

Survey for Heads of RE in Wokingham secondary schools – with responses

Dear Head of RE,

The Wokingham SACRE is currently planning for the 5 yearly review of the Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE, and is also considering its action plan for the coming financial year.

In order to support us to produce a syllabus that meets the needs of Wokingham secondary schools, and to plan appropriate support for schools in the coming year, it would be extremely helpful if you could answer the **9 questions** (8 of which are multiple choice questions) in the survey at the link below. If every school completes the survey, the information will provide the SACRE with a picture of RE provision across the borough, and enable us to plan our support for schools most effectively.

(NB In the survey we use the term RE (Religious Education) to refer to non-examined aspects of the curriculum, and RS (Religious Studies) to refer to the GCSE and A Level. We appreciate that RE/RS may be given a different name at your school.)

Responses received from 6 out of 10 secondary schools

Q1 What are the main strengths of RE provision at all key stages at your school?

(Please tick all that apply)

- We have a strong department of a sufficient number of specialist teachers x 3 schools
- Adequate time is available for teaching RE, in line with other Humanities subjects x 1 school
- Pupil engagement in the subject is strong x 3 schools
- Other strengths(s) (Please explain in the comments box)

Comments:

- Our subject is growing from strength to strength and we are looking to expand to sixth form. 3 full time members of staff

Q2 What are the main challenges in relation to RE provision at all key stages at your school?

(Please tick all that apply)

- We lack sufficient specialist teachers x 3 schools
- There is not adequate time available for teaching RE x 4 schools
- Pupil engagement in the subject is not as strong as we would like x 1 school
- Other challenges(s) (Please explain in the comments box)

Comments:

- Where we are expanding we need another full time member of the department
We are not in line with other humanities subject
- We are changing to a two year KS3 and students will then not be timetabled for RE at KS4. They may choose to do it at a GCSE if they wish. What the plans are for RE delivery at KS4 is unclear. There was talk about delivering it in PSHE/ Tutor time - or

on a drop down day, but this means the presence of RE in the school will be down considerably and reflects a negative view towards the subject. There is only one subject specialist delivering the subject, which is rather lonely and polarising. At GCSE there will be no Year 10 students.

Students are timetabled one 100 minute lesson a fortnight.

The following 3 questions refer only to Key Stage 4 RE/RS

Q3 At KS4, is RS GCSE full course or short course available to students at your school?

- Yes – all students are entered for full course x 1 school
- Yes – all students are entered for short course
- Yes – all students are able to opt for full course x 5 schools
- Yes – all students are able to opt for short course x 1 school
- No – students are not entered for full or short course but an alternative accredited course is available to our students
- No – no accredited course is available to our students
- Other (Please explain in the comments box) x 1 school

Comments:

- All students follow the GCSE full course in the beginning. They then make a choice to sit the short course in year 10 or then complete the full course in year 11
- Year 11 - most students are entered for full course GCSE
Year 10 - It is only as an option
Year 9 - will be only an option
In Years 9 and 10 arrangements still have not been made formally. Discussions have been around RE being delivered in Tutor time and a possible RE drop down day.

Q4 If not all your students are entered for an examination, how is RE taught at your school at KS4?

- Students receive discrete RE/ RS lessons once a fortnight or more often x 2 schools
- Students receive discrete RE/ RS lessons less frequently than once a fortnight x 1 school
- RE teaching is combined with other subjects x 1 school
- RE is taught through tutor time/ Collective Worship x 1 school
- RE is taught in another way (Please explain in the comments box) x 2 school schools
- RE is not taught at KS4 x 1 school

Comments:

- We currently deliver it through fortnightly core RS lessons but this has been removed from Sept 2023 and school are looking at drop down days instead
- Taught alongside PSHE which has increasing emphasis and focus.

Q5 Are KS4 RE/ RS lessons at your school taught by specialist teachers?

- Yes, all KS4 RE/RS lessons are taught by specialists x 2 schools
- Most KS4 RE/RS lessons are taught by specialists and a few are taught by non-specialists x 3 schools

- Some KS4 RE/RS lessons are taught by specialists and some are taught by non-specialists x 1 school
- No KS4 RE/RS lessons are taught by specialists

Comments:

The following 2 questions refer only to Key Stage 5 RE/RS

Q6 Is RE/ RS taught to all students at KS5?

- Students receive discrete RE/ RS lessons once a fortnight or more often
- Students receive discrete RE/ RS lessons less frequently than once a fortnight x 1 school
- RE teaching is combined with other subjects
- RE is taught through tutor time/ Collective Worship x 2 schools
- RE is taught in another way (Please explain in the comments box) x 1 school
- RE is not taught at KS5 x 2 schools

Comments:

- Students have the option to opt for A level religious studies
- Some RE is taught during personal development/tutor time but not as much as it should be.
- We do not have a sixth form but it will be an option subject. Unaware of plans for CORE RE

Q7 Is RS A level available to students at KS5?

- Yes x 5 schools
- No x 1 school

Q8 Are you aware of the support provided by the Wokingham SACRE to teachers of RE?

- Yes x 6 schools
- No

(Support includes regular secondary and cross phase network meetings, and CPD sessions for secondary teachers, led by a national RE advisor. Materials from recent meetings can be found here: <https://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/learning-and-teaching/religious-education/meetings-resources/>)

Q9 How would you like the SACRE to support RE and/or Collective Worship at your school?

(E.g. Training topics? Guidance required?)

Comments:

- Ideas about how to embed RE at KS5
Help with guest speakers that can support us for free
CPD on topics to explore at KS3 and assessment at KS3

- More direct contact with schools/ Head Teachers and Subject Leaders, making it clear about the expectations regarding the delivery of RE.
If schools are going towards drop down days, a list of suitable outside speakers from the variety of religions/ denominations/ non-religious groups, with contact details etc would also be very useful.
Any information about non- GCSE courses available that schools also deliver would be useful to know for possible alternatives to GCSE course available.