

# CLARKE & WOODHEAD: *A NEW SETTLEMENT - RELIGION AND BELIEF IN SCHOOLS*

Discussion Prompts for NATRE Local Groups



*Westminster*  
**FAITH DEBATES**

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# **A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools**

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**CHARLES CLARKE AND LINDA WOODHEAD**

# *A NEW SETTLEMENT - RELIGION AND BELIEF IN SCHOOLS*

In June 2015 Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead published *A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools*. Their proposals have been widely recognised as adding to the important debate on the law as it relates to RE (what is often referred to as the current legal settlement).

The full report can be found here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/q7x7pbz>

# RECOMMENDATIONS IN A *NEW SETTLEMENT*

Clarke & Woodhead's pamphlet contained 18 policy recommendations. One recommendation related to collective worship, eleven recommendations related to the curriculum for religious education, and six recommendations related to faith schools.

These slides only consider those relating the curriculum for religious education (#2 - #12).

# DISCUSSION PROMPTS

The following pairs of slides each contain the recommendation from *A New Settlement - Religion and Belief in Schools* followed by a varying number of discussion prompts. These discussion prompts often come out of the text in the full report relating to the particular recommendation.

Feel free to use these slides as you see useful to your group.

The report got a good deal of coverage in the national press when it was published. Many of the reports focused on the recommendation for collective worship and many of the headline writers clearly hadn't read the actual report. However there are clearly a variety of views about the report.

- See notes for links to reports.

A number of RE teachers, RE advisers, and others within the RE community have written blogs in response to the recommendations.

- See notes for blogs list

However not everyone blogs, tweets or engages with social media so NATRE wants to know what teachers in local groups think

“Consideration be given to using the phrase ‘Religious and Moral Education’ rather than ‘Religious Education’ in describing this part of the statutory curriculum.”



# RECOMMENDATION 2 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. Would you prefer a different name or is the present name appropriate?
3. Does the name of our subject matter?

## RECOMMENDATION 3

“The Religious Education syllabus in county and voluntary controlled schools should no longer be set by a system of agreed local syllabuses, but by an agreed national syllabus which would have a similar legal status to the requirements of other subjects in the National Curriculum.”

# RECOMMENDATION 3 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. Do you agree that becoming a National Curriculum subject would help RE have parity with other subjects?
3. Would you prefer to continue to have a locally agreed syllabus? Why? Why not?
4. Do you think an 'agreed national syllabus' would help raise standards in RE?
5. What would be the potential benefits and risks of such a change?

## RECOMMENDATION 4

“The nationally-agreed syllabus would be determined by the Secretary of State in agreement with a newly created ‘National Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (NASACRE)’ comprising experts on religion and education, and after formal consultation and input from the relevant established professional bodies and representatives of religions, humanism and other belief systems. This nationally-agreed syllabus should be reviewed every 5/7 years.”

# RECOMMENDATION 4 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation?  
Why?
2. What in your view would make someone an expert on religion?
3. What in your view would make someone an expert on education?
4. What are the potential benefits and risks of this proposal?

## RECOMMENDATION 5

“The government discusses with the faith school providers, including academies and free schools, the merits of voluntary-aided and foundation faith schools adopting this nationally-agreed syllabus and, on the basis of such discussions, considers legislating to require all maintained schools to adopt this syllabus.”

# RECOMMENDATION 5 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. How do you think those schools that have curriculum freedoms would react to this recommendation? Is their reaction justified in your view?
3. What are the potential benefits and risks of this proposal?

## RECOMMENDATION 6

“The government also discusses with faith school providers including academies and free schools, the importance of making a distinction within schools between religious instruction, formation and education, including agreement that religious instruction (even of a kind which does not include coercion, or distortion of other religions or beliefs) does not take place within the school day.”



# RECOMMENDATION 6 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. Do you consider this distinction between ‘religious instruction, formation and education’ a useful one?
3. Do you think any schools should be exempt for this proposal? Why?

## RECOMMENDATION 7

“In addition, the government discusses with independent schools whether they should adopt this nationally-agreed syllabus and, on the basis of such discussions, considers legislating to require all schools to adopt this syllabus.”

# RECOMMENDATION 7 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. How do you think independent schools that have curriculum freedoms would react to this recommendation? Is their reaction justified in your view?
3. What are the potential benefits and risks of this proposal?

“If these changes are agreed, the right of parents to withdraw their children from the Religious Education part of the curriculum should be abolished.”

# RECOMMENDATION 8 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. How would this affect your school?
3. Can you think of reasons why parents should retain the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education (as defined in this report)?

## RECOMMENDATION 9

“The legal requirement for Religious Education at Key Stage 5, after the age of 16, should be removed and that, within the context of a general reform of the curriculum at Key Stage 4, consideration should be given to modifying the legal requirement for Religious Education to a wider study of religious, spiritual, moral, ethical, social, and cultural values.”

# RECOMMENDATION 9 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation?  
Why?
2. How would this affect your school?
3. What are the potential benefits and risks of this proposal?

## RECOMMENDATION 10

“All faith schools, and possibly all schools in receipt of state funding, clearly advertise and explain the kind of religious (or non-religious) ethos and formation which they offer, so that prospective parents and pupils can make informed choices.”



# RECOMMENDATION 10 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation?  
Why?
2. Do you think parents would welcome this kind of information?

## RECOMMENDATION 11

“The local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) are given a new role which includes participating in the consultations about the content of the national RE curriculum, helping local implementation of the national RE syllabus, promoting community cohesion and educating for diversity, and advising on local availability of religious instruction.”

# RECOMMENDATION 11 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. Do you think that SACREs will be able to fulfill these functions?
3. Are there things that your current SACRE do that would be lost within these changes? If there are share examples.
4. Are there other roles that SACREs could fulfill?

## RECOMMENDATION 12

“An important, though not the only, way to promote community cohesion and to counter radicalization across the school system is to make the kinds of curriculum change which we are proposing. OFSTED should re-establish a strong inspection system to ensure that all schools, faith or not, properly fulfil their duty to promote community cohesion.”

# RECOMMENDATION 12 PROMPTS

1. What is your reaction to this recommendation? Why?
2. What would be the affect of this proposal on your school (if Ofsted did inspect in this way)?

# OVERALL: *A NEW SETTLEMENT - RELIGION AND BELIEF IN SCHOOLS*

1. Do you think that there is a need for a review of the current legal settlement?
2. Do you think that Clarke and Woodhead have highlighted the right areas for change, or have they overlooked key areas?
3. Do you think these changes would help improve standards in RE teaching? Why? Why not?
4. How might these proposals affect the pupils you teach if they were implemented?

# WHAT NEXT?

- Do consider getting in touch with us to share the outcomes of your discussion:
  - [by email: exec@natre.org.uk](mailto:exec@natre.org.uk)
  - on Twitter: [@natreupdate](https://twitter.com/natreupdate)
  - or on our Facebook page.
- Consider blogging your response as part of #BlogSyncRE.
- Discuss this with your colleagues at school and keep following the debates.