

GCSE Religious Studies 2014-2016 – A report by the National Association of Teachers of RE

This report is produced by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) as part of its work to support its members in campaigning for high quality provision for RE for all pupils. In schools where a local Agreed Syllabus applies, it is common for there to be a requirement that students follow a GCSE qualification at Key Stage 4; either short or full course. Where this regulation applies, the percentage of entries is an indicator of the degree to which a school is meeting its legal requirements, although there are often good educational reasons why a small number of pupils in each cohort might not be entered. The short course is designed to be taught in 60-70 teaching hours; the equivalent of about one hour per week over two years. The analysis that follows highlights a number of issues including different patterns of entry in different types of school, regional variations in entries and most alarming, the number of schools entering no pupils at all for any Religious Studies GCSE.

Research Methodology

The source of the data was the GCSE entry data collected by the Department for Education (DfE) and obtained following a Freedom of Information Request on 11th April 2017 by the National Association of Teachers of RE as follows:

For each school that admits secondary aged pupils in England, for each of the three years 2014-2016:

The percentage of the year 11 cohort entered for:

1. Full course Religious Studies GCSE
2. Short course Religious Studies GCSE
3. No GCSE in Religious Studies

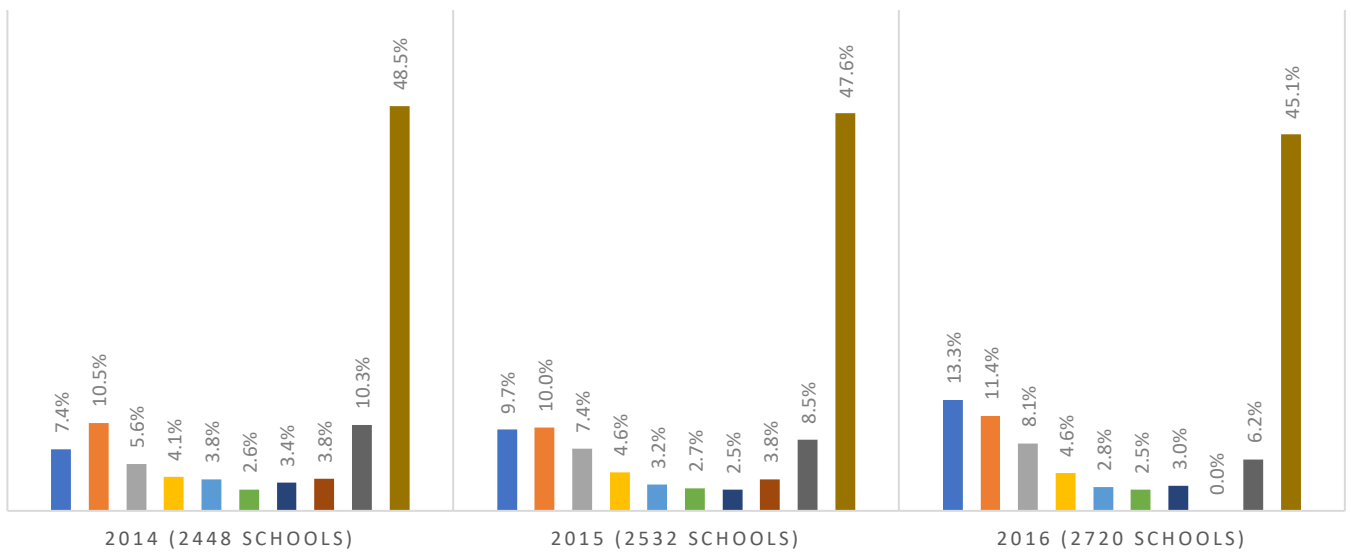
The percentage of pupils achieving a grade within the range A*-C as a proportion of those entering:

1. Full course Religious Studies GCSE
2. Short course Religious Studies GCSE

The 2015 data includes information from 2,856 secondary schools but some data is suppressed to protect confidentiality, for example when there are only one or two entries and it might be possible to identify an individual.

