

## National RE News updates: Autumn 2019

### First OFSTED reports published

You will remember that the new OFSTED framework was published and came into force at the beginning of September

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework#handbooks-and-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework#handbooks-and-framework)

172. All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the basic curriculum, which includes national curriculum, religious education and age-appropriate relationship and sex education. Academies are expected to offer all pupils a broad curriculum<sup>68</sup> that should be similar in breadth and ambition.

P.42 Footnote 68: Academies must include English, mathematics, science and religious education in their curriculum.

On the first day of reports being published NATRE published the following useful information including extracts from two reports. Neither of these schools are in Thurrock.

NATRE are pleased that the new Ofsted framework emphasises the importance of the broad and balanced curriculum including RE for all pupils in all school types. As the first inspection reports under the new framework are released it is pleasing to note that inspectors are reporting where improvements are needed in RE. NATRE are keen for schools who need support to be in contact and join our subject association in order to receive the resources, training and support we offer.

NATRE also notes that these new reports will be a helpful reminder to all schools and school leaders including governors as a reminder that high quality RE has to be taught at all key stages.

These recently published reports act as a reminder of how even when RE isn't the focus of a deep dive a lack of provision will be picked up.

An example from a Primary academy (Overall grade RI) Pupils are starting to build knowledge in some subjects. Pupils in Year 4 told us about their topic on ancient Rome and what they have learned about democracy. In other subjects planning to build pupils' knowledge is less well developed. For example, in religious education (RE) pupils know little about religions other than Christianity. Pupils do not learn a modern foreign language.

What does the school need to do to improve?

Pupils do not know enough about cultures and religions different to their own. Leaders have put plans into place to address this, but they must continue to review this work to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop the knowledge they need to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

An example from a Secondary academy (Overall grade RI) Most teachers are now teaching pupils the subject content that matters the most, apart from religious education, which is limited.

What does the school need to do to improve?

Currently, some pupils in key stage 3 do not cover subject content sufficiently well to be able to draw upon their learning in the future. This is because subjects such as religious education lack prominence in the curriculum. Additionally, the time pupils spend learning new content is limited in some subjects as teachers attempt to teach a broad and balanced curriculum that is commensurate with the national curriculum. However, time is limited, and teachers sometimes gloss over important learning points. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders must ensure that pupils are afforded sufficient time to learn important subject content in detail for as long as possible, including in religious education.

NATRE only publish extracts of reports and don't publicly name the schools concerned. Our aim in publicising this information is for all schools to understand the importance of RE and we recognise that individual schools may well be part way through a process of improving RE provision and will certainly be acting on the recommendations in their reports.

**What should SACRE do?**

- **Monitor for local reports**
- **Consider writing to schools 'at risk' with this new information.**

### **NATRE Meetings with the DFE**

NATRE representatives continue to meet frequently with the DFE. Recent agenda items have included discussing complaints about RE, non-compliance with the law on RE and the necessity of support for RE from government. NATRE were pleased to work with the DFE to jointly provide a subject knowledge enhancement courses for secondary trainee teachers, and are currently meeting with the DFE approximately once a month on behalf of RE teachers.

### **Number of schools flouting Religious Education laws rises**

Half of academies without a religious character and 40 per cent of community schools are still failing to meet their legal or contractual agreements to provide Religious Education, new research by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) has revealed.

State schools must teach RE to all pupils, whether they are studying for a GCSE in the subject or not. However, provision has been hit by schools being able to hide behind failing accountability structures, meaning many academies and community schools breach their contractual and legal obligations.

Meanwhile, more than a third of schools reported that they have received no subject specific training in the last academic year. The new Ofsted Framework for inspection states that school leaders, including governing boards, will be held to account during an inspection where lack of training for teachers has a negative impact on pupils.

