



Introduction

As ever this year has been one of activity in the world of religious education: a key follow-up report has been written '*A New Settlement Revised: Religion & Belief in Schools*' by Charles Clarke & Linda Woodhead (July 2018). In September 2018 the Commission for Religious Education Report was published & both were discussed at SACRE's Autumn Term Meeting.

This year the Religious Studies entries, both locally & nationally, have shown a very worrying decline. This, at a time, when young people need to be increasingly knowledgeable & literate religiously so as to navigate their way in the complex & changing world in which they live. The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was reviewed & was approved at the autumn meeting. The Revised Syllabus will implemented from September 2019. We joined with members of Enfield SACRE to visit the British Museum to see the excellent *Living with Gods* exhibition.

Advice to Statutory Bodies SACRE continues to have a close relationship with the Local Authority with support for the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Standards & Quality of Provision of Religious Education

National Examination results 2018

A level Religious Studies

This year Religious Studies had a **dramatic fall of 21.3%** in entries. Nationally Religious Education bodies have expressed deep concern over this decrease. One theory is that the fall might be perhaps due to its exclusion from the Russell University's

'facilitating subject list'. As in 2017, most of the RS candidates were female: 14,690 compared with 5837 males.

The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) expressed concern at the decline, its chair, Ben Wood, said: "This devastating fall has been expected given successive policy decisions that have failed to maintain and support the position of RS as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

"RS A level is an excellent preparation for both further study and for entering the world of work. It is a subject that helps young people gain access to a wide range of degree courses, and it is valued by employers, with the subject matter and approach of an RS A level helping to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to succeed in modern Britain."

The chief executive officer of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC), Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, agreed that the drop was "deeply concerning", and called for urgent action.

Of all RS students, 4.6 per cent achieved an A* grade, compared with 5.2 per cent last year. More than 50 per cent of students achieved an A* to B grade; and 98 per cent of students passed. More students took RS than, among other subjects, music (6251); French (8713); law (11,265); physical education (11,307); and political studies (17,964).

Barnet A level Results 2018

176 students were entered for the examination compared with 211 entries in 2017, (191 in 2016 & 165 in 2015). This decrease follows the national trends as indicated above. However, the figures over the last few years have fluctuated between 165-211. The entries came from the following 16 schools: Ashmole; Bishop Douglass, Copthall, East Barnet, Finchley Catholic High, Hendon, J CoSS, London Academy, Menorah High, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth Girls, St James', St Michael's, The Compton School, Whitefield & The Wren Academy. The same number of schools entered pupils, however Hasmonian High has stopped entering students. Whitefield are entering students. The results obtained: A* 2%; A 17% (with 19% achieving an A* or A grade) (national average 24.2%) B 36%; C 23%; D 15%; E 4% Unclassified 2%. This compares with the figures for 2017, 6.1% achieved an A* (national average 5.7%) with 31.1% achieving an A* or A grade (national average 24.2%) 53.8% achieving an A*-B grade (national average 49.2%) so an increase in achievement in A* & A grades with more entries as compared with 2016 when 22.3% achieved an A* or A result & 62.6% achieved an A*-B grade.

The RS AS-level nationally customarily attracted a lot of interest among students. Numbers fell from **19,027 in 2017 to 8454** this year, a drop of **44 per cent**.

Barnet A/S level results 2018 there were 76 entries as compared with 179 entries 2017 & 335 entries in 2016 so a huge drop in numbers reflecting the national trend. The following schools 14 schools entered students: Ashmole, Bishop Douglass, Copthall, East Barnet, Hendon, Christ College Finchley, London Academy, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth Girls, St James', St Michael's, The Compton School & The Wren Academy.

GCSE 2018

The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course **has fallen for the second year in a row, down 10.4%** against 2017 to 241,749. In

addition, the number of pupils in England and Wales taking the short course GCSE in Religious Studies has fallen even more sharply, down 35.8% from last year to 34,087. The decline is greater in England than in Wales. In England the number of entries for GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen by 10.7% to 229,189. In Wales the equivalent figures are down by 4.2% to 12,560, although these come after last year's record high.