PERCENTAGE OF YEAR 11 COHORT ENTERED 2014-16*

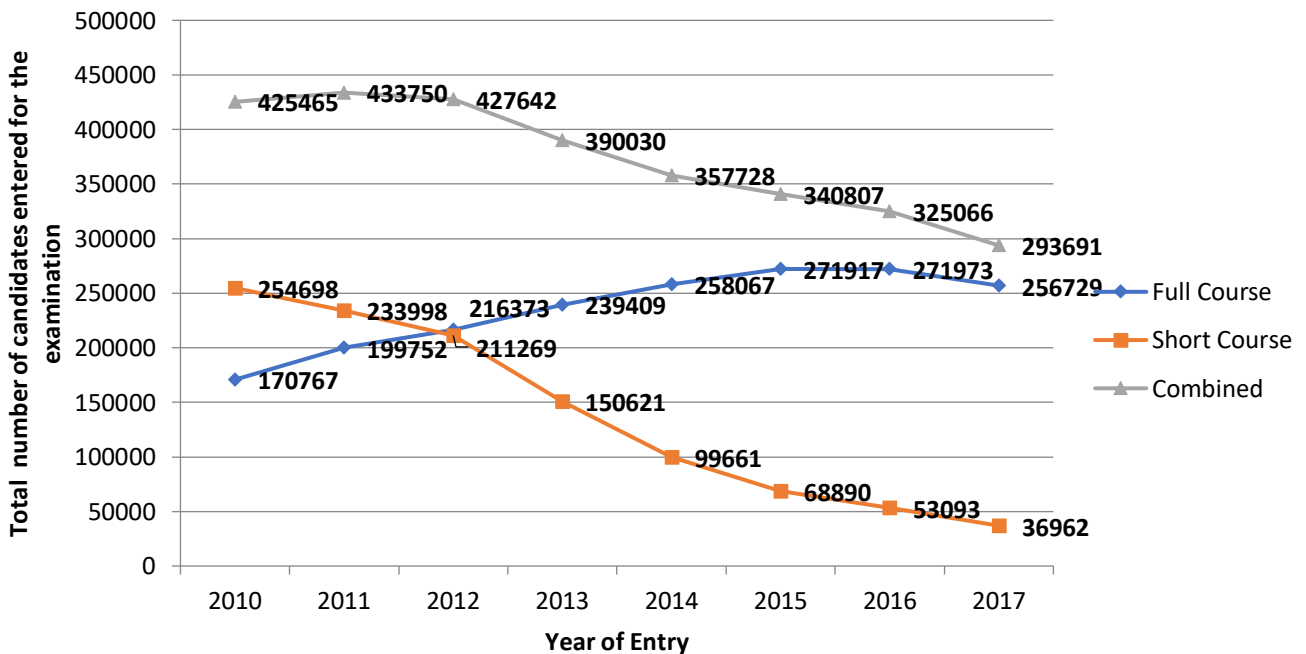
0.1-10.0 10.1-20.0 20.1-30.0 30.1-40.0 40.1-50.0 50.1-60.0 60.1-70.0 70.1-80.0 80.1-90.0 90.1-100.0



