

## Why schools should pay careful attention to the school workforce census and the regulations about what should be published online.

DfE has taken some small steps to improve accountability for provision for RE: In response to our State of the Nation report in September 2017, the DfE has taken some small steps to improve schools' accountability for their Religious Education. In May 2018, the detail of what schools including academies must publish online was amended slightly to ensure there was absolutely clarity that Religious Education must be included in the published curriculum, even if schools claim that the statutory provision is included in another subject and that it must be possible for anyone, including a local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to ask for further information.

### Academies should publish:

- the content of the curriculum your school follows in each academic year for every subject, including for mandatory subjects such as Religious Education even if it's taught as part of another subject or subjects or is called something else
- your approach to the curriculum
- how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum your school is following

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online#curriculum>

*Similar text appears in the statutory guidance for LA maintained schools*

The annual school workforce census has become more significant: A second source of information has also become more significant for schools – that is the school workforce census that takes place in November each year.

A few years ago, after a chance conversation with a data manager in one of the LAs whose SACREs I support, I discovered that the school workforce data could be significant in helping SACREs monitor provision for RE. This is because, through the census, not only do schools report on their teachers' subject teaching but also on how many hours each individual teacher spends each week teaching each year group. This same helpful data manager then showed me how he could produce a table showing how many hours of RE each secondary school was providing as a percentage of their timetable provision in each year group. SACRE were then able to use this data as part of their monitoring of RE. By triangulating examination entries, school workforce data and curriculum details published on the school website, they could begin to build a picture of that school's provision.

It has become clear that some schools seem not to record their data accurately and it is in their best interests to take steps to ensure that incidents of inaccurate data submission do not become a pattern. It seems that errors more often occur when the name for a subject is not the most conventional one. So, if Religious Education is called Philosophy and Ethics for example, the data manager might not match the teachers' hours with the code REL, which is the code for Religious Education. *(The DfE is aware of this problem and is taking steps to address it. Notice that the statutory guidance quoted above now draws attention to this possible error)*

Since beginning a discussion about the school workforce, NATRE has used Freedom of Information requests to collect this same data for all state funded schools and most recently published an analysis in the State of the Nation Report. We have made the results available to SACREs, MPs and others who have requested it. News about the potential of the school workforce began to spread.

[OFSTED are using school workforce data to inform their work:](#) Last year we received an invitation to meet with OFSTED in London to discuss the potential of school workforce data with senior officers. Predictably, professional data analysts were able to identify even more potential in the data. In view of this, it is probably unsurprising to read in this blog by Sean Harford that OFSTED is including the school workforce data in its algorithm-based risk assessment of good and outstanding schools.

“The new computer model uses progress and attainment data from the Department for Education, enhanced with school workforce census data and Parent View responses, to produce scores for each school, ranging from the lowest risk up to the highest risk.”

With a renewed focus on the curriculum very much part of OFSTED's agenda, all schools need to take recording of data very seriously and that includes the school workforce census. Those not making appropriate provision for RE are becoming more likely to be held accountable. Hence schools that have cut RE provision in favour of English, Mathematics or other EBacc subjects are likely to be identified by the school workforce data as having narrowed their curriculum.

### What should schools do?

- Ensure that the curriculum for RE is published for **each year group** on the school website in sufficient detail that readers will be clear about what is taught
- Check that there is information on the website about how parents or other members of the public can **find out more** about the curriculum
- Ensure that those responsible for the school workforce census are **clear about what subject name the school gives to Religious Education**
- Where the school combines provision for subjects such as RE, PSHEe and/or Citizenship, the data manager will need to allocate **the correct proportion of each individual teacher's teaching hours** to the code for each of those subjects – Religious Education is REL -religion
- Consider the extent to which the curriculum can be said to be **broad and balanced** when viewed through the lens of this school workforce data
- Consider if the information published will allow SACRE, OFSTED or others to be **clear that the statutory requirements** (the academy funding agreement, local Agreed Syllabus or other guidelines) for the relevant type of school are met in relation to RE