RE – Essence and Development

St Gabriel's Centenary Conference

Proceedings

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St Gabriel's Trust

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Introduction

RE –Essence and Development, the St Gabriel's Centenary Conference, was held at Church House, Westminster on 30 September 1999. The conference provided an opportunity to discuss the essence of RE, consider recent developments and map out and present a confident future for RE within the curriculum. It was a positive occasion, marking what one speaker called the 'coming of age' of RE.

This conference was part of the celebrations of the centenary year of the founding of St Gabriel's College. It was the third national conference organised by the St Gabriel's Programme. The first conference led to the national model syllabuses and the second one, focusing on collaboration, launched the short course GCSE in RE and also the National RE Festival. Further details of the St Gabriel's Programme are included in this publication.

The morning session of the conference addressed the 'essence' of RE, drawing on the ideas of a panel of RE professors. Terence Copley is Professor of Religious Education at the University of Exeter; John M. Hull is Professor of Religious Education at the University of Birmingham and Professor Robert Jackson is Director of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit. This panel was chaired by Colin Alves, trustee of St Gabriel's Trust and formerly General Secretary of the Church of England Board of Education.

Prior to the conference, the panellists had been asked to comment briefly on the question 'Why should we teach RE?' These initial responses informed the panel debate, and are included here as Appendix 1.

The afternoon session looked at 'developments' in RE, starting with the findings of a consultation carried out by the St Gabriel's Programme. The full findings of this consultation were circulated to delegates in the *Precedings* and are reproduced here as Appendix 2. Question One was commented on by Stephen Lavender, Chair of the Association of RE Advisers, Inspectors and Consultants. Question Two was discussed by Jeremy Taylor, Chair of the European Forum for Teachers of RE, and also Project Director of REfIT, the RE from IT group. Linda Rudge, Chair of the Conference of University Lecturers in RE, discussed Question Three.

John Keast, Principal Subject Officer for RE at QCA, commented on the issues raised by the question, concerning Citizenship and PSHE.

Delegates at the conference included teachers, advisers, lecturers, faith group representatives and other RE professionals. They were encouraged to contribute to the discussions, and their comments are included here in the record of three plenary sessions. The three consultation questions were deliberately discussed out of order, so that delegates would end by looking at the future of the subject. This is reflected in the transcripts of the conference as reproduced here. In producing Proceedings from the conference, some editing of transcripts has been required. This has been kept to a minimum, and it is hoped that all speakers will find any such minor alterations acceptable.

In drawing the conference to a close, Colin Alves thanked Ian Wragg for presenting the conference, chairing the afternoon session and co-chairing the morning session. He thanked the panellists from the morning session, and the presenters in the afternoon. He also thanked members of Culham staff who helped set up the Conference and the members of Church House and National Society staff who were responsible for the catering and conference hall arrangements. Gratitude was expressed to the Steering Group (Colin Alves, John Gay, Eric Lord, Carol Robinson and Ian Wragg) and to Priscilla Chadwick and the other members of the St Gabriel's Trust, for supporting the conference.

Opening the conference, Dr Priscilla Chadwick, chairman of St Gabriel's Trust, had quoted James, aged 11, whose words were printed in the *Precedings*:

> I like RE because it is interesting and challenging and one of the hardest subjects to learn.

Those attending the conference would have agreed with him about the interest and challenge of the subject, and perhaps can now see their way around some of the difficulties.

Essence

Panel Discussion

Colin Alves

For this particular part of the Conference we sent out a request to our three professors, asking them to produce a very short paper, answering the simple question 'Why should we teach RE?' Some people may say that we teach RE because we are required to do so by the law. That was not the answer I was looking for, and fortunately I didn't get it from any of the three professors. I duly received three short papers, and I tried to analyse them and find common themes running through them. We're going to deal with those themes in three groups. The first looks at the relationship between the aims of RE and the aims of education in general, and I am going to ask John Hull to lead on that one. The second one is to ask the question, in that context, 'What is distinctive about RE?', as opposed to all the other subjects on the curriculum, and I'm going to ask Bob Jackson to lead on that one. I will ask Terence to deal with the last one, 'To what extent is RE value-free?' because I think the answer to that question does affect the reason why we should teach the subject in school.

So we start with John, and I'm going to mention one or two ideas from the papers so that he can respond to those assertions.

There must be a confluence of ideals between the aims of RE and the aims of education in general. The aims of education in general can be summed up in a very simplistic way under three headings:

- personal development of the pupil
- strengthening the communities to which the pupils belong
- the pursuit of truth.

I hope John will recognise those three headings as familiar, and will respond to and expand on them.

John Hull

Colin mentioned the aims of RE, and referred to some of the aims of education itself. I did recognise some of those phrases, although I might express them slightly

differently. It seems to me that we have to place those liberal traditional ideals of education – the development of the person, the development of critical thinking, the value of the community – into the context today, as education is developed under the nation state. In other words, there is a tension between the traditional liberal educational values and the role of the education system in developing the UK into a more competitive relationship with other similar nations. That overriding function of education – to provide for national prosperity in a competitive financial environment – is the larger context within which the traditional aims of education must be located.

I believe that one of the crucial tensions that we have to consider in RE is this. The liberal aims of education fit nicely into RE. We can see how religion contributes to community solidarity, how religion contributes to personal development and to cognitive perspective or to the search for truth. But when it comes to the contributions to be made by religion and RE to the success of the nation, and the maintenance of the nation as a successful competitor on the international commodity and financial markets, then it becomes more difficult to see the role of religion. I think that is one reason why religion continues to be slightly marginalised, slightly alien from the rest of the curriculum. If anything, I think we have to say that the role of religion in that respect is somewhat critical of the national aims of education. The goals of religion and its ideals, to establish international community and to work towards the solidarity of the species, are not compatible with the goals of achieving success for the nation in the context of competition. That is one of the fault-lines which runs through the otherwise seamless robe of the basic curriculum. That is my initial response: to comment on the criticism and the alienation of religion and RE from those national goals.

Bob Jackson

I think there's a gap here. There's what some of us learned in the 1960s from Hirst and Peters on the one hand and from Philip Phenix on the other, about the breadth required by education; and then there's what actually happens as a result of the practical requirements in schools; that gap needs to be recognised. It is a shame that the philosophy of education has been so marginalised in studies that reflect on the nature of education itself. But I would use as a starting point the notion that education should cover all areas of human experience if it is to be a full and proper liberal education, opening people up to a range of possibilities. If you have that kind of education, then RE must have a role within it as one of those particular areas of experience.

Terence Copley

I think this is a difficult one, because the British are very reluctant to discuss the aims of education at all. Jack Priestley, who is sitting at the back of the conference this morning, has written that the British discuss the aims of education only in times of national emergency, like when we thought we were about to be defeated by the Nazis. If you read the pages of Hansard, you can see that the quality of the

education debates in the Houses of Commons and Lords in 1943 were a cut above the quality of similar debates in 1988. If we were really going back to debate the aims of education, I would strongly urge us to start in 1943 and not in 1988. What we've tended to do, ever since we believed that we'd won the war, was to make all sorts of assumptions about the aims of education; these are what lay behind the 1988 Act. They were not necessarily the assumptions of those of us on this platform and those of us in this hall, but they crept in. The nearest thing we've got to a national crisis since then is the recent pregnancies of two twelve-year-olds. That has suddenly started people saying, 'Well, of course, if the sex education and PSE were all right, we wouldn't have the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe.' It's a rather short-sighted way of thinking, and I can say this because I grew up a few hundred yards from the police station where one of the studs who sired these babies had surrendered himself. You may remember that he was very wily, and made the statement that he attributed it all to the failure of the sex education he had at school.

One of the things that slipped out of the overall aims for education in the UK is the pursuit of truth. If we neglect that in RE, then the danger is that it disappears altogether. It is possible to teach RE without attending to the pursuit of truth, if the RE becomes too descriptive, or if in a facile effort to promote multi-cultural harmony we avoid the big differences between religions, as well as pointing up where they have common ground. So, yes, RE must fit into the overall aims of education, but it's difficult for us as religious educators. We're the tail wagging the dog of the rest of the curriculum if we try to discuss what are the real values behind it, and whether they are the values that people want.

Colin Alves

I should like to pick up the point about the attempts to ensure that our community is not riven by the divisions which clearly exist, and that the best way to deal with that is not to pretend they don't exist, but to examine them. Would you agree that one of the ways in which the aims of education can be squared with the current national expectations of the schools, is by reminding ourselves that for a community to be prosperous and flourish, it must overcome the divisions that lie within it? Northern Ireland is a very good example of the opposite of that. I'm not talking just about RE, but about education. One of those purposes is 'to empower pupils to encounter others in ways which promote dialogue.' (I'm quoting here from a passage in the *Precedings*.) Is that an aim you would subscribe to?

John Hull

Yes, I think it is factors like those which lie behind the widespread European interest in RE today. It is a very interesting fact that almost every European country (France is the major exception) has some kind of state-funded RE today. I think if you study the role of religion in those educational systems, you see two principal factors operating, and we see them here in our own country as well. One is the

desire to retain national traditions at a time when there is a consolidation of national communities within the European Community, and a fear that the national distinctiveness might be lost. The other is a fear that 'the soul of Europe', to refer to the famous project, is scarred or criss-crossed by ancient fault-lines consisting of rivalries and competitions between religions. Northern Ireland is an outstanding example, but we see many other places in Europe where these fault-lines are actually causing seismic disturbances. So I think this is the two-edged face of Europe towards religion and Religious Education. On the one hand religion is feared because of its potential for conflict and disruption. On the other hand, it is desired as one of the ways of maintaining traditional life in the presence of highly disruptive influences which tend to globalise human beings.

