



Re: The current provision and teaching of Religious Education in your school

Dear Head teacher/ Head of RE/ Heads of Humanities/ Chair of Governors

We are writing to all secondary schools in Hertfordshire on behalf of the Hertfordshire SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) following an important national report published earlier this term.

One of the roles of the Hertfordshire SACRE is to support local schools in their provision of RE and we are concerned that some schools may be struggling to meet the statutory requirements due to challenges such as lack of specialist teachers, timetabling pressures, performance measures in other subjects and budget.

The State of the Nation is a joint report (September 17th, 2017) by the Religious Education Council (The REC) and the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) in which three sets of data have been analysed regarding the provision of RE within secondary schools in England

<http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/SOTN%202017%20Report%20web%20version%20FINAL.pdf>

The DfE provided the school workforce data (2010-2015) and the GCSE RS entries (2014-16) for this report in which we discover that over 28% of schools in England are not providing RE for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. This, as you know, is against the statutory requirement for maintained schools and the funding agreement for academies.

We encourage you to read this report and ask you to consider the provision of RE in your school

- Are we providing the opportunity for all our students to take RS GCSE?
- If we do not offer RS GCSE, are we providing Core RE for all KS4 students?
- Are we providing RE for students who do not opt to take RS GCSE?
- Maintained schools - are we following the full statutory requirements for KS3, KS4 and KS5 as set out in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education (2017-2022)?
- Academies - in what way are we meeting the funding agreement which requires us to provide RE to all pupils?

All maintained schools in Hertfordshire were given a free copy of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE which was published in April 2017 for implementation in September 2017.

We know that there are many schools in Hertfordshire where the teaching of RE has a high profile, with good and outstanding outcomes. If you would like to celebrate your RE with us, please contact us to arrange an opportunity to share your achievements at one of our termly Hertfordshire SACRE meetings. We would be delighted to welcome you. For further support contact sacre@hertsforlearning.co.uk

We hope that this letter is viewed as being supportive, as is our intention, however we do wish to stress that schools must ensure that they are meeting the statutory requirements for RE.

We look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

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School Effectiveness Adviser
SACRE Servicing Officer

Lisa Kassapian
RE Adviser, Breathe RE
SACRE Servicing Officer

The Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022 sets out the statutory requirements:

Page 4: there must be provision in all secondary schools for a full Religious Studies GCSE and Religious Studies A level option, in addition to the RE followed by all students. If students do not opt for RS GCSE or RS A level there must still be provision for RE throughout KS4 and KS5

Pages 29-30: What does the law in England say about RE?

RE is for all pupils

RE must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents. It is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum.'

- **Maintained schools without a religious character** should follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- **Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character** should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.
- **Voluntary aided schools with a religious character** should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus.
- **Church schools, church academies, church free schools** should provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied; this can be achieved by using the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus.
- **Faith and non-faith academies and free schools** Religious Education is compulsory as set out in the funding agreements. Academies may use their locally agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with permission of the SACRE concerned), or devise their own curriculum.

As stated above, academies can choose which RE syllabus to follow and we recommend the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022 which provides opportunities for schools to follow a broad and balanced RE curriculum reflecting life in modern Britain.

Should you wish to receive support in implementing your RE syllabus please consider attending courses run by Herts for Learning or buy in bespoke training from our RE consultants.

Religious Education for All is the interim report published (21st September, 2017) by the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE)

For the full report : <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Commission-on-Religious-Education-Interim-Report-2017.pdf>

For the Executive Summary of the report: <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Executive-Summary-FINAL.pdf>

This interim report explores the issues which have emerged from the evidence presented to the commissioners during the initial consultation period 2016/17. The interim report proposes several recommendations alongside a range of issues on which commissioners will seek to consult further before drawing any conclusions.