*Excluding those schools making no entries for any GCSE in RS

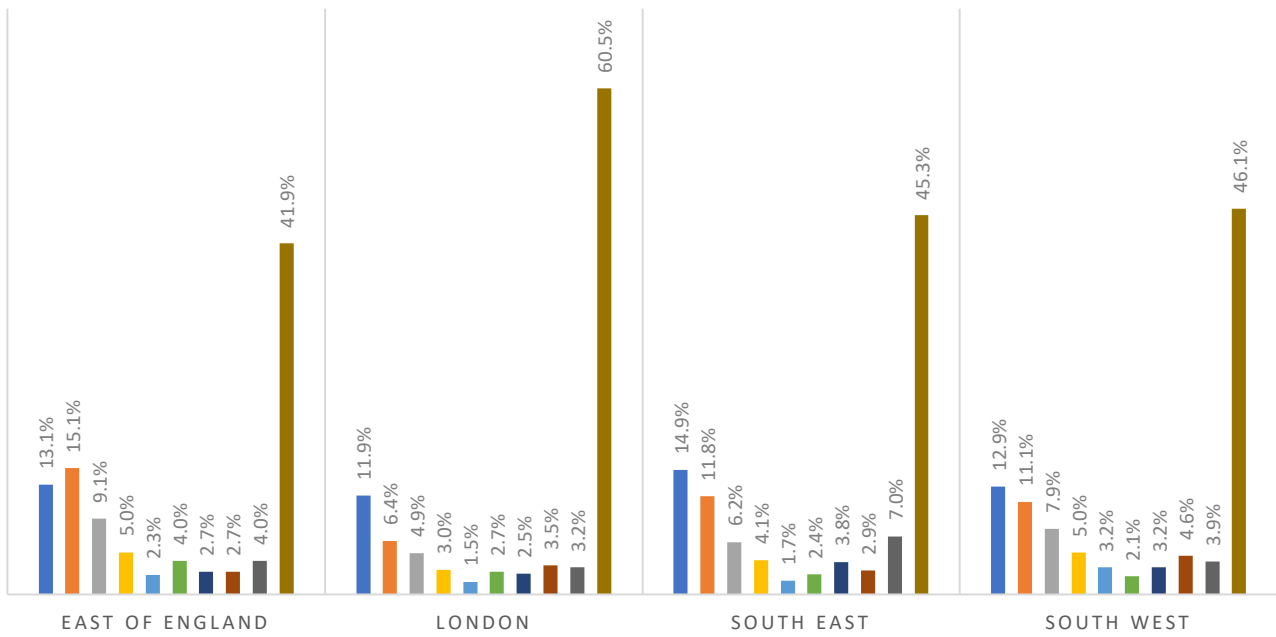
The number of entries for GCSE has remained steady over the last three years however, this figure masks some major changes to patterns of entry. The number of schools entering between 90 and 100% of their year 11 cohort has fallen steadily from 48.5% in 2014 to 45.1% in 2016. This reflects a move away from entering whole cohorts for either the short course or the full course, almost certainly prompted by the removal of the short course from accountability measures. Those entering 80-90% has also fallen from 10.3% in 2014 to 6.2% in 2016.

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES ENTRIES IN ENGLAND 2010-2017



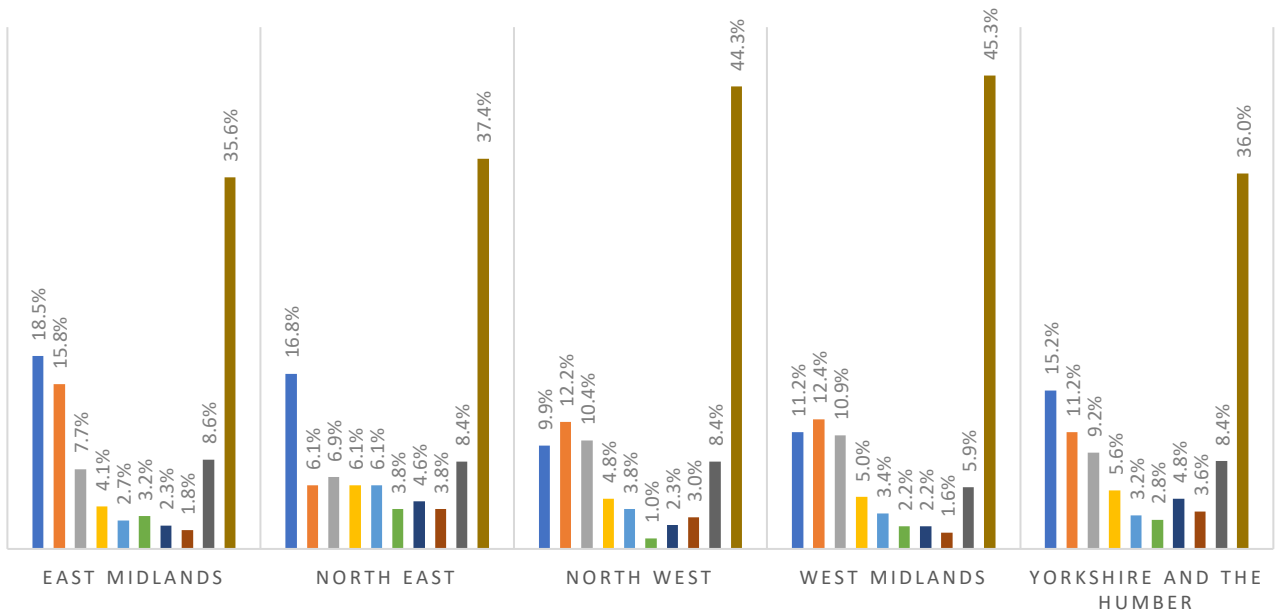
PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS ENTERED FOR GCSE RS IN 2016 BY REGION -SOUTH*

