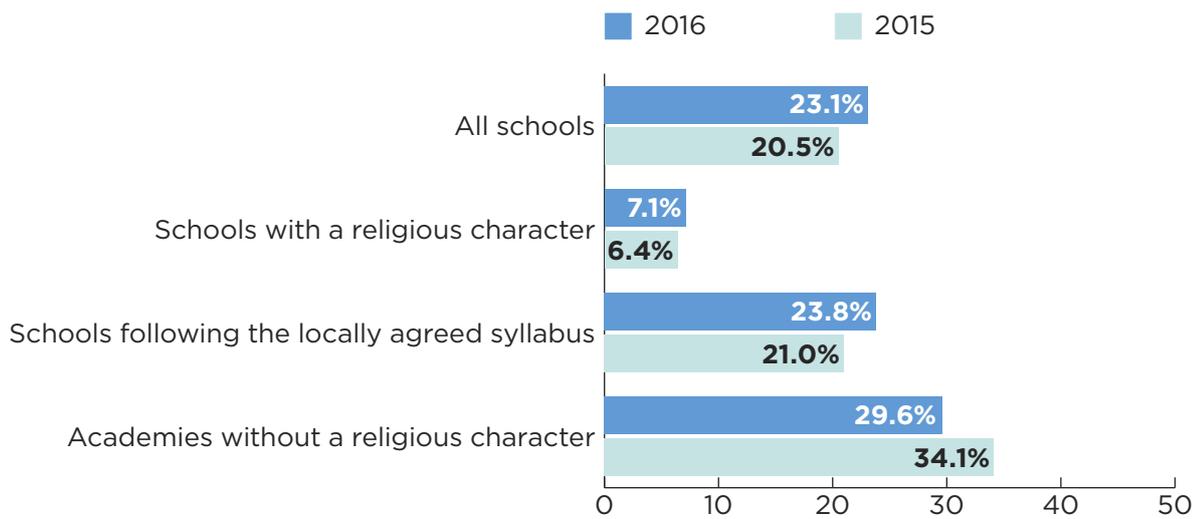
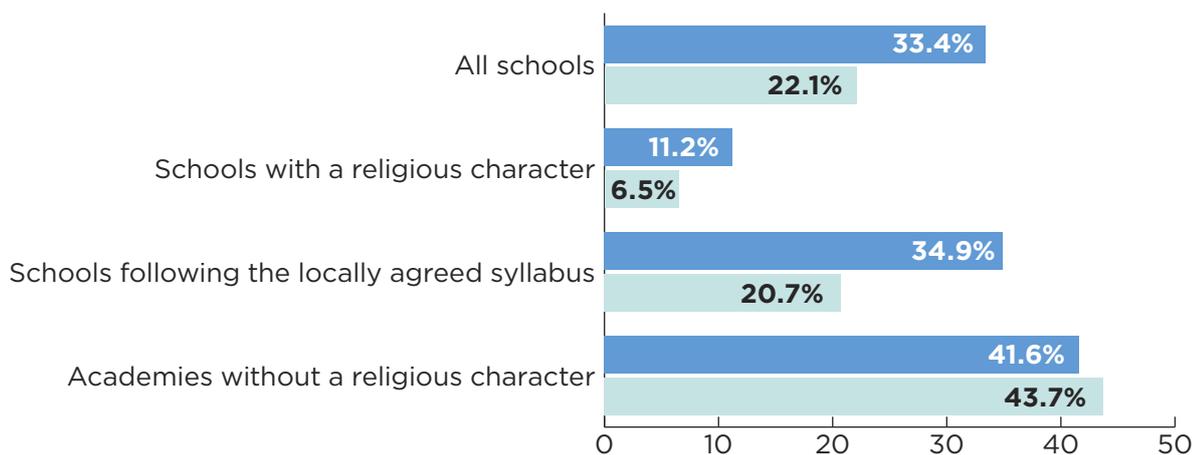


Figure 2: Schools offering no RE at Key Stage 4¹¹



22. Academisation and reductions in funding have reduced local authority support for RE via Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) and professional advisers, to the point where such support is unsustainable in many areas and already disappearing in some. This further increases the disparity between schools with a religious character, where support structures remain relatively robust, and those without, where they are increasingly in jeopardy.

