

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 them<sup>1</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 2009<sup>2</sup>. 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.<sup>3</sup>
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/](http://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.<sup>4</sup> 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 schools<sup>5</sup>. 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](http://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](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)<sup>6</sup>. At secondary, almost three times<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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%)<sup>9</sup>. 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](http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf)

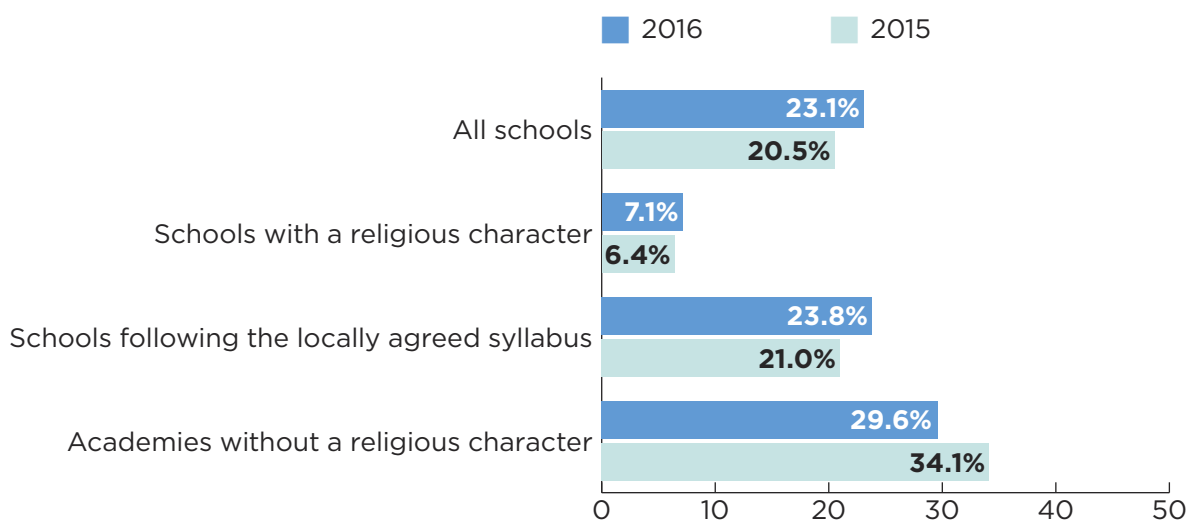
7 NATRE (2016). *An Analysis of the provision for RE in primary schools*. [www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf](http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Primary%20Survey%202016%20final.pdf)

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

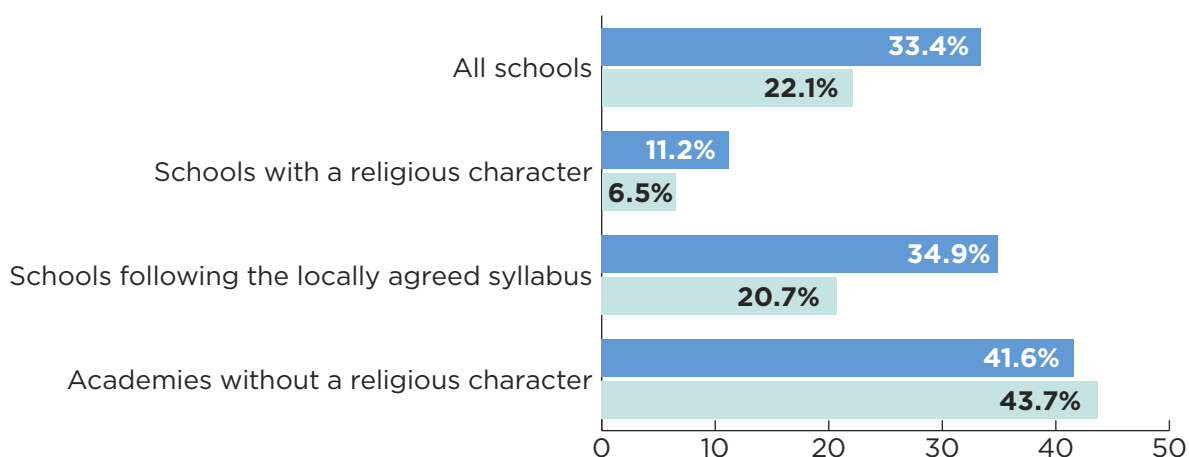
9 Source: *School Workforce data 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.*