0.1-10.00 10.1-20.0 20.1-30.0 30.1-40.0 40.1-50.0
50.1-60.0 60.1-70.0 70.1-80.0 80.1-90.0 90.1-100.0



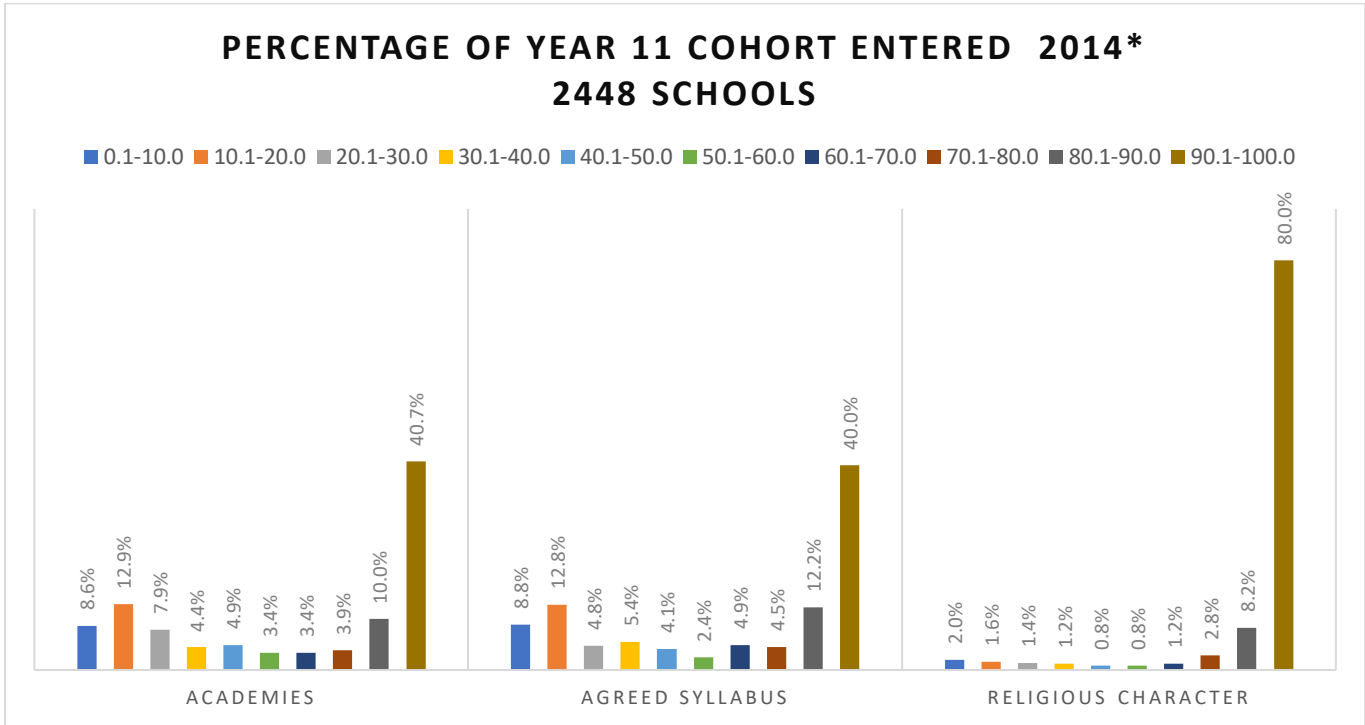
PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS ENTERED FOR GCSE RS IN 2016 BY REGION MIDLANDS AND THE NORTH*

0.1-10.00 10.1-20.0 20.1-30.0 30.1-40.0 40.1-50.0
50.1-60.0 60.1-70.0 70.1-80.0 80.1-90.0 90.1-100.0



