

19th March 2013

National Updates on RE

A. New secondary school assessment arrangements

The recently announced back-track on the EBacc Certificate as the main means of measuring secondary schools' performance has been good news for RE. The widening of the measure to include performance across 8 subjects means that it is restored to relatively equal footing on the curriculum. John Keast, Chair of the RE Council, has provided analysis of the new arrangements.

(see separate article : "Michael Gove and Religious Education" attached as Annex A)

Although the national funding for bursaries for those training to teach RE has been removed, Culham St Gabriel's charity are offering bursaries <http://www.cstg.org.uk/2013/01/bursaries-for-re-teacher-training/>

B. New Consultation Framework for National Curriculum (not RE)

The Government has issued a consultation framework for a new national curriculum for England.

The deadline for responses to the consultation is 16 April 2013.

Subject to Ministers' final decisions, and to the approval of Parliament, it is the Government's intention that the final version of this framework will be published in the autumn of 2013, and that the elements that require statutory force will come into effect from September 2014.

<https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/n/national%20curriculum%20consultation%20-%20framework%20document.pdf>

The introduction to this document reinforces the place of SMSC, the statutory duty have a daily act of collective worship and to teach RE in every key stage:

"2. The school curriculum in England

2.1 Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

All state schools are also required to make provision for a daily act of collective worship and must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage and sex education to pupils in secondary education."

The emphasis and format of this new national curriculum will have an impact on the Religious Education curriculum as it seeks to sit alongside other subjects and have parity of status and the flexibility to be taught in conjunction with other aspects of the curriculum.

C. REC RE curriculum review update

Phase one of the review is now complete and is available here :

http://www.recouncil.org.uk/images/stories/pdf/RE_Subject_Review_Phase_1_Report_Final.pdf

Phase 2 is now underway with interviews taking place for people to be on the writing group to produce materials which will form a basis for a document to inform RE in the future.

Three working groups are being developed:

1. Curriculum: aims, pedagogy and assessment. Core knowledge relative to age, descriptions of achievement are under the remit of the group. This will mirror the National Curriculum documentation.
2. 'Political group'. Building the lobbying capacity with DfE, Ofqual etc. To promote RE broadly.
3. Group to produce a replacement for the National Framework for Religious Education.

This will be the last group as it will consolidate 1 and 2 above.

D. APPG

This is an all parliamentary party group for RE which seeks to ensure that there is an active cross party group lobbying for the place of RE in English schools.

This work continues supported by Dr Barbara Wintersgill and on March 12th 2013 a full report of the Groups findings will be published.

All SACRES were asked for evidence about the state of RE in their LAs and we provided evidence from our completed survey and exam data trends.

A record of the APPGs discussions and findings to date can be found at

<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/blogcategory/0/94/>

E. RE Quality Mark

The Religious Education Quality Mark has now been achieved by over 40 schools. Two pilots have been completed and account taken of the feedback from schools and assessors. As a consequence, the criteria have been revised and the processes refined.

Subject leaders and head teachers are very enthusiastic: one Year 11 pupil commented on compulsory GCSE, 'It feels a though we have chosen to do RE rather than someone made us do it.' All the schools which have achieved the award are listed on the website www.reqm.org. If schools

are interested in self evaluation and do not wish to apply for the RE quality mark, they can download the criteria as an improvement tool.

The RE Quality Mark is open to all schools and the cost of applying is £475. Schools' school improvement budgets should pay for the application. However, if a school cannot afford to apply and needs financial support, then there is some funding available. Please contact the administrator at admin@reqm.org

If you know of any schools where a teacher would like to become an assessor please contact the project managers Jane Brooke jane.brooke@reqm.org and Mary Myatt (mary.myatt@reqm.org)
This email address is being protected from spam bots, you need Javascript enabled to view it

F. Specialist Leaders of Education for RE

RE is now included in the list of subjects for which the SLE role is available. This means that from now on it will be possible to have Religious Education Specialist Leaders of Education, which is a very positive development because it will provide both support for teachers of RE and good professional development for people who take on these roles.