NATRE's research found that:

- Almost 40% (up from 34% in 2015-16) of community and 50% of Academy schools without a religious character do not meet their legal or contractual requirements for RE at Key Stage 4. The proportion of Academies remains similar to 2015-16, but the overall number of Secondary Academies has increased by almost 20%, meaning more pupils are affected.
- 64% of students in year 11 and 59% in year 10 receive no Religious Education at Key Stage 4 where RE is an optional subject, even though it is a legal requirement.
- Almost one in three (32%) of respondents reported that some parents withdraw pupils from Religious Education in their school.
- Nearly a quarter (21%) of schools give less than the recommended teaching time of 120-140 learning hours for a Full Course RS GCSE.
- More than 80% of schools plan to make no GCSE RS Short Course entries in 2018/19, which represents a rapid decline (50%) since 2012. 16% reported no entries for the Full Course.
- In 58% of schools the number of specialist teachers of RE either remained stable or (in 13% of cases) increased. In some schools however the number of specialists employed is falling. This was reported by more than a quarter of respondents (28%).
- Three quarters of respondents reported that some RE was taught by teachers who spent most of their timetable teaching another subject. In 36% of cases more than 1 in 5 lessons is taught by these teachers who usually teach another subject. Part of the reason for this is lack of RE specialists in the workforce.

Commenting on the research findings, Ben Wood, NATRE Chair, said:

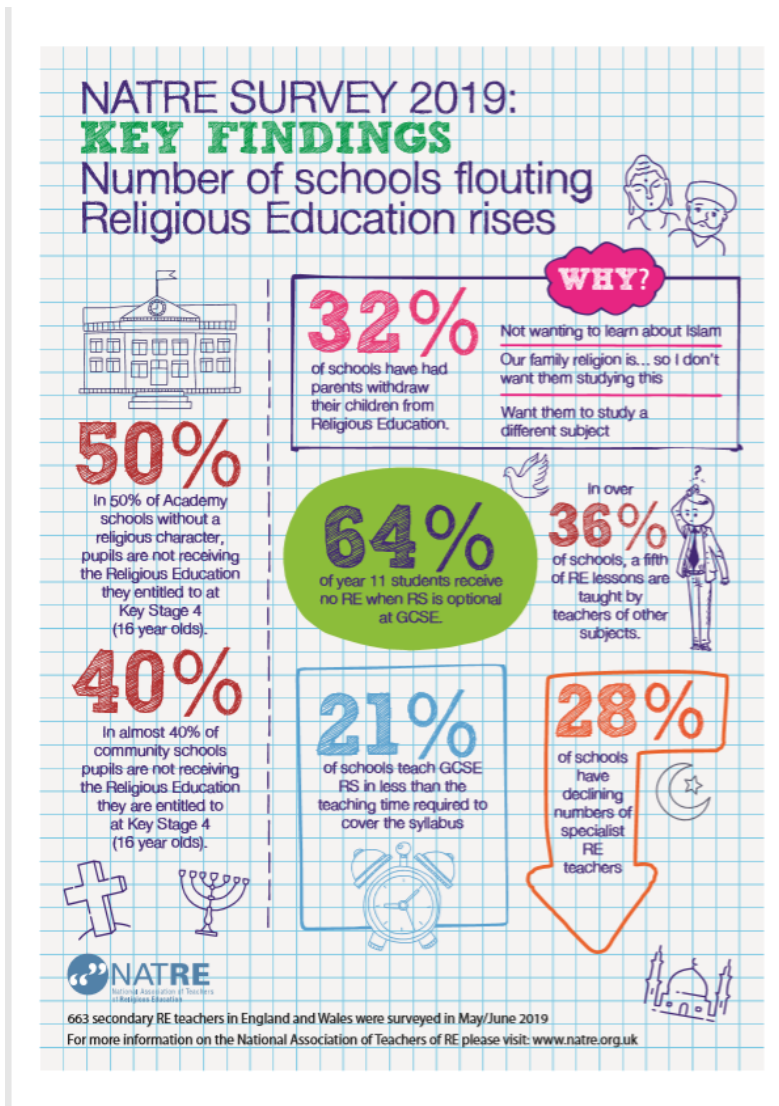
“There are so many schools, of every type, primary, secondary, academy, free school, local authority school, big and small, rural, urban, in every part of the country that provide their pupils with excellent RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This makes it all the more unacceptable to hear of schools where pupils are not given the access to the religious literacy they need and deserve to support them in our increasingly pluralistic society.

