

**Non-Statutory National Framework for RE Launch - 28th October 2004 - Sue Ganter**

Cynthia Davies, (Officer with responsibility for RE, DfES) - "Urge you to adopt"

Ian Colwill, (Director, QCA Consulting) Chair of steering group - Consultation results attached.

Ken Boston, Chief Executive, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

'Significant landmark in RE...lively & challenging learning experiences...reflect on what it truly means to be human'

Central task of framework — raise quality of teaching and learning in RE.

Clarifies distinctive role of RE in enhancing SMSC.... Preparation for life in a complex and diverse society...Fundamental task — respect and inclusion.

'The opposite of education is ignorance and prejudice'

Space to develop skill of reflection / questions of meaning, purpose and truth.

Picture of RE today:

++ GCSE numbers rising & post 16 — fastest growing subject

-- Non compliance...Recruitment & retention of specialist teachers...Need ICT...Effective use of assessment levels.

Brian Gates, Chair - Religious Education Council for England and Wales

'Common conception of religion as a virus for violence'

RE in basic curriculum = basic to all subjects — important status.

Framework restates distinctive RE tradition in England and Wales; boys and girls should be literate, numerate and religiate.

Substantial challenges:

- How will teachers, headteachers and IT teachers be persuaded to take RE more seriously?
- What will churches and faith communities do to encourage people to become teachers?
- What will be the follow through on the ground for 16 — 19 years olds? The otherwise commendable Tomlinson Report doesn't show creativity on this front.

Marian Agombar, Chair - National Association of SACRE5 (NASACRE)

SACREs welcome framework... 'Real and helpful support in work of SACREs in raising standards'

Not possible to teach directly from framework — look to SACREs and Agreed Syllabus to make this a real opportunity.

Framework demonstrates a way for local and national to work together — tailor material for local needs.

'It is the business of RE not to inculcate a religious faith but to inculcate understanding and respect, perhaps a step further than tolerance'.

Charles Clarke, MR Secretary of State for Education and Skills

Foundation for future development of our work and relationships.

SACREs - foundation for taking document on.

Faith education is growing in importance for young people...Increased uptake - they see the need to understand...

National expectations — a starting point for future development.

Not promoting a particular religion — children to question and make decisions for themselves.

Urge all SACREs to adopt framework...especially keen individual schools take up the challenge.

Framework a foundation to move forward:

- 1) Encourage all faith groups to develop own resources to accurately reflect the facts.
- 2) SACREs - an important role - develop good relationships between schools & faith communities.
- 3) Whole aspect of teacher recruitment - teachers who can deliver this!
- 4) Important development of Continuing Professional Development for teachers (CPD).
- 5) Question of how 'act of collective worship' operates...important and interesting...we should discuss.
- 6) Strengthening and reinforcing of role of faith schools.

Deborah Weston, Chair - Professional Council for RE (& classroom teacher!)

Fastest growing subject for last 7 years...great interest from overseas in RE here.

SACREs will decide if framework flexible enough.

# CHURCH TIMES

Friday, October 29, 2004

## **The Church's educationists welcome new RE framework** **By Margaret Holness, Education Correspondent**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION in schools received its biggest boost for half a century this week, when the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, launched the first national framework for the subject.

In the *Church Times* this week, Mr Clarke argues that the document will improve the quality of RE and raise its status by setting out national expectations for the subject. It will, he writes, establish an entitlement to RE for all pupils, set out explicit expectations for learning, and promote a continuous and coherent curriculum. Christianity will have a special place, taught through every key stage of schooling.

The Secretary of State's choice of words is significant, given the history of RE over the past 30 years. It has been taught according to the locally agreed syllabuses of a proliferating number of local education authorities (currently about 150), and is prey to the competing ideologies of those representing ever more faith and special-interest groups.

After several attempts to achieve national standards foundered during the 1990s, the Government's standards watchdog, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, carried out a feasibility study for a national framework. For more than a year, its report languished at the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), allegedly because civil servants believed high-level meddling in RE was too contentious.

However, within months of becoming Secretary of State in October 2002, Charles Clarke unexpectedly emerged as RE champion, willing to grasp this prickly nettle. The feasibility study was published, a wide-ranging steering group formed, and a draft framework drawn up and given ministerial approval.

The chairman of the Board of Education, the Bishop of Portsmouth, Dr Kenneth Stevenson, this week praised Mr Clarke: "His personal commitment to RE and active interest in the developing framework have been remarkable and formative."

The Church of England's chief education officer, Canon John Hall, welcomed the predominant position given to Christianity, and the provision for RE to be taught from ages three to 19.

Though it is understood that a statutory curriculum for RE has not been ruled out for the future, the new framework will have advisory status for the present. But, given its high-level backing, local conferences, that draw up agreed syllabuses and which have traditionally guarded their autonomy, are more likely to take notice of its advice. Mr Clarke's approach appears largely to have won them round.

Marion Agombar, who chairs the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, this week welcomed the framework as an invaluable support. Mrs Agombar, who is chairing the conference currently drawing up a new RE syllabus for Norfolk, said: "We shall certainly be taking account of the framework."

Hampshire, on the other hand, has published a new syllabus, just ahead of the framework launch. It is said by one insider to be "an act of defiance that, if repeated elsewhere, may hasten the end of local autonomy".