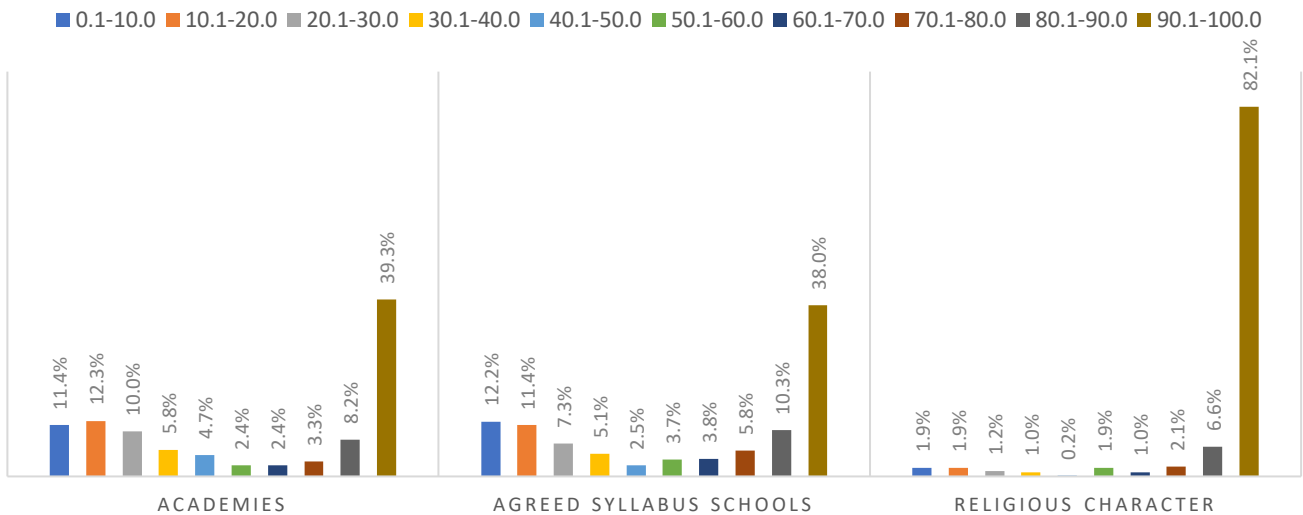
*Excluding schools entering no pupils at all for any GCSE in Religious Studies =Short and Full course.

At the other end of the scale, more schools are entering smaller groups of pupils, i.e. those who have opted to study the full course GCSE. The number of schools entering between 0.1% and 10% of the cohort has risen from 7.4% in 2014 to 13.3% in 2016.