Colin Alves

Bob Jackson's research at Warwick is looking at the attitudes and beliefs of members of other faiths, particularly amongst the younger members of those other faith communities. Has that given you any insight into this issue of dealing with difference?

Bob Jackson

Firstly, I would link this to what was said earlier about truth and the pursuit of truth. I don't think that is merely dealing with questions of whether certain religious claims are true or false. It's also about the whole business of the packaging of information and how information is presented to the young and to others. The young live in a society in which the media and advertising are able to package pieces of information and present them as true, whether or not they *are* true. I think one of the true goals of education is to seek out truth and be critical. Therefore, part of the pursuit of knowledge in religion is to find ways of portraying people from religious backgrounds in a way which is true; that does involve some criticism of the way in which this has been done in the past and some analysis of the uses of power in that relationship. That might sound a bit theoretical, but it relates to our research at Warwick on children and young people from different religious backgrounds. When we started to do that work we thought we were being phenomenologists, bracketing out our presuppositions and empathising with the 'other'. We soon learnt that we weren't doing that at all. We were trying to unpack and to grasp the language and symbols of others as they were actually used by individuals in the context of their groups. Some of those usages, some of those patterns of living and personal experiences, did not cohere with the kind of standard portrayals of religions that were coming down to us in the text books. So in a sense, by engaging with children and their families, one got a truer picture of what religious life was like in Britain today than one might have done from some other means.

Terence Copley

I think a very important question for religious educators in the classroom is this: if a member of the religion we are talking about were to be sitting on the back row, could they recognise themselves in the picture we have presented? I tell my students that question should be written up on the wall in large writing for them to think about, because this question of truth in presentation of religion is so important.

I'd also like to develop slightly further John's point about religion being feared, as I'm sure it is in Europe. I think it's feared not only for the reasons John gave, but also because people recognise that commitment to any religion changes you. In that sense it is threatening. If you become a committed believer your behaviour, your values, perhaps even your diet and your clothing change, and therefore it is easy for people to feel threatened by religion.

Not only are Europeans threatened by religion, they are still embarrassed by it. When I want to create a seat for myself on a crowded train, I take out a Bible or a Qu'ran or some other sacred writing and I look very solemn and I open it. I guarantee that no-one will talk to me. It's still a good conversation stopper at parties, isn't it? 'What do you do?' 'Oh, I teach RE.' Pause. ' Oh, I think that's frightfully important,' or more commonly the self-absolution, 'Oh well, I believe it doesn't matter what you believe' (an interesting remark), 'I believe it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you lead a good life, and that absolves me of all this.' There's a serious pay-off to this. Religious Education will not advance until we can break through this barrier with adults, and in particular senior members of school hierarchies, many of whom seem to have had damaging experiences of religion, or perceptions of religion in childhood. Maybe, when they were in nappies, some passionate religious believer stabbed them with the pin; I don't know. We have to realise as professional religious educators that Western Europe fears religion and is embarrassed by it, and what we can do is offer them help. The children don't feel this until they see the state the adults are in.

John Hull

I'd like to come in again on fear. I think that there is a fear on that part of the humanist and rational political establishment in Europe towards religion. I think that this may also possibly be true of the present administration in Britain. Religion is feared if it becomes fundamentalist and sectarian, because then it becomes divisive and controversial and fights break out. On the other hand, religion is also feared if it becomes universalistic and ecumenical, because then it seems to conflict with the competitive values of the money culture. In a way, the secular political establishment doesn't know what to do with religion. It doesn't want it to become sectarian and tribalistic, nor does it want it to become universalistic and idealistic, so what to do with it? So as that cultural ambiguity filters down towards children, then you have the attitude among children and young people that religion is not

cool. It's not cool to be committed, it isn't cool to belong to religion or to talk religion. I believe that that is the distillation in the youth culture of the ambiguity at the higher political and social level.

Colin Alves

Clearly, the three areas I suggested cannot be kept in watertight compartments. We have obviously moved over into other problems as well as the straight question, 'Why teach?' But even though there are many unresolved issues here, I would like to move on because we will have the opportunity later to discuss all the points that have been raised so far. Now I would like to spend some time looking at the other two areas I mentioned. I will ask Bob Jackson what he understands to be distinctive about Religious Education. Why do we have to have the subject on the timetable? Does it matter whether we study religion or not, if the aims we have been discussing can be pursued equally well through other subjects? Is there a timetable slot and a justification for that?

Bob Jackson

In all the versions of moral education that I have looked at in different societies and countries, none of them really deals deeply with fundamental human questions of life and death, suffering and so on. I think that what Religious Education does bring to the school is an exploration of these questions, not in relation to only one or two viewpoints, but in relation to a wide range of positions. This is not offering to children cans of beans on supermarket shelves; rather it is using material from religion in order to stimulate thought and debate about questions which are fundamental, but which tend to get ignored, and can be ignored in other parts of the curriculum. So I think that Religious Education has something to offer them distinctively in that respect.

I also think that it is important not to use religion only instrumentally. I do worry when people talk about 'using' religion, as if its only function is to raise such questions. I think we've got a dual duty. One of those duties, as I said earlier, is to present the full breadth of knowledge and experience as part of liberal education. We must be doing our level best in consultation with religious individuals and groups to represent them as well as we possibly can. But that's only part of the story. It must also connect with the exploration of basic and fundamental questions.

My colleagues and I feel that that dual element has actually happened to us in the work that we've done in studying religions and children from religions. It's part of *our* Religious Education. In a sense, why should Religious Education be confined to schooling? Can't Religious Studies in universities perhaps learn more from Religious Education in this respect? I have found that study a very transformative experience. I haven't become a Hindu or a Muslim or a Jew or a Christian, but I have been tremendously influenced by some of the people I've encountered, and also helped through some things in my own life. When my mother died in 1990 I

was studying the Hindu community, and the support that I received, and the insight into death and bereavement that I gained from interacting with these people, was absolutely tremendous.

So it's a two-sided thing, both have to be there. We talk about 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion. I think it's a rather seamless thing. You don't go and study Hinduism and then say, 'Right, let me put that on one side, and ask myself what have I learnt *from* it.' It's a reactive hermeneutical thing, moving backwards and forwards between the two. I don't think that any other area of the curriculum offers that. I certainly do think that other areas of the curriculum could learn from it.

There's also, as Colin said earlier, a social side to this. Here I'm a bit ambivalent about RE's performance. The work that we've done has raised all sorts of questions about the nature of religion and the nature of culture and the relationship between them. That in turn raises questions about topics such as ethnicity and race as well. I think Religious Education, if properly done, can offer an enormous amount to the general debates about being a citizen in Britain, and moral debates such as how one treats people of other ethnicities and races. If RE is done well, it can have a sophisticated view of religious and cultural change. We should not be homogenising any particular group and saying, 'These are the Hindus and this is what they're like,' but we should realise that change within a Hindu, Sikh or Christian community is complex and ongoing. Within sub-cultures and communities there can be all sorts of contexts and different points of view exhibited, and all of that is part of the subject matter of RE.

I also hold the view that part of RE ought to be a study of its own methodology: in other words, one should be discussing with children and young people how to do it. How do we set about understanding someone whose world view is perhaps rather different from our own? How do we do it, and how do we check that we've done it well? I think if we involve children and young people in that exercise and in reviewing it, that gives them another way of relating to and owning the material.

I want to make one more comment, about relevance. Whatever one might say about the breadth of education and what should be included, unless the material touches people where they are, its significance is very limited indeed. One of the tremendous skills that RE teachers need to develop is how to make the connection between where young people are and actually introducing the material. I'd like to mention Julia Ipgrave. Julia is a primary-school teacher from Leicester who teaches in a school where 85% of the children are Muslim. She's done a number of pieces of research. Her current research is on the notion that the children are studying one another's faiths and backgrounds within the school. She has developed a methodology whereby the children devise an agenda to study and then exchange and engage with each other on religious and theological topics. It's a most exciting piece of work and I think there's more mileage in it.

Colin Alves

Terence, what parts of the educational process does RE reach that the other subjects cannot?

Terence Copley

Well, I think in an era when 'rights' has become very important concept – we've covered that in the *Precedings*, with the UN Declarations and so on – children have the right to know about religions and the right to opt for a religious way of life. Equally, of course, they have the right to opt for a non-religious way of life, though in our culture at the moment that right is rather less at threat than the first two. There's also a reverse of that argument, that national education systems have no right to expunge religions from children's programmes of study, leaving them prey to unthinking scientism or an unquestioned self-centred view of the universe, in which fulfilling *my* wishes, *my* desires, *my* ambitions, becomes the main motivating force. RE supplies this human right which no other subject supplies.