“RE is a vital part of the curriculum, giving pupils the chance to learn about the people in the world around them and providing them with the opportunity to discuss and debate important questions. To deny pupils this chance means pupils are missing a crucial part of their learning, something every pupil in every school is entitled to receive.”

The survey results show that the Government needs to take action and NATRE urges it to establish a National Plan for RE as recommended by the Commission on Religious Education.

Read the full [NATRE secondary survey report](#) here.

[\*\*View the infographic of the key findings from the report.\*\*](#)



**NATRE and school compliance on RE**

NATRE are continuing to work with schools, parents and teachers on compliance around RE. Letters from NATRE to schools supporting parents or teachers who are complaining about non compliance have proved effective. NATRE are also supporting several people who are taking their complaints to the DFE. NATRE were at the Labour and Conservative conference and had meeting with the Secretary of State, Schools minister and shadow schools minister to discuss non- compliance in RE.



**What should SACRE do?**

- Invite local MPs and councillors to see RE in school
- Check websites of local schools to look for schools at risk of non-compliance

**Massive improvement in recruitment of trainee teachers of RE**

We are delighted to report that based on the UCAS figures released this week, there are 505 trainee teachers of RE placed or conditionally placed which, when compared to **2018**, is an increase of over 100 trainees, If all of these people start their training and don't change their mind at the last minute, this will be the best recruitment figures for RE in a very long time! We are really pleased that our campaigning for higher value bursaries and subject knowledge enhancement courses appears to have paid off.

Lest we get too complacent however, we need to consider how many more trainees we might recruit next year if the government were to treat trainees in religious education in the same way as those of shortage subjects as recommended by the CoRE.

Perhaps then we would have a chance of improving the percentage of lessons of RE taught by specialists, that figure has remained stubbornly low for many years and clearly has an impact of outcomes for pupils.

**What should SACRE do?**

- Find out if there is a shortage of secondary specialists in our schools

**Welsh consultation: subject name change and the right of withdrawal**

The Welsh Government has announced that it is consulting on key potential changes to the teaching of Religious Education (RE). The reforms up for consultation include a potential change of the name of the subject to 'Religions and Worldviews' and the ending of the right of parents to withdraw their children from RE lessons.

NATRE is encouraged by the Welsh Government actively taking an interest in RE and its role in their new curriculum. It is good to see they are consulting on one of the most challenging areas to affect our subject recently; the right of withdrawal.

The NATRE Executive sees no good reason for prolonging the right of parental withdrawal from inclusive RE and supports the Commission on RE's recommendation that the right of withdrawal should be reviewed. If the right of withdrawal is maintained then it should be clarified or modified by guidance to show that it is for reasons of religion and belief, and not for use selectively, in a discriminating manner.

As a step towards this we have produced our own guidance in association with the NAHT, which can be found [here](#).

In addition, the proposed name change might be a step in the right direction of a more inclusive description of our subject. However the phrase 'Religions and Worldviews' makes less sense than the Commission on RE's recommendation of "Religion and Worldviews". The proposed term from the Welsh Government suggests that religions are distinct from worldviews, which differs from the Commission on RE idea that we all have a worldview, and this can be religious or non-religious.

NATRE would like to encourage all teachers and NATRE members in Wales to respond to the 8-week consultation, which can be found [here](#).

### **What should SACRE do?**

- **Consider whether school leaders have sufficient support in managing the right of withdrawal**
- **Publicise the NATRE guidance on withdrawal**

### **National and Regional Ambassadors**

A reminder that the National and Regional RE Ambassadors are continuing to work to support and connect teachers of RE. More details here: [www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/regional-ambassadors-announced/](http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/regional-ambassadors-announced/)

### **Primary 1000: can SACRE nominate schools for this RE-improvement project?**

Are there Primary schools in our area who rarely engage with SACRE or with RE events? The 'Primary RE 1000' project from NATRE is designed to reach these schools with support for better RE.

