

RE in Academies

1)

NATRE has discovered that the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) might be of help to RE Teachers in Academies who are worried about the subject being marginalised e.g. by the introduction of the EBacc. NATRE's survey of almost 800 teachers in January 2011 found that around 30% of subject leaders reported a negative impact on timetable time and/or staffing.

2)

NATRE contacted the Department for Education for advice and their guidance is reproduced (verbatim) below:
'Academies must provide religious education in accordance with their Funding Agreements. The policy intention is for the model Funding Agreements to broadly reflect the provisions that apply to local authorities and schools in the maintained sector. The Funding Agreement requires that Academies with a religious designation provide religious education in accordance with the tenets of their faith and Academies that do not have a religious designation must arrange for religious education to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses. In other words, a curriculum which reflects that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

'For foundation or voluntary controlled schools with a religious designation that convert to Academies, the intention is that they will arrange for religious education in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses, as set out above, unless any parents request that their children receive religious education in accordance with any provisions of the school's trust deed or in accordance with the tenets of the school's faith. If any parents do request this, the Academy must make arrangements for those children to receive such religious education unless, because of special circumstances, it would be unreasonable to do so. The Funding Agreement sets this out.'

3)

NATRE contacted the Young People's Learning Agency. They explained their role as follows:
'The YPLA monitors compliance with Funding Agreements and also deals with complaints about Academies on behalf of the Secretary of State. If you or any of your members would like to raise a concern about an Academy with regard to RE provision then please send details to academiesenquiries@pla.gov.uk and the YPLA will investigate.'

4)

NATRE asked what a teacher or concerned individual might do if an Academy had decided change their provision so that RE was no longer provided for all pupils. This is the response:
'..if you or the teacher concerned would like to send a specific query stating the name of the

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Academy, please send it to academiesenquiries@ypa.gov.uk and I will forward this to the YPLA

Academies Lead Officer (ALO) responsible for dealing with issues relating to that specific

Academy: the ALO will then liaise with either you or the teacher concerned. I would also like to

point out that the teacher concerned can choose to remain anonymous during any discussions

between the ALO and the Academy but considering the specific nature of the query, this may be

problematic. However, the ALO could approach the Academy simply stating that the query is

from a concerned member of the community who wishes to remain anonymous.'

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