The other thing that RE can do (though it doesn't always) is be a process as well as a product. The present traditions of UK RE have been rather content-driven: 'learning about religions', or the rather passive 'learning from religion': 'sit there and be quiet and you'll learn something to your advantage.' We don't teach art by getting children to look at the great masters and mistresses of art and leave it at that: I think that RE should induct children into theologising for themselves. In the seventies it seemed that theology was going to be relegated to the seminaries in favour of this wonderful neutral phenomenological Religious Studies. But theology is simply the study of religion from a declared perspective, that's all: from a religious perspective, from an agnostic perspective, or from an atheistic perspective. Theology can make people religiously literate by providing hermeneutic keys for narratives, insider views of where doctrines and beliefs come from, and so on. So if people engage in theological questions and issues, the point of studying religions becomes clearer and the student becomes an active participant in the process. When people theologise they take part in the debate, they engage in dialogue with the religious traditions, and they become more aware of their own stance. I think RE has the unique potential to enable children to theologise. It's not always exploited, this potential, but it's there.

John Hull

My own view is that religion has the power to transform human lives and human societies. Religion is not the only thing which transforms people: love transforms people, poverty transforms people. Nevertheless, I continue to believe that religion has a distinctive power to transform, and Religious Education continues to be important because its task is to study, understand and appropriate that transforming power.

Colin Alves

I'd like Terence to expand on some of those ideas in rather a different direction. You've talked about the importance of theologising, getting within a tradition and trying out ideas within the context of that. What happens, though, if that experience does actually change a person? What about the transforming power of Religious Education? Here we're up against the great tension between what the school may be doing and what the community or the family may also be doing in rather a different way. Can we actually claim that Religious Education is value-free?

Terence Copley

We walk a tightrope in RE. If we over-sanitise religions in order to protect children from being 'zapped' by the particular religion we're teaching at the time, we're teaching 'un-truth'. We're also reinforcing this idea that children can't see why adults ever take religion seriously anyway, because it's so tame. If, on the other hand, we go on the other side of the tightrope, and we let the religion leap out at the child like an animal of prey, there are risks there. And there's another question. Why are we so happy to play with the spiritual development of children and not to address our own spiritual development? It's a question which all RE teachers have to face. Are we content to be ring-masters and ring-mistresses, cracking the whip while the religions jump up and down through the hoops that we set up, without allowing ourselves to be changed as the audience might be changed?

Now I will address the question 'Can RE be value-free?' No, it can't, because no education is value-free. It is interesting to take the parallel of maths. If maths teaching were subjected to the degree of scrutiny to which RE teaching has been subjected, would it survive? Does it survive as a major preoccupation simply because everybody says it's important and you've got to do it? It has to be a curriculum baron. Nobody ever asks why it is so important, or what it does for people. Now, I don't mind the spotlight being on RE, provided I can turn it on to other subjects as well.

One judgement we make is that religions and spiritualities are a very potent force on the surface of the planet, but not necessarily for good. At the moment, there's a vague assumption that all spirituality is good and some religions can be bad. However, I can envisage something called Nazi spirituality, and I can describe it, and I would call it evil; so spiritualities actually, like religions, are opaque. We are not promoting them. What we're saying is that if we want to understand women and men, both alive and dead, we have to understand these forces.

The other thing we have to attend to is that these religions have world views – they're tied into cultures – and sometimes they run quite counter to our own world view. Therefore it is important that we use them as mirrors to see ourselves. I sometimes say to children, 'If we'd been brainwashed by a world view (and in Britain at the moment it would be a secular world view), would we know? And if we did know, which subject would we be most likely to realise it in?' The answer

is RE, but the difficulty is that in a secular society it's easy for us to appear to be promoting religion. That's not quite what I'm saying, and you are sophisticated enough to see that. The children and the people in our staff rooms don't always quite see the subtle difference between what I've just said and promoting religion. So we must keep the values question up front, in what we say to parents, to children, to colleagues in staff rooms and to politicians.

Colin Alves

I think one must follow that by asking which values must be up front, and be constantly looked at and expressed and reflected. To what extent are the values on which we have been reflecting this morning (the values which John Hull described as liberal values) actually derived from the Christian heritage of the country in which we have been brought up?

Bob Jackson

I think it's very difficult to say. It's like discussing how far democracy is dependent on Christian tradition. The fact is that we are in a setting in which we want to defend a form of liberal democracy, and our education system and our schools and our classrooms ought to reflect that kind of democratic set of procedures. There are tensions in that – there have to be. So if you do look at the Religious Education classroom, it isn't value-free. But whether people are there because of some kind of long-term Christian heritage, or heritage of democracy or whatever, nevertheless they are there and they are trying to uphold some form of democratic presentation. If you try to do that in Religious Education then there is a certain role for the teacher. The teacher is a very powerful figure, a figure in authority. It's firmly my belief, and based on a lot of experience (though not, I might say, based on empirical research), that a very wide range of people from different religious and non-religious viewpoints are able to act as Religious Education teachers. They can do that in such a way that they affirm all the children as persons, and they also have some respect and regard for every religious and non-religious position that is represented. There is always the possibility of finding someone whose position conflicts with the nature of democracy or the law of the land – that may come up. But I have seen teachers who have no religious background, I have had Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Christian students, who have been able to operate in this way. I don't mean that all these students have to hold liberal theological views themselves. Some of the best RE teachers I have had the pleasure to be involved in training have been Christians on the evangelical wing of Christianity, but they have developed a professionalism, a way of dealing with diversity, a way that says, 'I want to be true to me, but I don't want to abuse my power, and I also want you to be true to you. Let's learn about and from one another and get on with this enterprise.' It's a matter of their own teaching skill and of pragmatics as well. There are some inherent tensions. There will be some people who could never do it for various reasons, but many can do it. If Religious Education can operate like

that in our society, then I think it's making a tremendous contribution not only in all the things that I've tried to talk about earlier, but also in terms of social cohesion and killing myths about distinct ethnicities and the 'other'.

John Hull

Does Religious Education have values, and must these values be rooted in the Christian tradition? My own view increasingly is that Religious Education needs to adopt a radical and relevant posture in education and politics today, and this is not a comment about the details of what one does in the classroom, but a suggested stance for the subject as a whole. I believe that to do this we have got to match the globalisation of commodities and of finance by an increased emphasis upon the globalisation of Religious Education. That means more than teaching a world religions curriculum. It means adopting a more globalised vision of religious values and their role in the evolution of the human community. Here I would give as an example the agreement of the world's religions, both large and small, at the Chicago Council of World Religions in 1993. Then the programme for a world or global ethic was enunciated, and the religions stated that their cultural and historic task is to promote certain fundamental religious and humane values upon which they all agreed. These were things like the dedication to societies of truth seeking and truth speaking, the dedication to cultures and societies of equal opportunities for men and women, for able bodied and disabled, the dedication of religion to societies of justice and to breaking down the barriers between wealth and poverty. Those are the kind of ideals which the religions expressed, indicating their contemporary vision by means of these ideals, to challenge the globalised functions of the present globalised society in which we live. If we don't adopt that kind of ecumenical and global vision for our subject, we will edge ourselves into a little corner of the board. We will strategically become national instead of participating in the great worldwide enterprise of religions today, which is to ask who possesses the human soul.

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Plenary Discussion 1

Margaret Griffin

I am currently the President of the Secondary Heads Association. Something which hasn't been mentioned, which I consider to be one of the values of teaching RE, is to give children the opportunity to understand something of wonder and awe. It seems to me that in our mechanistic society, and given the way in which our National Curriculum is progressing, this is the only opportunity in the school environment for children to learn that there is an awful lot that we don't understand, and that we will never understand. Miracles occur every day. I think children need to be aware of the miracle of life, of getting up every day. I'd also like to ask a question about school assembly, and whether you see that as part of Religious Education or whether you see it as just a social occasion.

Colin Alves

I must reply that we have very carefully done our bit of bracketing out of the question of school worship in a phenomenological way, so I think we must concentrate on classroom RE at this conference.

John Hull

I think that's a very important emphasis and I'm glad you mentioned it – it's part of the values by means of which religion mounts a counter-culture. I think it's important to emphasise the significance of wonder and awe, not only in the old liberal sense of expanding the richness of the personal life of the child, but in a more radical social sense. Today is the tenth anniversary of the coming down of the Berlin Wall. That was a fact which filled us all at the time with a deep sense of wonder that long-standing structures of oppression can disappear before your very eyes in a day. That kind of historical wonder, and openness to the possibility of human transformation, is also a part of the wonder experience that Religious Education offers.

Terence Copley

Awe and wonder as part of RE, yes. But for me they're part of spiritual development, and I hope that children would experience awe and wonder in art

and music and literature and so on, even in ICT on occasions. I don't think it's specifically owned by RE. It's difficult to achieve. In the FARE project we made it Attainment Target 1, Awareness of Mystery, and if only one could attain that it would be a good target. Of course, if you happen to be teaching disillusioned adolescents by a pit slag heap, then it's harder still, but I agree with the comment that we must not give up on it.

David Attfield

I live in Durham, I am a retired Anglican priest and sometime lecturer in RE; I've also written a certain amount about it in the past. I want to come to a point that was raised at the very beginning – the suggestion that there is some sort of antipathy between recent developments in schooling and the aims of a liberal education or RE. I do wonder whether recent trends could not be seen in a more sympathetic way. The two main ones are the greater emphasis on literacy in primary schools (trying to achieve at least a decent standard by the end of Key Stage 2) and the league tables (with their emphasis on the Gold Standard, of larger proportions of children, particularly in inner-city areas, getting five GCSEs). I would argue that this preconditions our success in RE. How can we really teach RE seriously unless children are fairly literate at least by half-way up the school? Any understanding of religion in the modern world demands this broader, general liberal education in the sciences and the arts and so on. Success in exams is a very crude, but perhaps a necessary indicator that a school is doing something seriously about those basic subjects.