¹⁰ Source: School Workforce Data 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.

¹¹ Source: School Workforce Data 2016 analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.

23. Changes to accountability systems have created an environment where there is less and less incentive for schools to offer good RE, particularly at secondary level. These include Ofsted no longer inspecting individual subjects, the removal of GCSE Short Courses from school performance measures and the non-inclusion of Religious Studies GCSE in the Ebacc. This has led to a significant drop in students taking a Key Stage 4 qualification in RE¹² and has affected, for example, the number of specialist teachers at secondary level.

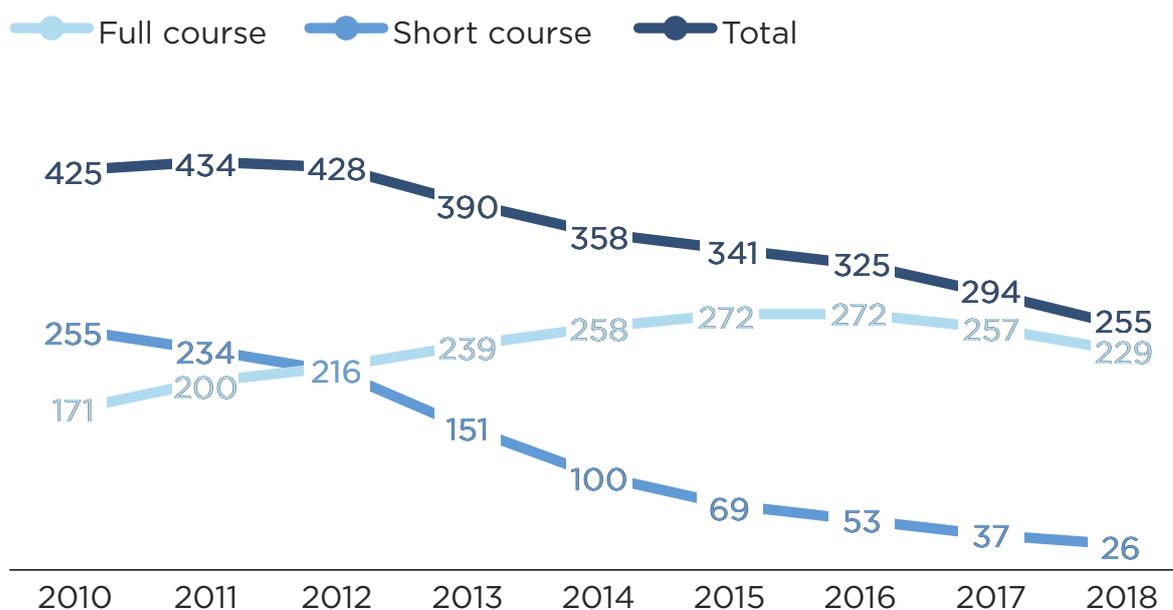


Figure 3: Trends in GCSE entries for Religious Studies¹³
Religious Studies GCSE entries in England 2010–2018 (thousands)

24. All of these issues mean that urgent action needs to be taken to reform and strengthen the structures that support Religion and Worldviews in schools. We therefore recommend changes to accountability systems, curriculum development, local and national support structures and initial teacher education, creating a robust and coherent structure for Religion and Worldviews. Our recommendations, as set out below, will enable all pupils in all schools to receive high quality education in Religion and Worldviews and will support and strengthen the subject for the foreseeable future.

¹² 260,300 pupils entered for a Key Stage 4 qualification in Religious Studies in 2018, down from a high of 433,750 in 2011.