NATRE has received funding for an amazing RE development project called Primary RE 1000. The aim of the project is to benefit 'hard to reach' schools so that they are more engaged with RE. We have a list of project activities that will help Primary schools to improve their RE, wherever they are currently.

The project has been designed to challenge, support and inspire Primary schools where they need to change and improve the RE opportunities they give to pupils.

The schools accepted to join the project will receive:

- A digital starter pack to kick start better RE in their schools
- Over 1000 free-to-use classroom resources
- Links with a local group of RE teachers to share best practice
- NATRE membership at a discounted price (£55 for two years, instead of £150!)
- Opportunities to attend high quality training at a discounted rate
- And much more
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Can SACRE send school names, email contacts and subject leader contacts for schools who may benefit from this support? NATRE will then invite eligible schools to join the project. The invitation may come from NATRE via SACRE, or directly from SACRE. If SACRE gives NATRE its recommendations, NATRE will check which schools qualify for Primary RE 1000 and get back to SACRE with a personal invite we can send to them. NATRE is very eager to work in partnership with SACRE.

Contact Mandeep Singh Shekhon [Mandeep@natre.org.uk](mailto:Mandeep@natre.org.uk)

### What should SACRE do?

- **Send names of local schools to NATRE so they can be offered the opportunity**
- **Publicise the opportunity at heads meetings**

### Discovering Sacred Texts: a new online resource

*Discovering Sacred Texts* is a new free British Library online learning resource, inviting visitors to explore the world's major faiths through the Library's extensive collection of sacred texts.

**Available to all, the new website includes over 250 digitised collection items, teachers' resources, short films and articles written by academics, faith leaders and practitioners, library curators and cultural leaders.**

Texts range from some of the best-known and most beautiful manuscripts of the scriptures of various world religions, to an extensive collection of printed editions, both early and modern, including selections from over 100 texts that are newly digitised and available online for the first time.

*Discovering Sacred Texts* provides access to the richness and diversity of the texts from the world's great faiths. Designed for Religious Education students, teachers and lifelong learners, it features the six most-practised faiths in the UK - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism - as well as a number of other faiths including the Baha'i Faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism.

Highlights include:

- A copy of the *Lotus Sūtra* in a lavishly decorated scroll from Japan, written in gold and silver ink on indigo-dyed paper dating back to 1636, which will also feature in the Library's upcoming *Buddhism* exhibition
- The earliest surviving copy of the complete New Testament, Codex Sinaiticus, which dates from the 4th century
- The *Ramayana*, an epic poem ascribed to the sage Valmiki, composed in Sanskrit in the middle of the first millennium
- The Ma'il Qur'an, one of the very earliest Qur'ans in the world, dating back to the 8th century
- One of the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible from the 10th century
- The Prayer Book of Rani Jindan, a manuscript including three hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib, prepared in the early 19th century
- Tablet written by the Bab, co-founder of the Baha'i Faith in the 19th century
- Adhai Dvipa, a traditional Jain cosmic diagram from 18th-19th century
- A copy of the world's oldest Zoroastrian manuscript, the Ashem Vohu, dating from the 9th century

Offering specially researched and curated content, over 50 discursive articles are available for audiences exploring and celebrating religious diversity. Original articles by academics, library curators and faith leaders cover topics such as Islamic pilgrimage and sacred space, Henry VIII

and the Reformation, iconography, the Buddha and the Buddhist sacred text, Hindu deities, the illumination of Jewish biblical texts and the shared origins of the Abrahamic faiths.

Of the 250 diverse collection items on the Discovering Sacred Texts platform, over 100 of these are now available to the public online for the first time, including selections from:

- Tyndale's New Testament, the first complete edition to be printed in English and one of only three copies surviving from the 3,000 or more printed in 1526
- The British Library's oldest dated manuscript of al-Bukhari's collection of hadith from the 12th century
- A woodblock-printed Illustrated Life of Jesus in Chinese, from 1637, one of thirty-seven surviving copies of the book

A curated selection of the spectacular collection items representing these faiths will be on physical display in the British Library's free, permanent Treasures Gallery to coincide with the launch of Discovering Sacred Texts.