Bob Jackson

The things that David Attfield refers to are extremely important. What I was talking about is what I see as a kind of creeping instrumentalism. There's not so much reflection on the nature of education itself, but rather on fixing problems as they come up. There also seems to be an over-emphasis on economic success. I was not making a negative remark about liberal education as such, but just about one or two tendencies which I feel are there.

John Hull

This is a problem: we don't want to get into politics, that would be a dreadful thing for Religious Education! But the opposite emphasis from the very true and laudable one to which you referred would be the Secretary of State's recent announcement of the intention to impose fines of up to £5000 on the parents of children who play truant. In the Birmingham school with which I am most familiar, the parents of the truanting children are absolutely on the bread-line. What do you do when you're a single mother raising five children in a council flat and your child wags it for the day? Sometimes these desolate and broken parents keep their children at home for consolation, to get a little bit of love during the day. To fine these parents all that money seems to me such an unrealistic view of the social realities of these families.

David could quote examples to support his point of view and I could quote a few to support mine. I guess there's a bit of truth on both sides.

Colin Alves

I don't think John has really answered David's point: I think it was John as well as Bob who raised this issue of the fault-line, the tension between a liberal education in the way we had started defining it, and the very instrumental type of education which seems to be reflected in this emphasis on literacy and numeracy. David has said that a liberal development of education depends on a good sound base of the sort that John might have appeared to be attacking.

John Hull

It's true that Religious Education depends on a degree of literacy, but I continue to believe that the universal and humane values deeply present within all the great religions are very hostile, antithetical, to the values which guide governments of all Western countries in the pursuit of competitive excellence. To that extent I do believe that there is a profound tension between religion and these ideals.

Gabriel Lancaster

I'm Chairman of the Kent SACRE. I'm also Chairman of an annual conference by the Board of Deputies of British Jews for Jewish representatives to SACREs all over the country. I'm not a trained teacher. I'm an engineer by profession, so perhaps I tend to be a bit pragmatic. I speak to lots of children in schools all over Kent and I'm Chairman of Governors of a secondary school. A question which puzzles me is a practical one. How do you reconcile the creationist view of our origins with the more scientific view which is also taught to the same children in different classes? I was interested to hear the comment on spirituality because Kent SACRE recently published a book called *Shaping the Spirit* which is an attempt to guide teachers in looking through all of the curriculum subjects with a view to giving children this sense of awe and wonder at the mystery of life. It seems to me that it's important to guide children in this way.

Colin Alves

I think we're back to the question of living with plurality and different views; how do we prepare the children to cope with that – and indeed, are we coping with that ourselves as an RE profession?

Terence Copley

I have read the Kent document, which is a very helpful and important booklet on spirituality. We at the University of Exeter are running an unfashionable research project at the moment, on teaching the Bible. I'm all for doing unfashionable things; the Bible was dominant in RE in the 1950s, which seems to be not desirable, but it's disappeared from RE in the 1990s, which seems to be equally not desirable.

We've been looking at how to teach the Bible within a world religions RE framework. We have addressed this question of biblical interpretation, and what we've said could apply to sacred scriptures in other religions (though not always easily); the point is one of diversity. The reality is that there are various Jewish ways of interpreting the Torah, and there are various Christian ways of interpreting the Bible, and I don't think that the RE teacher in presenting these religions has to edit out any of them. She or he can say, even to quite young children, 'Some Jews when reading the creation story take it to mean this, and other Jews take it to mean this. What do you think?' and open up the situation like that, and explain why people take these different views. I think if we give only one interpretation, whether the interpretation is fundamentalist or liberal or call it what you like, we've actually short-circuited the process of education. What children should be doing in relation to the text is working out how they interpret it, and in order to do that, they have to hear the wisdom of different interpretations from within the religion.

Colin Alves

Could I just ask if Michael Poole would be prepared to say something about this from the audience? What else needs to be done in other classrooms than the RE classroom, to deal with this situation?

Michael Poole

I work at King's College, London, and my particular interest is in the interplay between science and religion. This is a hoary question which is always cropping up. One of the difficulties I think is in the very language of creationists. There are various types of creationists – young-earth creationists, progressive creationists, and so on – and because the word has been taken over to mean a very young-earth position, we're denied the use of it for those who believe in creation by God. In that sense I'm a creationist but I'm quite happy with the general evolutionary pattern there. There's some kind of a category mistake when pupils are being pushed into either choosing creation by God, or choosing a particular mechanism. One thing that's helpful is to unpack the idea of creation in the religious sense of 'bringing into being', of a relationship with God and so on, something which is quite independent of particular mechanisms by which things are brought into being. The other important matter is the exegesis of the text. Terence has made some very helpful comments about showing how different people have interpreted texts differently, but it's also helpful to point out that you can't make a contrast between creation and some particular mechanism, whether it's big bang, stellar evolution or organic evolution and Darwinian theory. They are categorically different. That's one thing I think you can say to pupils in the first instance. Then you can start looking at the text and the meaning of language, and help them to unpack things a little bit differently. Part of the problem is the word 'creationist' and how it has been annexed in a way to mean some particular mechanism and time scale. Creation, as modern physics has taught us, is actually very different from that. Time is part of the

created order and indeed so is space itself.

Colin Alves

Could we say something about what might happen in the science classroom to deal with these issues? I was implying that it wasn't just an RE problem – or do you think it is?

Michael Poole

Oh no, I certainly don't. One of the reasons I've been invited today is that Culham College Institute has just published a little booklet of mine, which looks at opportunities for teaching about science and religion within the science in the National Curriculum. It's a very important issue and quite a lot of Ofsted Inspectors have raised the question in science departments: 'How are you teaching the spiritual, the moral, the cultural and the social (particularly the spiritual and the moral) as well as the traditional contents of science?' I have been campaigning for a long time for the teaching, within science, of issues of this kind, because pupils bring them up. They bring them up in RE, but they also bring them up from time to time in science. I'd like to see RE departments and science departments getting together to think how they might best tackle this within schools, making links between the two. I certainly think that within science there is a whole range of places where issues arise that have metaphysical implications. More and more these days, science is using the word 'counter-intuitive', because the world in which we live doesn't follow from common-sense. More and more, science is raising questions which science itself cannot answer. There are metaphysical questions in cosmology. 'Why is the universe as we know it apparently so fine-tuned for our human existence to an incredible number of decimal places: 10^{60}?' If it was slightly different we wouldn't be here. It's a metaphysical question, and science can't answer it except by looking at an inflationary universe that gives rise to such fine-tuning effects, but that just pushes the whole thing back one stage further to ask why is the universe such that is has that initial inflationary phase? It's still raising the metaphysical question which many years ago was expressed in the form, 'Why is there something rather than nothing?'

Jack Priestley

I'm a former Principal of Westhill, now returned to Exeter. I want to take up the question of what we are educating for, and the context in which we educate, and to try to deal with Religious Education. When Cardinal Hume died a few weeks ago, Hugo Young (who had been a pupil at Ampleforth) recorded a story in the *Guardian*. A woman once said to Headmaster Hume on Parents' Day, 'What are you educating these boys for?' Without hesitation he replied, 'For death, madam, for death.' It seemed to me a very important thing. Perhaps when one has been through a life-threatening experience, one's perspective changes. Harvey Cox made the point in his *Secular City* back in the sixties that one of the effects of the

secular society is to foreshorten one's perspective. We don't think over a period of time now as our forebears used to do.

About twenty years ago, a group of us used to sit around in the staff room putting the world to rights. On the edge of the group was a new research student who was Head of the hospital school. In a pause in the conversation she slipped in the question, 'What do you tell your students about the education of dying children?' The pause lasted rather a long time as we all took in the impact of this question: what were we educating for? It changes one's whole perspective. What's the curriculum in your mind when you have a child dying of leukaemia and you know they are going to be dead in three months' time? It brings to mind the whole perspective of that Dennis Potter interview when he talked about the value of the present moment. This was brought back to me recently when I was asked to take over supervision of a PhD thesis which is on 'The Good Death'. It's the work of a nursing sister who has done a lot of work in hospices. It's not a morbid thesis at all, it's very joyful, because the whole emphasis is on the 'now', the moment. I wonder whether, as religious people, we are so much pulled into the secular context of our religious teaching, that we don't educate within the context of our religious dimension.

Bob Jackson

I used to work for a head teacher who lost his wife. It was all very sad and we were all very supportive, but he tended to use Religious Education and collective worship as therapy for himself, and it wasn't very educational for anyone else. I just wanted to mention that danger. Secondly, I'd like to relate it to a point I made earlier about relevance and about finding some way to connect this material – whether it's science and religion, or material from the religious traditions or texts or whatever – to the concerns and questions of young people. If we don't make that connection then the whole thing is really a dead letter. Some recent research in Sweden involved secondary school pupils aged about sixteen. The aim was to discover what key issues and questions they were concerned with, so that religious material could be selected to relate to those questions. All of them, without exception, were concerned about death. It's not that the question of death has been knocked out of everybody by short-term thinking – all the pupils were very much concerned about death. One question was about how you would cope with the death of a child. One of the class told about the death of a small child and how the parents and family had come to terms with it and how they dealt with the funeral. We have talked about the interface with science; this produced an interface with drama. The funeral of this child was dramatised by the minister, other members of the congregation and one or two of the young people, and videoed. It's a most powerful tool for beginning to look at Christian perspectives on death. The point I'm making is simply that if we don't connect these questions up, if we project *our* concerns rather than finding out what *their* concerns are, then we might be making a mistake.