All schools, including Academies, have a legal requirement to offer Religious Education at all key stages, but today's figures suggest that this is not sufficient to ensure that all pupils in England get to study the subject at Key Stage 4. In too many cases, 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 students 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.

This year's drop in entries should not detract from a decade of strong growth for Religious Studies GCSE. In 2008 there were 166,628 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 this year, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies is still 45.1% greater than in 2008.

It has been encouraging to hear that Ofsted intend to pay closer attention to whether schools are meeting their requirements to teach Religious Education. Today's figures show how important it will be for Ofsted to do this.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2018 are as follows:

- There were 241,749 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of 10.4% from 2017 (269,839)
- There were 34,087 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 35.8% from 2017 (53,071)
- There were 275,836 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a decline of 14.6% from 2017 (322,910). Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 40.3% in seven years with 186,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4.
- 7% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded at least an A or a 7
- 7% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A*

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

Source: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses>] HYPERLINK "http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses"cq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses

Barnet GCSE full course 2018

In 2018 there were **1602** entries compared with **1807** (2017) & 1751 (2016) (The following 19 schools (compared with 24 schools in 2016) entered pupils for GCSE full course: Bishop Douglass, Christ College, Copthall, East Barnet, Finchley Catholic High, Friern Barnet, Hendon, JCoss, London Academy, Mill Hill High, The Queen Elizabeth's Girls, St Andrew the Apostle, St James', St Michael's, The Compton, Henrietta Barnet, The Totteridge Academy, Whitefield & The Wren Academy. There were no entries from Hasmore High & Menorah High

Barnet GCSE short course no data was available.

Barnet SACRE has provided all schools with plans of work & support materials.

Agreed Syllabus

An Agreed Syllabus conference was convened with participants from all the four SACRE groups, a questionnaire was devised, circulated to all schools & the responses collated & used to inform discussions. 4 meetings took place. The Revised Syllabus was approved at the November 2018 Meeting for implementation in the Autumn of 2019.

Support is provided for all primary schools with termly newsletters & coordinator training. A local NATRE group (Enfield & Barnet) also has regular meetings.

Collective Worship

The guidelines are in place & no applications for determination or complaints were received.

Management of SACRE three meetings took place & all were quorate. A recruiting drive was put in place by the Chair Kevin McSharry supported by other SACRE members this has resulted in a number of new appointments, ensuring that SACRE reflects the communities of which it is a part.

A termly newsletter is circulated to all members & school & training is held on a regular basis either as part of the meeting or in a separate pre-meeting session.

SACRE's contribution to the wider Local Authority Agenda

A Holocaust pack is produced for use by schools, SACRE members & the wider community written by Rabbi Bernd Koschland, Anna Sallnow & designed by Sister Jacinta O'Driscoll O.P. from the community of Dominican Sisters at Rosary Priory Bushey.. This year it included material from Rabbi Bernd Koschland who wrote about his experience as a Kindertransport refugee. This year in recognition of his tireless work in Holocaust Education, he was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Honours list. We have been fortunate locally to have had his expertise as a former excellent Chair of SACRE, a frequent visitor to schools & his editing of this pack. Young people from local schools who attended the 'Lessons from Auschwitz' project also included reflections on their experiences & read their material at the annual Holocaust Remembrance Service in Barnet.

Students from Queen Elizabeth School have continued the project begun with a grant from the Westhill Trust. The students prepare material from their religion to then make presentations to local primary schools in their cluster group. It has been a very successful project & we are grateful to the trust for their initial support. Women from the Interfaith Network have also begun to visit schools in pairs talking about their religion. We are fortunate in Barnet to have such a varied & rich religious community that provides expertise & support. Dr Shah from the Jain community provided a venue for the Summer Term Primary coordinators meeting at the Jain Centre in Colindale & gave a tour of the building & a talk on Jainism. Our deputy chair Vicky Golesaneh from the Baha'i community arranged for Stephen Vickers to give an excellent talk on the main features of the Baha'i faith & the link with Barnet as [Shoghi Effendi](#) (1897–1957), a leader in the [Baha'i](#) faith, who died on a visit to London in 1957 and who, in accordance with the faith, was buried near the place of his death in New Southgate cemetery.

We are fortunate that we receive great support from Barnet Local Authority & all the members of SACRE.