**Figure 1: Schools offering no RE at Key Stage 3<sup>10</sup>**



**Figure 2: Schools offering no RE at Key Stage 4<sup>11</sup>**

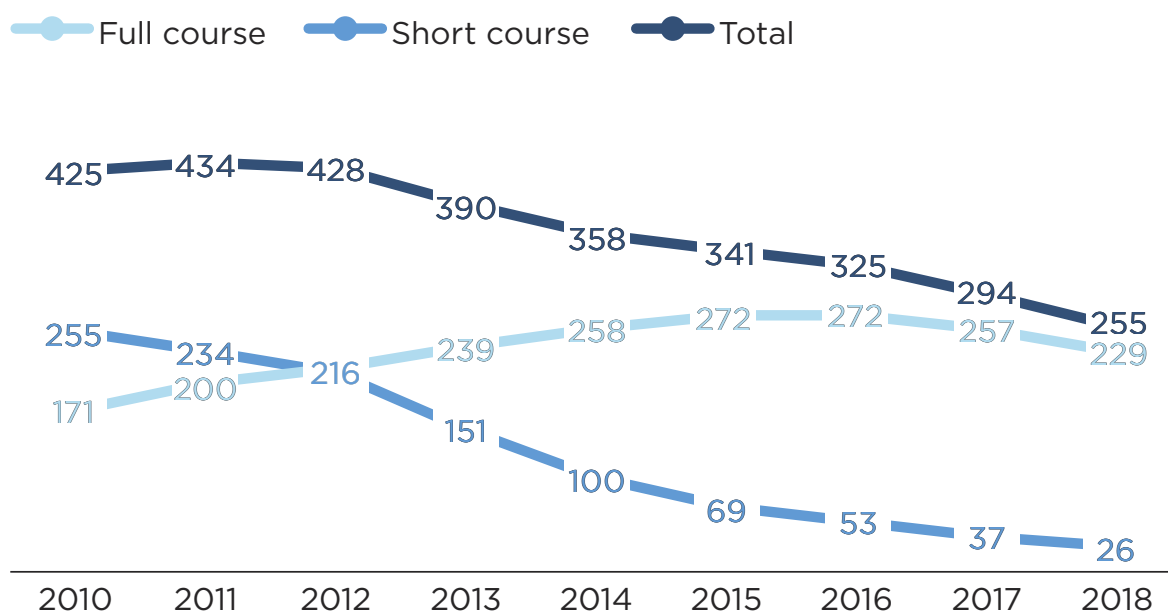


22. Academisation and reductions in funding have reduced local authority support for RE via Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) and professional advisers, to the point where such support is unsustainable in many areas and already disappearing in some. This further increases the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

<sup>10</sup> Source: School Workforce Data 2016, analysed by Deborah Weston for NATRE.

<sup>11</sup> 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 RE<sup>12</sup> and has affected, for example, the number of specialist teachers at secondary level.



**Figure 3: Trends in GCSE entries for Religious Studies<sup>13</sup>**  
*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.

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

<sup>13</sup> 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](http://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

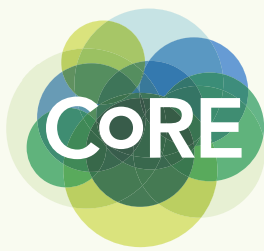
- a. The DfE should consider the impact of school performance measures on the provision and quality of Religion and Worldviews, including the impact of excluding Religious Studies GCSE from the Ebacc and of excluding GCSE Short Courses from school performance measures.

- 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

Report drafter: Amira Tharani  
Report produced for the Commission on Religious Education  
by NCVO - CES

© RE Council September 2018

Religious Education Council of England & Wales  
CAN Mezzanine  
49-51 East Road  
London N1 6AH  
020 7250 8166  
[religioueducationcouncil.org.uk](http://religioueducationcouncil.org.uk)  
[facebook.com/religioueducationcouncil](https://facebook.com/religioueducationcouncil)  
[twitter.com/RECouncil](https://twitter.com/RECouncil)