Imam Sajid

I represent the national umbrella organisation of the Muslim Council of Britain. When a Muslim child is born, there is a mandatory tradition that calls for a prayer to be spoken in the right ear. This is to prepare the child to know that we are not going to live in this world permanently, and the day will come when the Lord will call us back. We have to be reminded of this every day when we get up early in the morning.

On a serious note, I'd like to return to the multi-religious society in which we live, valuing diversity and appreciating the differences, and think about how that could become a common value in terms of seeking the common good. Does the panel feel that there is a contradiction in terms, of the pursuit of competitive excellence and pursuit of the truth? Do you think that this is a difficulty, that we are trained in our own tradition so deeply that sometimes valuing the diversity is impossible for us? Also, in society there is a vacuum of morals, especially in the position of secularists. If we believe we are the creation of God, that we are prepared in this world for a task, and that the development of personality is the aim of education, how can RE make the child realise that he or she is one individual?

Bob Jackson

There were several questions in there. I don't think young people see a problem in accepting difference amongst themselves. One of the striking features of Julia Ipgrave's work is that a lot of the children are Muslim, but there are also Christian and Hindu children, and children from a completely secular background. It seems to be one of the mantras of a certain group of writers within Religious Education, that any form of multi-Religious Education is inherently relativistic and that nobody would believe anything to be true. Looking at the transcripts of the conversations of Julia's children, we see that first of all they accept difference; secondly, they believe what they believe to be true. The notion that beliefs can be true is not eroded by engaging with one another – they accept that. But I think there are certain values that sometimes emerge that are common amongst the children as well. I might add also, that there is a certain amount of inter-influence. This is how religions change and this is how cultures change. People actually listen to one another and may well begin to accept something or incorporate something into their way of thinking that wasn't there before. That doesn't necessarily change the fundamental religious position that they hold. So I've got no problems with that.

With regard to teachers, I don't think we know. All of us on this platform and probably most people in the room have written or talked at some point about the commitment issue – the commitment of the teacher in relation to how one teaches, the process of teaching, and so on. I think many of us have found ways through. There has been very little empirical research done on this. Two of my colleagues, Judith Everington and Pat Sykes are now doing some research on how teachers from a range of different religious and non-religious backgrounds actually handle

the question of difference and diversity in the classroom and how it affects them and their own views. So I'm confident, and I know you are too, that there will be many Muslim teachers of Religious Education who feel that they can operate within the county community school system and not just within separate Islamic schools.

Colin Alves

Could I pursue that a little further? I felt that behind some of your question, Imam, was the feeling that there are some Muslims, Christians, Jews and others who are not happy with that sort of position. They feel that they have to abandon their own beliefs in the uniqueness of the faith to which they are committed. So it's not a question of having no commitment in this situation of accepting diversity, but the problem of how to deal with diversity when you yourself believe that the other people are simply wrong. Do you say that a person with such a view should not be in the RE teaching profession at all?

Bob Jackson

Teachers suffer enough! I want my students to feel comfortable and happy in their work. If for that reason or some other reason they can't, then they should do something else, and probably do it very well. Having said that, there is a very broad range of people who can and do operate in the RE sphere, and not only enjoy their work but contribute insights from their own traditions and backgrounds to it.

Terence Copley

I think that the RE teacher has the critical right to think that particular bits of particular religions have got it wrong; what is particular for her or him in saying, 'That's not right for me,' will vary. That's not to say I'm holding a relativist position because I'm not. However, we at least are not in the position of a lot of wider society, where what passes for tolerance is really apathy. It does require a certain confidence in your own faith position or secular position, to go beyond the descriptive. In other words, if you happen to be a Christian, you could stand inside a mosque very happily and say, 'Oh, that's the *minbar* and it means so and so and this is the Imam and his role is so and so.' But when you start to think, 'Well, this community believes in one God and so do I, and Jesus is a prophet in this community and is held in high regard and I hold him in high regard,' then you are starting a process of spiritual development, because you are addressing for yourself questions that cannot be avoided. I don't think they should be avoided by the religious educator. What she or he has to do is to protect the children from an overdose of her or his own answer to that particular question.

John Hull

I do endorse what both of my colleagues have said. I add this further point. My own belief is that the religions must abandon their futile competitive relationship with each other and must overcome those elements within their traditions which

represent that exclusive claim to a monopoly of truth. This is a theological comment which I express from my own Christian theological perspective. My own way of looking at this is that God has launched many saving projects, and that what is causing death and destruction over the planet earth today, is not the religions. The religions can be harnessed as instruments of human welfare, but we must help the religions to become partners for human welfare. They should not be engrossed with the differences between them, which makes mutual conversion the target of their energies; that I believe would be a destructive and regressive step for religions and for Religious Education.

Colin Alves

You've suggested another aim of Religious Education which I don't think I had really identified before, and that is to help not only the individual and the community, but the religious communities themselves.

John Hull

Yes, indeed that's true. I think Religious Education offers a very important gift to the religious traditions. I'm sure we've all encountered this again and again in our professional careers. I remember, for example, commending Agreed Syllabuses of one kind or another to representatives of various religious communities who have first responded by saying, 'That's all very well, but there aren't very many children from our particular community in the schools of this area.' When I've then said to them, 'Yes, but hasn't your religion got something to offer to all the children? Isn't your religion a gift to all the people in this community?' they've been surprised, and after a while have said, 'Well, yes, of course it is.' Religious Education does help religions to become more altruistic in the service of the community.

Kanwaljit Singh

I'm an educational inspector and Chair of the British Sikh Education Council. I've been in education for 30 years as a teacher, as a head teacher and as an Inspector for the last ten years. I was a primary school teacher originally, and I have taught Christianity right from the beginning. I do feel that teachers are actors and actresses, and a good teacher can teach whatever religion they are supposed to be teaching. You don't have to belong to a religion to be able to teach it. You can say, 'Christians believe this, Muslims believe this, or Hindus believe this.' There's nothing wrong in that because that's a fact. When I started teaching there was no other religion allowed to be taught except Christianity. When we talk about science and religion, my religion teaches that God created this world and is still creating it, because God is not dead. Another thing that my religion says is that all religions are different paths leading to one reality that is God, and I don't have any qualms about teaching all that. I think this should be brought into the forefront as well – not just one religious background but others. There are other religions, but they are different paths. That's how we can live in harmony together.

John Leeson

I am the Chair of the Hounslow SACRE and amongst other things I'm on the Executive Council of the International Humanist and Ethical Union. A number of comments were made by the panel about fault-lines here in Europe or in society concerning what we should teach in RE, and why we should teach RE. As a Humanist I believe passionately in, and have a deep commitment to the ideals of human civilisation and individual happiness. I regard all of you here who share those values as brothers and sisters. Does that make me a religious or a non-religious person, a believer or a non-believer, does it make me simply an atheist, does it make me secular? There may be fault-lines in Europe based on religious traditions, and as Terence Copley said, there is perhaps another fault-line and that is between religion and secular society. A number of comments have been made about secular society, perhaps without any consideration or thought about the values in secular society which can equally be dealt with just as you can examine the values of religious society. I note that in the law on RE in this country we have to teach predominantly the Christian religion because that is the tradition and the religion of this country. We can talk a bit about nationalism if you like but I'll park that for the moment. Terence again said a number of interesting things. One was that the aim of Religious Education is to combat the problems of our secular society, but surely it's a Christian society, according to the law of the United Kingdom? There are several issues here which I think should be tackled with regard to the questions raised about what happens in the classroom.

Terence Copley

First of all, the question of whether this is a Christian society is partly connected with law, and so if you don't mind I'm going to avoid that. We're concerned with what the essence of RE should be, rather than the many committee proceedings that produce legislation across the road. Let's focus on what you said. First of all, I have no problem with the British Humanist Association and allied groups in terms of their values in accepting that they are a life stance (I wouldn't wish to offend them by describing them as a religion against their will, since despite Buddhism, religion carries connotations of theism), and therefore one whose values should be taught and explained to children. When I talked about secularism and its dangers, I was not talking about the dangers of Humanism under another name, but rather about things like the money culture. I was referring to the dangers of what I call the 'me' culture: this indoctrination that children are at the centre of the world, that the world exists to please them, and it's OK to take whatever they want provided they can get away with it. These are sentiments and values which, I suspect, many Humanists would disown completely. I'm grateful to the questioner for giving me a chance to distinguish between the proper attention that can and should be given in RE to non-religious life stances like Humanism, and the focus of rampant materialist secular indoctrination This shoots right through our culture and our

education system, and most of our children, including religious children, grow up imbibing it without even questioning.

Bob Jackson

Just one quick remark: many of the seriously 'secular' people I know come from within the religious tradition.