¹³ GCSE entry figures for 2017 and 2018 do not include the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. In 2016, there were 1,142 Full Course entries and 938 Short Course entries from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Source: JCQ: www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses

25. We are aware that rapid change is disruptive and counterproductive for teachers and schools. We therefore suggest a phased approach in which programmes of study and support structures are established before schools are required to change their curriculum to align it with the National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews. We have set out our proposed timeline in Appendix 1.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The name of the subject should be changed to Religion and Worldviews. This should be reflected in all subsequent legislation and guidance.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews should become statutory for all publicly funded schools.

- a. For community, foundation and voluntary controlled schools, the requirement for Religion and Worldviews to be provided in accordance with the National Entitlement will replace the requirement in the Education Act 1996 (Section 375) to follow their locally agreed syllabus.
- b. For academies, all funding agreements should be amended to state that all academies must provide Religion and Worldviews in accordance with the National Entitlement.
- c. For voluntary aided schools of a religious character, a requirement should be introduced to provide Religion and Worldviews in accordance with the National Entitlement as well as the requirements of their Trust Deed.

THE NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS

All pupils are entitled to be taught Religion and Worldviews in every year up to and including year 11. Post-16 students, including those in Further Education should have the opportunity to study Religion and Worldviews during their post-16 course of study.

Schools must publish a detailed statement about how they meet the National Entitlement and ensure that every pupil has access to it through the curriculum, lessons and wider experiences they provide.

Pupils must be taught:

1. about matters of central importance to the worldviews studied, how these can form coherent accounts for adherents, and how these matters are interpreted in different times, cultures and places
2. about key concepts including 'religion', 'secularity', 'spirituality' and 'worldview', and that worldviews are complex, diverse and plural
3. the ways in which patterns of belief, expression and belonging may change across and within worldviews, locally, nationally and globally, both historically and in contemporary times
4. the ways in which worldviews develop in interaction with each other, have some shared beliefs and practices as well as differences, and that people may draw upon more than one tradition
5. the role of religious and non-religious ritual and practices, foundational texts, and of the arts, in both the formation and communication of experience, beliefs, values, identities and commitments
6. how worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions of meaning and purpose raised by human experience, and the different roles that worldviews play in providing people with ways of making sense of their lives

7. the different roles played by worldviews in the lives of individuals and societies, including their influence on moral behaviour and social norms
8. how worldviews have power and influence in societies and cultures, appealing to various sources of authority, including foundational texts
9. the different ways in which religion and worldviews can be understood, interpreted and studied, including through a wide range of academic disciplines and through direct encounter and discussion with individuals and communities who hold these worldviews.

Programmes of study must reflect the complex, diverse and plural nature of worldviews. They may draw from a range of religious, philosophical, spiritual and other approaches to life including different traditions within Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, non-religious worldviews and concepts including Humanism, secularism, atheism and agnosticism, and other relevant worldviews within and beyond the traditions listed above, including worldviews of local significance where appropriate.

Teaching must promote openness, respect for others, objectivity, scholarly accuracy and critical enquiry.

Pupils are therefore entitled to be taught by teachers who:

- a. have secure subject knowledge
- b. are capable of addressing misconceptions and misunderstandings and handling controversial issues
- c. demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the study of religion and worldviews
- d. promote the value of scholarship.

In order for all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in Religion and Worldviews, the subject must be given adequate time and resources commensurate with the place of Religion and Worldviews as a core component of the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION 3

- a. Non-statutory programmes of study for each of Key Stages 1–4 should be developed at a national level, at a similar level of detail as those for History and Geography in the National Curriculum. These should be ratified by the DfE.
- b. Programmes of study should be developed by a national body of a maximum of nine professionals, including serving teachers. This body could choose to take advice from other organisations as relevant.
- c. The core purpose of the national body should be to develop and revise the programmes of study. It will also make recommendations to the government and advise the profession on issues relating to Religion and Worldviews and the resources and support needed to deliver high quality Religion and Worldviews for all pupils.
- d. The national body should be appointed by the DfE on the basis of recommendations from the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, following an open application process.
- e. Members of the national body should be appointed on the basis of commitment to the approach taken to Religion and Worldviews in the National Entitlement and proven expertise in some or all of the following:
 - i. specialist knowledge of Religion and Worldviews with both research and classroom experience
 - ii. curriculum development, within or beyond Religion and Worldviews
 - iii. initial teacher education or continuing professional development of teachers
 - iv. current or recent classroom experience in either primary or secondary phases.
- f. The national body should be a standing body with a third of members changing every three years. It should be funded on a *per diem* basis by the DfE.
- g. Programmes of study should be reviewed whenever the National Curriculum is reviewed, but the national body should also have the power to request the DfE for a review if they believe this is warranted.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Section 375ff of the Education Act 1996 should be amended to remove the requirement for local authorities to convene Agreed Syllabus Conferences and develop locally agreed syllabuses.