### **Strictly RE**

**Date:** 25 January 2020

**Location:** Park Inn, London Heathrow

**Full price:** £175 (Price includes lunch and refreshments, downloadable handouts and presentations from all).

Strictly RE returns with another exceptional day dedicated to the teaching of RE! Packed full of inspiration, practical ideas and useful pedagogy - this year will focus on the intent, implementation and Impact of RE for your pupils.

Join colleagues from across the country, in a relaxed one-day CPD event sure to leave you feeling refreshed and excited to teach RE in the classroom.

### **What should SACRE do?**

- **Publicise these opportunities with schools**

### **Religious Studies GCSE entries fall despite popularity among pupils**

The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen for the third year in a row, down 1.6% against 2018 to 237,862.

In addition, the number of pupils in England and Wales taking the short course GCSE in Religious Studies has fallen even more sharply, down 19.7% from last year to 27,384. Religious Studies remains by far the most commonly taken short course GCSE, accounting for 94.4% of all short course GCSEs taken in England and Wales.

The decline is greater in Wales than in England. In England the number of entries for GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen by 0.6% to 227,913. In Wales the equivalent figures are down by 20.8% to 9,949.

When the entries for the full course and short course GCSE are combined, the picture is of significant decline in the number of pupils taking a qualification in Religious Studies. Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) in England and Wales peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 42.6% in eight years with almost 200,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4.



The long term picture is more positive for the full course GCSE where there has been strong growth in the number of entries for most of the last decade. In 2009 there were 170,303 entries for Religious Studies in England and Wales. The number of entries increased every year until reaching a peak in 2016. While there has been a decline since this peak, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies is still 39.7% greater than in 2009.

All schools, including Academies, have a legal requirement to provide Religious Education to all pupils at all key stages, but today's figures, together with the Government's own school workforce data, suggest that this is not sufficient to ensure that all pupils in England get to study the subject at Key Stage 4. [1] A key driver of this behaviour is almost certainly the fact that there are no consequences for those schools that decide to flout their legal obligation, with Religious Education not featuring in measures such as the EBacc that are used to hold them to account.

At a time when greater religious literacy is even more necessary than ever before, the decline across England and Wales in pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies is troubling.

The fall in entries comes despite pupils emphasising how much they value and enjoy studying Religious Education (underlined by the overall rise in entries at A-Level and GCSE over the past decade) and despite the fact that the Government is rightly emphasising the importance for young people to have knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs.

In 2018 the independent Commission on Religious Education made a series of recommendations including legal and policy changes that the Government could make to better support the subject. The report has been endorsed by the RE Council and NATRE among a wide range of other organisations.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2019 are as follows:

- There were 237,862 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of 1.6% from 2018 (241,749)
- There were 27,384 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 19.7% from 2018 (34,087)
- There were 265,246 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a decline of 3.8% from 2018 (275,836). Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 42.6% in eight years with almost 200,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4.
- 29.8% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded at least an A or a 7
- 23.5% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A\*

## GCSE RS entries – England and Wales (2008-2018)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% change 2009 to 2019	% change 2018 to 2019
<b>Full</b>	170,	176,	209,	226,	251,	269,	283,	284,	269,	241,	237,	39.7	-

<b>Course</b>	303	867	479	782	063	494	756	057	839	749	862	%	1.6%
<b>Short Course</b>	282,168	274,381	252,316	230,451	169,088	118,481	86,679	71,299	53,071	34,087	27,384	-90.3%	-19.7%
<b>Combined</b>	452,471	451,248	461,795	457,233	420,151	387,975	370,435	355,356	322,910	275,836	265,246	-41.4%	-3.8%

Source: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcse>

**Comment from Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, Chief Executive, Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC):**

"Today's figures show the long term impact in England of reforms introduced when Michael Gove was Secretary of State for Education. The exclusion of short course GCSEs from the performance indicators by which schools are monitored, coupled with Religious Studies not being included in the Ebacc, has had a disastrous impact on RS at GCSE. There are now almost 200,000 fewer key stage 4 pupils studying for a qualification in Religious Studies than there were in 2011. This is particularly distressing given how popular the subject is with pupils and how relevant it is in today's world. Last year the independent Commission on Religious Education offered proposals for how to secure the future of religious education that had widespread support from stakeholders across education. It is time that the Government engages fully with the recommendations and for it to take action to support high quality religious education for all pupils in all schools.