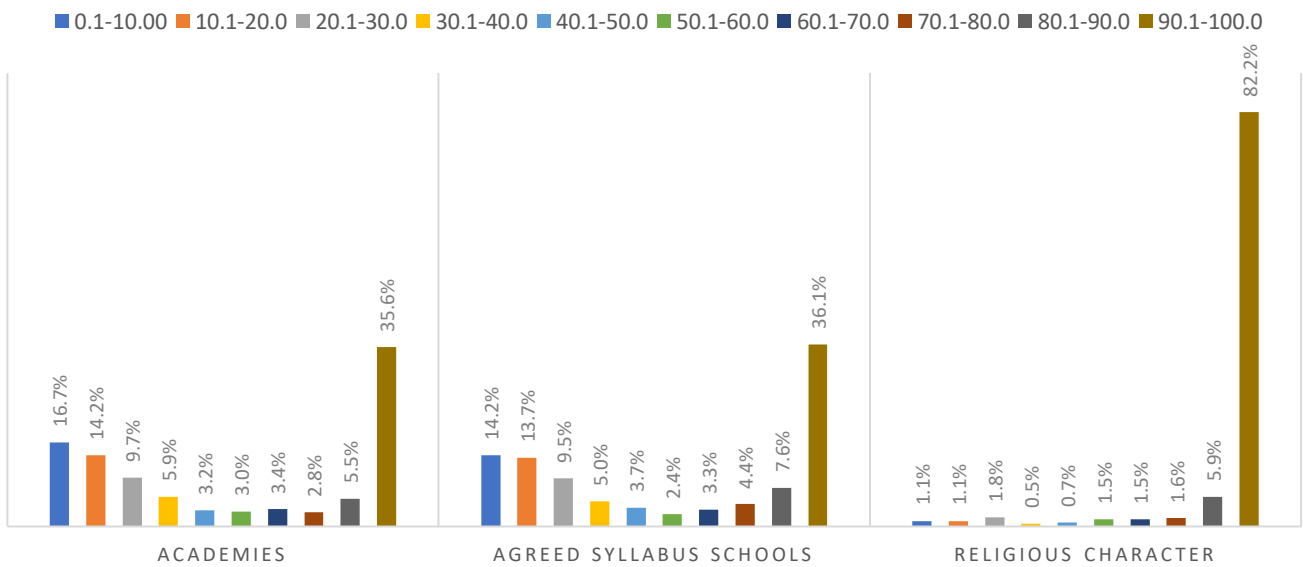


There is a marked difference between types of schools in relation to the patterns of entry. Most schools with a religious character enter almost the whole cohort of year 11 for a GCSE. In 2014, between 90 and 100% of pupils at 80% of these schools were entered for a GCSE in RS. In other types of school, in 2014, half as many schools entered this proportion of students (40%) but this figure has fallen to around 36% by 2016. The number of schools without a religious character entering between 0 and 10% of their cohorts increased from around 8% in 2014 to around 16% in 2016.

PERCENTAGE OF YEAR 11 COHORT ENTERED 2015* 2532 SCHOOLS



PERCENTAGE OF YEAR 11 COHORT ENTERED 2016* 2720 SCHOOLS

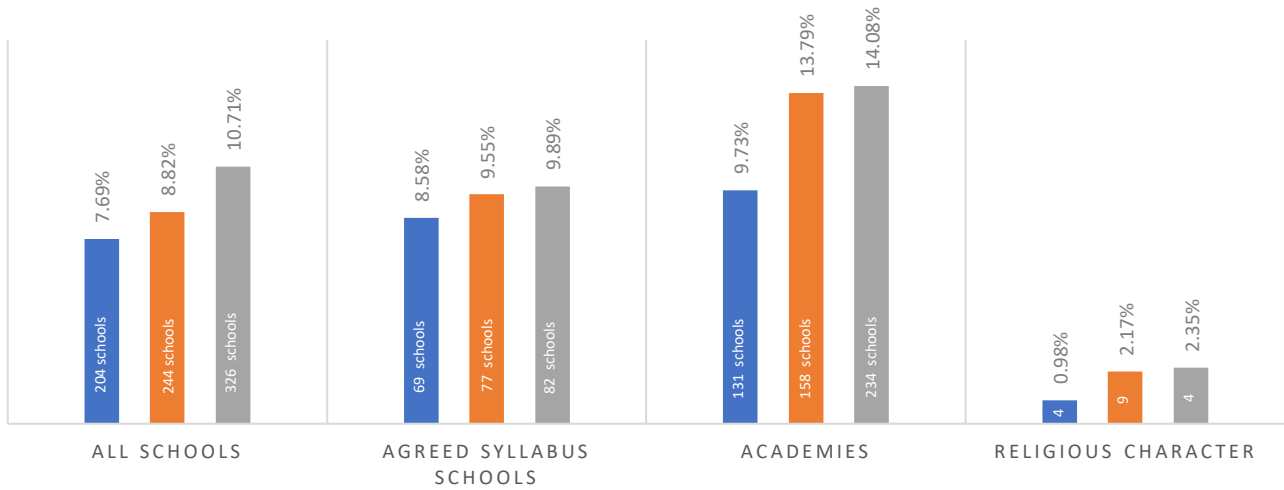


SCHOOLS WHERE RELIGIOUS STUDIES IS NOT STUDIED AT GCSE LEVEL AT ALL

The number of schools removing GCSE RS from their curriculum entirely has risen steadily between 2014 and 2016 (3% overall). Schools with a religious character are least likely to not enter any pupils for GCSE RS but more than 14% of Academies do not enter a single pupil for any GCSE in RS.

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT TYPES MAKING NO ENTRIES FOR ANY GCSE RS 2014-16

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016



PERCENTAGE OF THE 326 SCHOOLS WITH NO GCSE RS ENTRIES IN EACH REGION