RECOMMENDATION 5

- a. When GCSE and A-level specifications are next reviewed, this should be done in the light of the National Entitlement.
- b. The national body should also consider how the study of Religion and Worldviews may be incorporated into vocational qualifications, either as a stand-alone course or as modules within existing vocational courses.

RECOMMENDATION 6

All Initial Teacher Education (ITE) should enable teachers, at primary and where relevant at secondary level, to teach Religion and Worldviews based on the National Entitlement and with the competence to deal with sensitive issues in the classroom, and the teachers' standards should be updated to reflect this. In order to support this, the following should be implemented.

- a. There should be a minimum of 12 hours of contact time for Religion and Worldviews for all forms of primary ITE including School Direct and other school-based routes.
- b. Bursaries for ITE in Religion and Worldviews should be set at parity with other shortage subjects.
- c. Funding for Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses should be reinstated at parity with Ebacc subjects. Funding should be allocated for Subject Knowledge Enhancement for primary.
- d. Two new modules for Religion and Worldviews should be developed for primary ITE, and also made available as continuing professional development (CPD) modules: one for those with limited experience and one for those with proficiency in the subject who would like to be subject leaders or work beyond their own classrooms. These modules should focus on the delivery of the national programmes of study.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The government should allocate funding for CPD for Religion and Worldviews to support the delivery of the new non-statutory national programmes of study. This funding should be for a period of at least five years and be sufficient to cover:

- a. a national programme of online and face-to-face CPD, including an online platform with both massive open online courses (MOOCs) and static resources
- b. the development of curriculum materials and supplementary guidance, including resources for local studies
- c. support for local face-to-face CPD including teacher hubs and networks, with specific allocations for areas of opportunity and of a sufficient level to cover adequate professional advice and support.

All of the above funding streams should be administered and overseen by the national body as part of their remit.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Legislation regarding the establishment of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education should be amended as follows.

- a. The name of the body should be changed to Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews.
- b. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews must facilitate the implementation of the National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews in all schools within the local authority boundaries by providing information about sources of support available, and must connect schools with local faith and belief communities and other groups that support the study of Religion and Worldviews in schools.
- c. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews must submit an annual report to the DfE and to their local authority. The DfE and the local authority must publish the annual reports on a dedicated web page.
- d. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews should be made up of members from five groups:
 - i. teachers of Religion and Worldviews from all phases including Higher Education
 - ii. school leaders and governors
 - iii. ITE and/or CPD providers
 - iv. school providers including the Local Authority (LA) and Multi Academy Trust (MAT), dioceses etc
 - v. religion, belief and other groups that support RE in schools or wish to do so (this might include local museums and galleries as well as religion and belief groups).

- e. The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews may also:
- i. provide CPD support for schools
 - ii. develop programmes of study to support the National Entitlement and supplementary curriculum materials for use within and across their local authority boundaries
 - iii. provide extra resources for schools on local faith and belief communities to support local studies
 - iv. provide further support for learning outside the classroom
 - v. provide advice to schools and school providers on matters of religion and belief in schools
 - vi. facilitate school-to-school collaboration
 - vii. celebrate success including through offering prizes and competitions
 - viii. promote good community relations within and outside schools.

Statutory funding must be provided for all Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews, calculated by size of local authority and of a sufficient level to enable the group to carry out its activities effectively. This should be ring-fenced within the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) of funding provided to local authorities.