As former education secretary and architect of the original GCSE, Lord Kenneth Baker, pointed out earlier this week, the narrowing of the curriculum is a damaging trend that the current Government needs to urgently address before it leads to a generation of young people whose education and prospects are severely weakened."

**Comment from Ben Wood, Chair, National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE):**

"Congratulations to those pupils receiving their GCSE RS results today, and to their teachers. I hope that the hard work, study and revision have paid off for you.

For thousands of young people, GCSE Religious Studies provides an invaluable opportunity to learn about, consider and debate many important and pertinent questions, preparing them for adult life in a diverse and complex world. In this respect, it is pleasing to see that GCSE RS remains one of the most popular GCSE subjects.

However, too many pupils do not receive the teaching they need and deserve. Over half a million young people every year do not take a GCSE in Religious Studies, and while some schools do offer alternative provision, too many schools simply fail to meet their statutory duty to provide their students with RE. Research indicates that over half of secondary schools without a religious

character fail to provide RE at KS4, and that this lack of provision is more pronounced in schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged students.<sup>[3]</sup>

It is not fair that so many young people are not given the full breadth of education they require, and we call on the government to take stronger action in ensuring that all schools provide high quality RE for all of their students.”

### **Schools’ failure to meet legal requirements on RE continues to impact A-level entries**

The growing number of secondary schools in England and Wales that are failing to provide Religious Education to all pupils until the age of 16 is continuing to impact Religious Studies A-level entries.

While the reduction in number of students taking an RS A-level examination in Religious Studies in England and Wales slowed this year, the number of entries has declined significantly since its peak in 2016. Figures show a drop of 5.1% in 2019 and 22.8% in 2018.

The decline comes in the context of a smaller cohort of 18-year-olds this year and an overall reduced number of A-level entries across all subjects. Nonetheless, the number of schools failing to provide Religious Education at Key Stage 4 has been increasing. The latest data from the Department for Education’s School Workforce Census suggest that a third (33.4%) of all schools are failing in their legal duty to offer the subject, which in turn has consequences for A-level entries.\*

The figures are an indication that Religious Education remains vulnerable and that the Government should engage further with the recent recommendations for change from the Commission on Religious Education.

The key outcomes of the 2019 A-level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:

- 17,490 RS A-level entries were recorded, a small decrease of 5.1% on 2018. Much of this decrease is explained by a decrease in the number of 18-year-olds in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland of 2.9%.
- Despite the decrease in entries for RS, there are still 57% more entries than in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003).
- The 5.1% decrease in entries for RS is considerably smaller than equivalent figures for many other subjects such as English Language (down 21.8%), English Literature (down 7.8%), Further Maths (down 10.0%), and Drama (down 9.4%).
- The increase of 57% in the number of entries for RS A-level since 2003 is greater than equivalent changes over the same period for such as Geography (down 1%), Law (down 6%), and History (up 23%). Among arts, humanity or social science subjects, only Sociology (up 58%), Economics (up 77%) and Political Studies (up 114%) have seen stronger growth since 2003.
- Entries for RS A-level have declined since a peak of 24,849 in 2016, although this year’s decline in entries of 5.1% is considerably less than the equivalent figure of 22.8% last year.
- 21.5% of entries for RS A-level were awarded an A or an A\*.
- There were 3,911 entries for RS at AS-level, a decrease of 35% on 2018, this reflects the decline across all subjects where the number of AS entries fell by 49% across England and Wales.

