

ITEM 7

Record of the UK Parliament at Hansard. A recent re-statement of the government's position (on 3rd February 2011) can be found here.

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110203/text/110203w0004.htm#column_971W

You need to scroll down the page a little.

Religious Education

Mr Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his policy is on the requirement for religious education to be a compulsory subject in all maintained schools. [33977]

Mr Gibb: Religious education holds a unique position as a statutory subject in the basic curriculum for all pupils in maintained schools in England. It is not a part of the National Curriculum, which means that there are no statutory national programmes of study, attainment targets or assessment arrangements. The nature of RE is such that local authorities and schools, who know their communities, are best positioned to design a syllabus which reflects local traditions and needs. The locally agreed syllabus, which is designed by Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education SACRE and adopted by the local authority, is statutory, and that means that local authorities must provide such a syllabus and that maintained schools must follow it. Schools with a religious character can either follow the locally agreed syllabus, or use a syllabus which has been agreed by their governing body. It is the responsibility of the head teacher, governors and local authorities (LAs) to make the necessary provisions for RE in all maintained schools.

We are firmly committed to maintaining the strong position of RE in the basic school curriculum and we do not intend to change the current statutory arrangements.

What decisively establishes that RE is still statutorily required in all maintained schools is that Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 has not been repealed or amended. Nothing that a Secretary of State, or anyone else, says or does can alter this state of affairs until Parliament votes to change the current legislative position.