RECOMMENDATION 9

- a. Ofsted or Section 48 inspectors must report on whether schools are meeting the National Entitlement.
- b. There should be a one-off, in-depth review of the impact of the National Entitlement and national programmes of study once these have been implemented. This should be conducted by Ofsted.
- c. The DfE should publish data on hours taught in all subjects (Key Stages 1-4) and GCSE entries for all subjects, including trend data, in an easily accessible format on their website.

RECOMMENDATION 10

- a. The DfE should consider the impact of school performance measures on the provision and quality of Religion and Worldviews, including the impact of excluding Religious Studies GCSE from the Ebacc and of excluding GCSE Short Courses from school performance measures.

- b. In the light of the evidence, the DfE should make amendments to school performance measures to ensure that the study of Religion and Worldviews is not neglected or disadvantaged.
- c. The Russell Group universities should review the list of facilitating subjects and consider whether, given their stated comments on the academic rigour and value of Religious Studies A-level, it should be included.

RECOMMENDATION 11

- a. The DfE should review the right of withdrawal from Religion and Worldviews and provide legal clarification on:
 - i. whether parents have a right to withdraw selectively from parts of Religion and Worldviews
 - ii. whether parents have a duty to provide an alternative curriculum for Religion and Worldviews
 - iii. whether children withdrawn from Religion and Worldviews can access other curriculum subjects or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support during the time they would normally be studying Religion and Worldviews.
- b. The DfE should work with school leaders to develop a code of good practice for managing the right of withdrawal.
- c. The DfE should monitor how the right of withdrawal is being used on an annual basis and provide data on the number of full and partial withdrawals and the reasons for withdrawal where given.



Commission on Religious Education

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*Response to Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead “A New Settlement
Revised: Religion and Belief in Schools”*

Paul Smalley, Chair of NASACRE

NASACRE Patron, Charles Clarke and Professor Linda Woodhead have launched a revised version <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Clarke-Woodhead-A-New-Settlement-Revised.pdf> of their 2015 pamphlet *a New Settlement*. This reworking has involved researching and sounding out many of the proposals in the 2015 booklet <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>. On behalf of NASACRE I have been involved in some of this research, and SACRE responses to the *Big NASACRE Survey 2017* <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-488-evidence-submitted-on-behalf-of-nasacre-to-the-commission-on-re-by-paul-smalley.pdf> have fed into Charles and Linda's thinking.

The recommendations fall into three areas:

1. RE and Curriculum
2. Collective Worship
3. Faith Schools.

The last of these, Faith Schools, is of no direct concern to NASACRE and SACREs.

On Collective Worship it has considered the frequent way in which the law (to hold a *daily* act of collective worship of a broadly Christian nature [or other nature if a SACRE determination is granted]) is widely disregarded. Yet to be published research which I have worked on with Linda and others suggests that about a third of all schools self-declare that they are in breach of the law. However, many teachers we have spoken to do not wish to see the legal requirement abolished altogether as curricular and examination pressures on schools might lead to the end of assembly time, which is still widely valued. The recommendation is to change guidance to read:

‘All pupils in attendance at maintained schools and academies shall take part in a regular assembly or act of collective worship in keeping with the values and ethos of the school and reflecting the diversity and character of the school community.’

This seems a sensible move to me, and will of course mean, for SACREs (and the DfE in the case of academies), that they no longer would need to consider determinations.

It is on RE and the curriculum that the most radical changes are proposed, with even the name being changed to “*Religion, Beliefs and Values*”. This is something which I have always been ambivalent about: no one suddenly liked peanuts, when *Marathon* bars became *Snickers*!