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Development

Consultation Question 1

Stephen Lavender

Thank you very much to the St Gabriel's Trust for inviting me to give a few reflections on Question One. I was delighted to go to the St Gabriel's weekend recently, with 250 RE teachers, and to lead a discussion on the three consultation questions. Question One was 'What are the three main developments which have taken place over the last five years that have helped improve RE's status and standing within the curriculum?' The three developments at local or national level should be looked at in terms of a whole range of other developments: one of the most important has been the appointment of a whole load of RE Advisers, but that was rated quite low – I was rather disappointed at that.

Of the items highlighted by the teachers and the respondents, the first is the GCSE short courses. This has been an incredible achievement. This year, nearly a quarter of a million young people took a GCSE qualification in some sort of Religious Education or Religious Studies. Who would have thought, five years ago, that would have been the case? The future outlook for the GCSE short course is even better. As I go into certain schools in Hertfordshire and beyond, there is still a great deal of interest, with heads of RE considering whether to take it on board and experimenting with small groups. The next development will be led by John Keast, and bring the Religious Studies and the Religious Education criteria together, to make them one seamless whole where you can take a short or a long course. I think that is extremely important, and will further boost the number of students who will be able to take it.

The second important development has been the development of Agreed Syllabuses. What is interesting here is the differential between primary and secondary. The report from HMI on the implementation of Agreed Syllabuses two or three years ago showed a huge differential between the way in which secondary teachers take on board an Agreed Syllabus and the way in which primary teachers do it. The message was that a lot of secondary schools ignore Agreed Syllabuses and carry on doing what they've always done, but primary schools have a thirst for

guidance and support. I think that is because of the nature of the teachers, many of whom are non-specialists, and the co-ordinators who need support and help. Many local authorities can't provide that sort of detailed advice and guidance, but are at least able to produce Agreed Syllabuses that are clear and concise. These have improved a great deal over the years.

The third important item is Ofsted. We should not underestimate the power of inspection. Yes, it is a two-edged sword, and many head teachers and Governors find it an interesting one. The big 'but' is that Ofsted isn't in a position to say what should happen in the school, and isn't in the position of supporting poor RE. Certainly Ofsted has created huge improvements. It has created fear as well, which I don't applaud, but it has seen an incredible resurgence of RE, both in primary and in secondary. I think that is probably clear to those of you who are involved in teacher training. Certainly in my own authority we have double the number of RE specialist teachers in our secondary schools now, than we had when Ofsted first started. That is because so many schools have decided they can no longer get away with just a non-specialist, or head of Humanities who is a non-specialist leading RE. In primary schools as well, where there wasn't a co-ordinator before, there is one now. Where there was little RE, there is now some RE. Where there were few resources, there are now more.

When I was reflecting on this talk, I thought about these three main developments that have been perceived. What is the link between them? I think the link is actually a person, Barbara Wintersgill, who has tirelessly fought for the cause of RE. What she has done has been quite remarkable in terms of influence and impact. That is important, and I did want to pay tribute to her.

What about the other responses? I've already expressed my disappointment that RE Advisers are not identified as one of the most important things, but that is perhaps not surprising. We're retiring sort of folk, and we don't like to make an awful lot of what we do. The other areas of impact clearly have been the Dearing recommendations, the contributions to 'spiritual and moral', the resources, the advice and guidance, and local Inset. It's heartening to think that organisations like St Gabriel's, Culham, the BBC, and all the organisations who are represented here, have all played their part in improving the status of RE. But there's still some way to go. I was disappointed when one of my colleagues in an advisory service said to me recently, 'I'm weary, I'm moving on. I've had enough of the battle for RE.' I think that's what many people have felt in the past about RE. But the heartening thing from this survey is that I think the battle has almost been won. Judging by the response of so many schools to these initiatives, the battle is being won right across the country. I'm not weary, I'm still carrying on and I hope you will all carry on, in your own roles in teacher training, in the churches, in inspection work, in schools, trying to ensure that Religious Education continues to improve its status and standing and its standards as well.

Consultation Question 3

Linda Rudge

The third question in the consultation says, 'What relationship, if any, do you think there should be between RE and the various elements of the framework for PSHE and Citizenship within the school curriculum?' John Keast is going to talk a bit more about Citizenship, so I won't dwell on the details of Programmes of Study that may already have been suggested. As the *Precedings* have noted, the analysis of the responses to this question reveals the most ambiguity and a very wide range of views. Considering that this is actually a small response (although quite an impressive one), that is perhaps surprising. Or is it? Faced with a question relating to new curriculum proposals that most teachers and other educators hadn't actually seen, respondents were probably working in the main from media reports, journal articles and rumour about PSHE and Citizenship. There was also an ambiguity in the question itself. 'What relationship, if any, does RE have with these areas?' The usual ambiguities also emerged in the evidence which illustrate the different models of Religious Education existing at theoretical levels and in the classroom. Is it a subject that engages fully with the personal development of the individual, allowing all in the classroom, including the teacher, to explore and respond to religion? Or is it concerned primarily with the study of religions? I think you see those models coming through clearly in some of the responses, especially from teachers. Communicating RE, both within the field itself and to the outside world, if that's how we wish to refer to it, remains a problem, and that's quite clear from the evidence that we have.

I'll move on now to look at the curriculum context in which we are expected to work and some of the suggestions about these future developments. A closer examination of the three curriculum areas mentioned in the question reveals the nature and roots of some of these ambiguities. First of all, PSHE – Personal, Social and Health Education. By September 2000 it is expected that all schools, primary and secondary, will be following a programme of non-statutory guidance in PSHE. The proposals cover a learning framework which promotes pupils' personal and social development, including their health and their well-being; which develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities as active citizens in a modern democracy; and which equips them with the values, skills and

knowledge to deal with the difficult moral and social questions that they face. Some of that sounds familiar, and many respondents noted that in their comments. PSHE of course is not new, and has been developed in schools since the 1960s, either as a separate curriculum area, or through pastoral programmes. The introduction in 1988 of the National Curriculum, with specified core and foundation subjects, did alter the emphasis of the philosophy, aims and organisation of education. That was reflected on this morning by our speakers. School programmes in PSHE were definitely affected. PSHE in its new draft material does make reference to religious diversity and the backgrounds of the pupils in the classroom.

Secondly, Citizenship. By 2002, pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 will be expected to follow statutory programmes in Citizenship education which will be covered by a new foundation subject, and indeed GCSEs are expected to be developed in this subject as well. All schools will have some autonomy in organising the PSHE and Citizenship programmes in order to 'maximise opportunities for effective teaching and learning.' That's actually a quote from somebody I heard at a conference in July. You could read that, of course, as, 'schools will have to organise their own schemes of work and get on with it.' Citizenship education as a concept is not new, of course. Some teachers will remember the previous life skills programmes or even civics programmes introduced as far back as the 1950s, to address apparent gaps in so-called 'preparation for adult life'.

The Citizenship draft orders also make reference to religious diversity and backgrounds. Thirdly then, we'll just consider Religious Education and its position. For the majority of pupils and students, their Religious Education will continue to be provided through classroom experiences based on the local Agreed Syllabus or through diocesan guidelines, or other faith guidelines if it's another aided school. RE's position in the curriculum remains technically unchanged by the new legislation, and it has been noted before that this position leads to both freedoms and constraints, security and instability. Several commentators have pointed out that the growth of this new subject area may indeed lead to further instability for Religious Education. A glance at the aims of RE in a range of LEA syllabuses agreed since 1988 or even 1993 (you can look in the *Directory of Agreed Syllabuses* for this) reveals the areas of overlap between PSHE and Citizenship, and the distinct differences too in philosophy noted by the respondents in the survey. You can look at the aims of RE in those syllabuses and see that there are clearly areas of overlap in the aims and content of these two relatively new, or newly thought-out curriculum areas.

Clearly, RE has long been associated with PSHE. Some would even argue that PSHE grew out of the RE curriculum in the 1960s, and some of us will remember programmes in which RE had an important role. There is also the idea that education contributes to the formation of beliefs, values and attitudes, that both children and adults in any community will draw on. The extent of RE's specific contribution to these areas is, of course, a matter for debate.

There are some important issues emerging in this important transition period in the relationship between RE and PSHE and RE and Citizenship. They are issues for all who are engaged in education, including pupils, parents and communities, religious or otherwise. For teachers of all areas, whether it's PSHE, RE or anything else, the most immediate issues are those related to curriculum change, classroom practice and their professional confidence, and I think that came through clearly in their response. This is not RE teachers having a moan. This is something that reflects teachers' professional concerns about change that comes in without enough resourcing.

For school managers and governors, the concerns are connected with curriculum organisation and resourcing, and changes which might even alter the ethos of the school. For LEAs there are clear messages to be responded to, as yet another national initiative impinges on the only subject which belongs primarily to local government and local democracy. There are issues for SACREs as they monitor RE and teacher training. There are issues for Agreed Syllabus Conferences in terms of new syllabuses that might be developed in the light of these new proposals. There are issues for dioceses and other religious communities and organisations.

There are issues for trainers, including initial teacher trainers like myself. Just imagine the training for Citizenship education for teachers. At the initial stage what might happen is that they would raise the RE numbers in order to accommodate all these new teachers that we need for the subject. I'm not sure that's a likely scenario. On the other hand, they might set up separate training courses for Citizenship education. If I were an RS or Theology graduate, or a graduate from another related area such as Development Studies or Philosophy, looking at this new course, I wonder which way I'd jump in terms of promotion and resourcing. So for trainers there are issues for recruitment and for retention.