The decline in entries for RS A-level adds further evidence to the case for action to secure the future of Religious Education as a subject for all pupils in all schools. The Commission

on Religious Education published its final report in 2018 making recommendations for changes that have so far only been partially taken up by the Government.<sup>[1]</sup>

The decline in entries comes after warnings in recent years of insufficient action to support the subject. In 2017 the RE Council of England and Wales (REC) and the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) published **analysis** based on data from the Department for Education showing that 28% of secondary schools in England report that they are not meeting their statutory obligation to teach religious education (RE).

The reduction in entries is surprising given that Religious Studies at A-level continues to be a favourable gateway to university and jobs. The importance of RS A-level as a subject for Higher Education entry and for graduate recruiters is increasingly recognised by independent bodies. The Russell Group of top universities has made it clear that RS A-level provides 'suitable preparation for entry to university generally', and both Oxford and Cambridge University include Religious Studies in the top level list of 'generally suitable Arts A-levels'.

In fact, almost 21% of students admitted to Oxford University to study English and 13.5% admitted to study History in 2015 had an RS A-level, more than those with Economics, Physics and Business Studies A-levels.<sup>1</sup>

Employers recognise the value of religious literacy. For example, in February 2017, EY announced the creation of Religious Literacy for Organisations (RLO), a diversity and inclusion training programme designed to help organisations better understand religious inclusion and its positive impact on business process and performance.

Career prospects for those that take Religious Studies/Philosophy at degree level are also very bright due to developing a strong academic skillset with transferable skills attractive to employers. In 2015/16, 16.5% of Philosophy graduates entered the professional sector in the fields of Business, HR and Finance, compared to 10% for all disciplines. With 13% of graduates going on to work in the fields of legal, social and welfare, 6.8% choosing to become educational professionals and 4.6% managers.<sup>2</sup>

The drop in the number of pupils taking A-level and AS-level Religious Studies is all the more concerning at a time when there is a shortfall in recruitment for teacher training in Religious Education in some areas of the country. Evidence collected by the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) suggests that headteachers are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit RE specialists.

### **Comment from Ben Wood, Chair, National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE)**

"Congratulations to all those students receiving their A-level Religious Studies results today! Those continuing their studies in this area will be ready to take their understanding to the next level, while those going in other directions will be well prepared to succeed in an increasingly complex world.

"However, the continuing problem of schools failing to provide RS at KS4, and thus failing in their statutory duty, is impacting on the number of students taking the option of A-level Religious Studies. At a time when high levels of religious literacy have never been more important, it is sad to see so many young people are not given the opportunity they deserve, especially when teachers of RS see the many benefits this course offers young people.

"We look forward to seeing the impact of Ofsted's decision in May this year to place greater emphasis on the provision of quality teaching of worldviews and to hold to account those schools that are not giving pupils the RE to which they are entitled."

### **What should SACRE do?**

- Promote the value of GCSE and A level religious studies both for pupils' personally and also in terms of the career value of the subject using resources such as these [films](#) from RE-Online, data on University attitudes to RE from NATRE [here](#) and parent/pupil appreciation of GCSE RS [here](#)
- Write to schools to celebrate success with examination results and ask the school improvement team to include RE in their conversations with school leaders where there are causes for concern

### Other news

#### Questions in the House of Commons

NATRE want to thank Shadow Minister of State; Mike Kane for asking these useful questions to the Department for Education and sharing our concerns about Religious Education.

Click the links below to read Nick Gibb, Minister of State's (education) response to each parliamentary question asked:

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all schools provide pupils with opportunities to develop specific and age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of religions as part of promoting mutual respect and tolerance of people with different faiths and beliefs; and if he will make a statement.'

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department have made of the quality of training for primary teachers in religious education; and if he will make a statement.'

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that all state-funded schools are providing an adequate provision of religious education; and if he will make a statement.'

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of (a) religious education lessons and (b) history lessons are taught by teachers with no post A-level qualification in those subjects; and if he will make a statement.'

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations have been received by his Department on the provision of RE teaching in schools as part of a broad and balanced curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

### What should SACRE do?

Consider actions that aim to encourage national government to provide further support and guidance for RE