They suggest that “*the RE curriculum in schools should be determined nationally rather than locally, as now, by a newly created national “Advisory Council on Religion Belief and Values”.*”

Our research <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-488-evidence-submitted-on-behalf-of-nasacre-to-the-commission-on-re-by-paul-smalley.pdf> shows that SACREs are divided on the issue of a National RE syllabus. It is true that in many areas the limited capacity of some SACREs has led to widespread adoption of non-local syllabus solutions. The pamphlet acknowledges diversity of opinion with SACREs and practitioners, but sets out a number of challenges to those who still support a local syllabus for every SACRE. Charles and Linda are convinced that a “*local SACRE system of syllabus-setting will not succeed in meeting the challenge of developing RE.*” (p15) The proposed Advisory Council would consist of 12-15 practitioners and curriculum experts appointed by the Secretary of State. Faith communities may be consulted but would not have a role in setting the curriculum. It is understood that this is key in enabling another recommendation: *The right of parents to withdraw their children from the Religion, Belief and Values part of the curriculum should be removed.* There has been much written recently <https://theconversation.com/parents-are-pulling-children-from-re-lessons-so-they-dont-learn-about-islam-95235> about how withdrawal from RE and Collective Worship is still relatively rare, but does allow parents to prevent their children from being prepared for life in a religiously plural society. The right so withdraw children from an Act of Collective Worship, within the ‘values and ethos’ of the school is retained in the proposals.

They recommend that “*The “Religion, Belief and Values” syllabus should be required in all state-funded schools. Schools with a religious character could complement the requirement with additional provision as required by their religious designation.*” The pamphlet suggests that academies, independent schools and schools with a religious character should all follow the national syllabus – something widely supported by SACREs in the *Big NASACRE Survey 2017*. This would be enacted through legislation similar to that requiring PSHE and RSE to become compulsory, something which I suggested some time ago (See for Example *RE Today* 2018, 35(2):11)

The recommendations that “*OFSTED should ensure that all schools properly fulfil their duty to teach the nationally agreed RBV curriculum*” and that “*At Key Stage 5, after the age of 16, the legal requirement for RE, should be removed*” I think will be widely supported by SACREs and the wider RE community. Although no firm proposals are made about key stage 4: “*At Key Stage 4, consideration should be given to modifying the current legal requirement for RE to a requirement for all pupils to study contemporary religious, spiritual, moral, ethical, social, and cultural values*”, there is potential that RE (or RBV) might largely disappear after key stage 3.

The major recommendations to which SACREs will want to give due attention are recommendations 8 and 9:

Local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) would be consulted about the development of that curriculum and asked to assist in its local delivery and implementation. SACREs should be reconstituted and properly resourced in order to assist in developing, and then delivering, the faith aspects of the government's approach to community integration and cohesion.

The authors "identify three main roles for SACREs in response to the changes [they] propose:

a) to assist in the local delivery of the new RE (or RBV) curriculum, and to be consulted about the development of that curriculum

b) to assist in strengthening links between RE (or RBV) and FE and HE institutions, and between RE (or RBV) local religion and belief

c) to assist in developing, and then delivering, the faith aspects of the government's approach to community integration and cohesion." (Page 29)

Somewhat frustratingly there is little detail about what statutory frameworks would be in place to ensure that SACREs are "properly resourced", how they might be "reconstituted", or to what extent schools (and the proposed Advisory Council) would be free to ignore SACREs 'assistance' and advice. My recent (somewhat tongue-in-cheek) blog post for the Theos Think Tank

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/comment/2018/07/02/religious-education-brought-to-you-by-g4s-re-futuregazing> hinted at some of the possible dangers of reconstituted SACREs and a possible sense of disenfranchisement that educationalists may feel if given wider community integration responsibilities. However SACREs are very positive about having a wider inter-faith, community cohesion role if properly resourced.

Overall these are a very interesting set of proposals about the future 'Settlement' for RE. I commend SACRE members, and all those interested in Religious Education in schools to carefully read and consider the proposals. Please let NASACRE know your SACREs thoughts. It will be interesting to see how these proposals correlate with the Commission on RE's recommendations when they publish their final report in September.

It is worth remembering that these are simply proposals, well thought out and carefully researched, but still only proposals. It will take confident political leadership to take any legislative change regarding RE through Parliament, and I am not optimistic that this is likely to occur any time soon.

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