There are issues for researchers. John Hull brilliantly pointed out recently at a conference that when a survey is done of all the research papers on Citizenship, there is very little from the curriculum area of Religious Education. It's not out there in the public domain, so when the debates take place, RE once again is missed out. There are issues for government bodies in handling and resourcing effective change, and for commentators as they try to communicate RE and its relationship to the rest of the curriculum and the society as a whole.

So let's draw a few conclusions. They are my personal response, so I'm sorry if you don't all agree with them. PSHE and Citizenship are not going away: the Secretary of State has made that perfectly clear recently. Neither, as far as we know, is Religious Education, and yet the introduction of a new area of the curriculum has implications for the nature of Religious Education. Will it, for example, be forced into a renewed perception of itself, in which it will be confined to the study of religions, losing the impetus of the last twenty years in which it has become a subject for and about everyone? The key to the successful development

of this new relationship referred to in our question is surely one of mutual trust amongst colleagues and amongst professionals. We have a real opportunity here to enhance our own collective understanding of the nature of education and its role in the cultivation and the celebration of humanity, and RE has a particular role to play.

Citizenship

John Keast

Like Linda, I was not surprised by the results of the feedback. No one of course knows how things are going to work out in terms of the relationships between RE and Citizenship and indeed PSHE, and that's why it's so useful for us to be able to share our views today. There are common hopes and common fears. I want to begin by endorsing what Linda said: the introduction of Citizenship (but I will include PSHE) is a significant development which we cannot ignore. When I talked at the recent national conference of AREIAC, the Advisers' Association, I likened the curriculum to a fleet, and I began rather lamely by saying that a new ship is being added to the fleet – Citizen*ship*! I think the imminent arrival of the new ship is of great significance to us. It's the first new National Curriculum subject since we've had a National Curriculum. I know it's not coming until 2002 and it'll be only for secondary schools then, but I don't think we should underestimate its significance: a statutory programme of study with statutory assessment requirements, possibly accreditation in different forms following on from that, and the allocation of curriculum time, resources and support. For example, the Standards Fund for next year will include £5 million for the introduction of Citizenship, all devolved to schools. That's an indication of the fact that we will have to take this development seriously, and you could make the same argument for PSHE, although the statutory basis is very different.

I should say that the order for Citizenship for 2002 and the new PSHE Framework will be published in November, and they will be on the website so that everyone will have access to them. At QCA we will be publishing guidance on PSHE and the preparation for the Citizenship order early in the new year.

Question Three was, 'Is there a relationship between Citizenship and RE?' I'm quite convinced that a relationship of some kind will develop. RE is a statutory subject with a track record, with growing numbers of youngsters taking accredited courses. But even standing off is a relationship of a kind, and I think the question for us is, 'What will be the nature of the relationship between Citizenship and Religious Education?' My own view is that I hope it will be a positive one. For I think there will be much more to gain through a positive relationship than there is to

be gained through a cold shoulder. I'd like to consider this relationship on three levels if I may: the legal perspective (which will be relatively short), a theoretical perspective and then the practical one.

From a legal point of view there is a clear plurality envisaged : a statutory Citizenship, a non-statutory PSHE and a statutory but locally controlled or faith-controlled Religious Education. Of the three, I suppose the legal status is least secure for PSHE, although even when you look at the framework there, you will notice it incorporates elements of the curriculum which are already statutory, such as Careers Education from Year 9 onwards and Sex Education in secondary schools. In any case there is much educational and government support for the PSHE framework. It would be naive to say, 'Let's leave it at that legal level, and all will be well.'

On the theoretical level my argument revolves around a distinctiveness which is proper to each of the three areas, and the complementarity between them. On distinctiveness, Citizenship will be an induction into a democratic society for youngsters. It will involve specific areas of knowledge and understanding from (for example) the law, economics, politics, sustainable development, world development issues. It will involve two sets of particular skills that have been identified: first, 'enquiry and communication', and secondly 'participation and responsible action', that is, in school life and community life. Those are quite clearly set out in the order. Although there are references in the order to religion as well as to History and Geography and so on, that is the distinctiveness of the new subject. PSHE is distinctive in the sense that it is intended to help youngsters cope with their existing life and preparing for changing and growing, as they get older and into adulthood: the challenges, the temptations, the relationships that are so fundamental in living. Here again you can see three specific strands running through the framework: first, the development of personal qualities and characteristics; secondly, the development of skills and knowledge in health; and thirdly, developing positive relationships. I don't intend to outline the distinctiveness of Religious Education because we've spent the morning on that. Sufficient to say that I would assume that here we all understand elements of that distinctiveness and would want to support it.

The complementarity, then, is the ways in which those three distinct elements fit and support not just each other but the rationale for the school curriculum. (If I had had the courage to join in that very erudite discussion this morning, I would have referred to the imminent arrival of a rationale for the school curriculum that tries to do justice to some of the tensions that were discussed this morning, but also of course reveals that those tensions still exist. However, that is a digression.) The complementarity that I want to focus on really involves the question of values, because I think this is one of the key areas in which the three elements – Citizenship, PSHE and Religious Education – all have an enormous stake. We could ask questions such as, 'What kind of society are we preparing youngsters to

be citizens in?' 'What is the good life for them as citizens or indeed as citizens of the world?' 'What is the basis for the kind of relationships that we would want them to cultivate and develop, and what is the basis for the commitments that they might consider making?' 'What is it that we strive for as we become adults and live life?' One might put it in this sense, 'What is a good citizen? Is it simply someone who takes part in all the local elections, votes in every national election, canvasses for his party or her party, speaks up, participates in all the local activities, yet always votes BNP?' A good citizen isn't necessarily one who simply takes part, but is one who has some kind of vision for society, and the right and wrongness and the justice of actions that society inevitably involves.

It is in posing that kind of rather simplistic dilemma that I would see the role of RE coming through as distinctive and complementary, because it alone explores in a coherent sense the basis of our values, in our beliefs and our practices, and the way in which we apply them, to our commitments, our sense of meaning and purpose and the other things that motivate us in life. There is an article by Nick Mead in the current edition of *Resource*, and I would encourage you to read it if you want to follow further an argument about the complementarity and the distinctive contribution that RE can make alongside Citizenship and PSHE to the curriculum. He talks about it in terms of dialogue and spiritual literacy. He identifies some skills and attitudes, not just on the part of youngsters, but on the part of teachers, which resonate very much with Religious Education.

However, in outlining very briefly this view that Citizenship and Religious Education are complementary and distinctive, there is an obvious fundamental dimension: the debate will be an echo of a much wider one – the nature of the relationship between religion and education, the role of faith in what is largely a practical, secular society and educational system. Here there are all kinds of fascinating things that one could draw out and complementarity as a theoretical approach does require that both parties – Citizenship and RE – see some value in the other.

Thirdly, the practical level is the most tantalising of them all and yet it's the most difficult, because of the likely variety that there will be in practice in classrooms, in schools, in local authorities. There will be the effect of the inevitable pressure of distributing finite time in the curriculum. There is the inevitable pressure of the finite number of staff, and hours in the week. There is always the pressure of resources, and if Citizenship is accredited, as I'm sure it will become, then there will be an impact from that development as well. How the curriculum is organised, the priorities which the school and its community give to elements of the curriculum, the role of Ofsted in its inspection of Citizenship – all these things are bound to make a difference to the nature of the relationship in this school as distinct from that school. We might extend that variety not just between schools, but between groups of schools, for the aided sector might be different in its approach from the county sector. That will mean that what happens in schools will be the test-bed of the relationship, for whatever the theoretical or the legal position, what happens on the

ground will determine how you and I actually see it in practice. It will require hard work to get the relationship right. It'll be hard work for those for those in schools, it'll be hard for those who advise schools, it'll require vigilance on the part of SACREs. It'll require all of us who have an interest in Religious Education, and who have an interest in Citizenship too, to ensure that the relationship is a healthy one, is a mutual one, and not a one-sided one. I think that is more likely to be the case if we adopt a positive approach rather than a negative one.

Plenary Discussion 2

Clive Erricker

John Keast has asked some very platonic questions, and talked about a radical method by which RE could contribute to the way in which Citizenship was actually addressed. The radical notion that we could take RE as complementary to what's done in other areas is something that may be very important to us. But I wonder whether RE can actually accommodate that radical vision. Let me take a number of strands.

For example, we have assumed a child-centredness in RE and yet in education today this is often merely lip-service, rather than actually saying, 'We do want to develop children's thinking in the affective and cognitive way that really makes them into citizens, who can critically address questions of justice and issues of that kind.' I'm wondering whether we have actually addressed that in relation to other concerns today.

Also, if we talk about a rationale for Citizenship, who's going to compose that rationale? In other words, if there's a way in which we can contribute to the characteristics that RE can offer to Citizenship, who is actually producing the document that has that rationale? I have some misgivings in terms of consultation; will it be something that is given to us? Or will it be something that we can devise for ourselves, included in the promotion of a Religious Education that takes into account the complex but only superficial debate (because of the time constraints and the number of contributors) we had this morning?

