



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Belinda Twiggs
32 Raddicombe Drive
Brixham
Devon
TQ5 0EZ

AM26217/RR
November 2023

Dear Ms Twiggs,

Thank you for your letter regarding religious education.

I strongly believe in the importance of RE for developing pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of faiths and communities and their role in shaping the values and traditions of Britain and other countries. Indeed, these are some of the reasons why RE is a statutory part of the curriculum. The syllabus is not, however, set by the Government, but locally by schools and local authorities.

The Department for Education welcomed the publication of Ofsted's research review into RE in May 2021, particularly given that it sought to identify factors that contribute to high quality RE curricula and teaching in schools. The Government's policy is to allow the RE curricula to be designed at a local level, through locally agreed syllabuses or by individual schools and academy trusts developing their own curriculum. Whilst it is important that the review is taken into account, the Government does not prescribe how much time a school devotes to any individual subjects, including RE. It is for individual schools to plan, organise and deliver their own curriculum.

While all schools must teach RE, academies have the freedom to set their own curriculum under the terms of their funding agreements, and voluntary aided faith schools can teach RE in accordance with their faith.

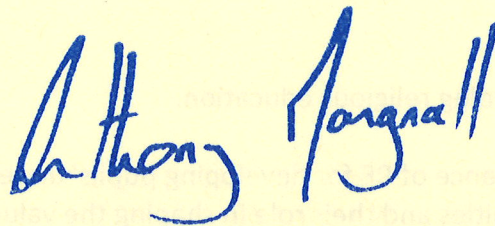
To ensure high standards of RE teaching, resources will be procured by Oak National Academy during the second tranche of its work. Oak will work closely with the sector and utilise sector experience when producing new materials for RE. This will ensure that high quality lessons are available nationwide, benefitting both teachers and pupils, should schools opt to use them.

To support high standards of RE teaching in all schools, the Department is continuing to offer eight-week subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses for candidates who have the potential to become outstanding teachers, but need to increase their subject knowledge. The eight-week SKE course, available in RE, can be undertaken on a full time or part time basis, but must be completed before qualified teacher status can be recommended and awarded. Eligible candidates could be entitled to a SKE bursary of £175 per week to support them financially whilst completing their SKE course.

More information on these courses is available here: www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-knowledge-enhancement-an-introduction.

I hope this reassures you that the Government is committed to ensuring that children receive a well-rounded religious education.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthony Mangnall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony Mangnall MP
Totnes and South Devon Constituency