A further issue would be the relationship between the religious and the secular. If we're talking about children's spirituality and Religious Education as a discrete subject, how does Religious Education actually speak more universally about a spirituality that isn't just religious? If you want to talk about inclusion, you mustn't create 'otherness', therefore you can't create a subject that will be exclusive of those who aren't under its remit or umbrella, if that remit or umbrella is religious. Some very important questions have been raised, but I wonder if we've got to the depth of addressing them so far.

John Keast

It's not often people call me radical! I take the point about the rationale and what kind of Citizenship and who is going to decide. I think I can simply suggest that when the order is published, it should be on the agenda of every SACRE and every Religious Education department and co-ordinator, to attempt to identify what it is in the order and what it is in Religious Education that could enable it to show its distinctiveness, and how it could work in a complementary way.

David Attfield

When I reflected on Question Three, I thought that what we need is some sort of strategic vision of the way the future might go. A useful technique is to put up a cockshy for people to throw things at, so I'm trying to do that for this conference today. With this large range of items – PSE, Religious Education, political education and I also say the Ofsted personal, social, cultural and moral development – there's so much overlap and interconnection that we need some radical remapping of the curriculum. What I suggest is based on the premise that nothing will happen seriously unless it's made a discipline in the National Curriculum, so I suggest that the National Curriculum would need to have four new disciplines. First, Religious Education must become a national subject (I think that's just a formality – it's the way it's going anyhow). I want to cut off the child-centred element, the 'learning from' element, because I think that belongs in spiritual development, and keep this subject to the study of religion and the debate about truth in religion which we discussed this morning. Then we need a second National Curriculum discipline, a basic narrow moral education on those things we can all agree on (like the fact that presumably we don't want twelve-year-olds to become pregnant, and a few other things) which the politicians are always demanding and I think is a legitimate requirement. Thirdly, what I call Citizenship, which includes political education, life skills, and probably quite a lot of the health and social education. One way of putting it might be to include the kind of topics that people bring to my wife who is a Citizens' Advice Bureau counsellor; the sort of things which used to be called social studies. The fourth discipline we need is something to embrace spiritual development, ethics in the wider sense, and something called emotional education which is doing the rounds these days. I've decided to call this 'Relationships' based on the research of Rebecca Nye and David Hay. What children actually seem to want are relationships with themselves (this is the building of self-identity), relationships with other people, relationships with the environment and relationships with some sort of God if you believe in God. For that I was thinking much more in terms of circle time or form periods or something of that sort, possibly verging at some points into counselling.

What all these things need is a slice of time in the National Curriculum, a bit of resourcing and perhaps one person in the school to be a subject leader, and then how it's done can be worked out. I have set out all these arguments reasonably fully in a short paper.

Peter Jackson

I'm in charge of the Independent Schools RS Association and I also work at Harrow School. It strikes me that we could get very confused over the relationship of RE and Citizenship. The essential issue must be this. Citizenship looks very useful from the outside; to those not involved in the RE world, RE would look less useful, and so therefore RE would be squeezed out. We have to make sure that it's obvious to people that what we do is useful; we can't do that by saying, 'We think it's useful, and look, we can do some of what you want to do with your useful Citizenship.' That would be very stupid. However, there is a much more important philosophical argument, which is that the whole of this is being driven by utilitarian attitudes to education. I think that is really wrong, because we're just saying, 'We think this would be very useful for them, and that would be less useful.' What we should be thinking about is what actually matters; we should really be arguing about the whole basis of education and the insidious way in which utilitarianism is becoming the basis of everything that we do.

Linda Rudge

I think that goes back to what I was saying about communicating Religious Education. One of the problems is that the subject has become perceived as 'about religions', about people doing things because they are religious. My husband John Rudge (former Director of the Westhill RE Centre) has a phrase for this: he calls it 'Festivals, Founders and Frilly Bits'. There is a problem here. I was stimulated by one of the responses in the survey which mentioned Citizenship as being the secular side of RE. Now this is really dangerous, because Religious Education is surely about everybody. All right, there are conscience clauses (and they are difficult and we won't go into those right now), but if the subject is to be an inclusive subject it has to be one in which the silent majority of people in this country, who are not members of traditional religious communities, feel is also about them. I have a real concern that in these debates and developments, RE will be forced back on itself into the study of religions. It may have an element of spirituality left in , but more likely it will become a very utilitarian subject, feeding into the examination system. I've nothing against accreditation or standards, but I think it will lose something very important if that happens.

Anne Lamb

I'm a St Gabriel's trustee. Thinking about this morning, I cast my mind back to a statement by a man called Conibear whose study of Victorian church parties has just been published. You will all know them, the High Anglicans, the Evangelicals, the Broad Church. He attributed the enthusiasm for Christianity to the atheism of the French Revolution, and of course the French Revolution after Napoleon was followed by the foundation of the National Society and the British Society, both of whom have representatives here today. Where is this leading? It's leading me to ask where we look for new ways of asking our questions. Not, 'Is it the truth?' 'Is

it true?' All science and indeed all theology, the queen of sciences, start with 'supposing'. 'Is this true? Is this the voice of God? What do I do? Is it true?' Not, 'Is it the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?' So that's one stage. Second, Citizenship. The school community is the preparation of the Kingdom, the corporate group, the family, the school, the community, the nation. How can citizenship exist without a sense of your local community as you grow up and as you mature? Now, 1945 which I clearly remember. It was said that the doctors and the teachers were nationalised very easily because they thought it was such a good thing that there should be more teaching and more medicine. The lawyers were very clever and kept out of it. So my next question to the panel is, 'Is it fair? Is it true, is it fair?' My third question, 'Will it work?' Can we manage to make this thing productive of health, wealth, prosperity and above all, goodness? The good society. Goodwill. The message of Christmas. I'm asking that question, can we rephrase our questions? Is it true, is it fair, will it work?

John Keast

I take your question to be a development of the point I made about the distinctive role of RE, in terms of asking not just what Citizenship is, but is it good Citizenship and where are we going? I think your questions, 'Is it true and is it fair?' are developments of that, which underpin the value of RE, and that's why I think it will survive.

Consultation Question 2

Jeremy Taylor

I want to be provocative about what I see as the five characteristics of UK RE for the next five years. I've tried to synthesise them out of the responses that were in the report, and I've tried to set them against the reality of classroom life.

First characteristic – we will go on fending for ourselves as a subject outside the National Curriculum, but one with strong professional motivation and self awareness. Think back to the National RE Festival, which we called for at the last of these conferences, and how it has affected 50% of the schools of the country. Think of the networking which goes on in the local groups of RE teachers – with more to come, perhaps, as a pack is produced to support them. Think of the work on subject standards, working towards levels of achievement, that the Advisers' Association have worked on and is now with QCA. Think even of ICT and the work that we are doing in REfIT. Already two RE dedicated websites are up and running, and another will be commercially sponsored (that's interesting) in a few weeks' time. Even BECTa, the Government agency, will have RE well placed in its Virtual Teachers' Centre within months. We've written it for them, and we hope they'll publish it. What links all of those things is the way that Trusts work with teachers. When teachers and Trusts meet in the RE world, it is the equivalent of the government pouring millions in for everyone else. Rightly or wrongly, that's the way it is.

Second characteristic – we will go on maintaining the pressure, particularly since the 1988 Act and the work that led up to that. The effective coalition between teachers, other professionals within RE, churches, faith groups and life stance groups, that have come together around the RE Council and other bodies, has maintained pressure and has led to the present situation. We will need to go on doing so. I suspect that recruitment initiatives such as RETRI will need to go on full speed. Training provision for existing teachers and for non-specialist teachers (though they are a reducing number as we've heard already) will continue. The work on a subject leaders' guide, produced by the RE community and led by AREIAC, is critical. Notice, too, the way that commercial providers of in-service training such as FFE are coming on board. They've just appointed an RE specialist

to their staff. That speaks to us. Farmington continues its work: the Farmington Fellowship Scheme is the equivalent of seventeen full-time researchers. We'll need to maintain the pressure too on compliance with the legal entitlement, particularly in Key Stage 4 where we've moved from a 20% figure to a 40% figure in two years. We must press on to 100%. At sixteen-plus the situation is much more dire as the papers indicate. There's an area we must move on into.

Third characteristic – we need to join the agenda. If only we could prove that good RE cuts truancy down; if only we could prove that good RE reduces exclusions; they'd all want it! But there's a serious point here. We've been effective in the past where we have joined the agenda, not where we've asked the agenda to change. We need to have the political skill and nous to identify the agenda issues where we can say, 'We've got a solution.' We need to be able to say, 'We see you've got a problem about … We could supply the answer.' That's the political reality. We need it on raising standards, grasping the assessment nettle as we are beginning to do in the work of QCA, and a raft of further stuff coming out in November. The message the government has is that schools are fed up with receiving things and they don't want it all landing on the desk. They may be right usually, but they're not right about RE. Any RE specialist will tell you, 'Send me more paperwork, because if you send me more paperwork I can walk into the Head and say, "Have you seen this? What are we doing about that?" We want more paper!' The work of the British and Foreign Schools Society, the School Effectiveness Project (REaSE), will give us major answers that we can offer to the debate. My joy is that I don't have to talk about Citizenship, because it's been done already. There are still problematic areas in the balance between local control and national. We need to be at the political cutting edge, and we need people who can speak for us in that way.

Fourthly, we need to be fighting the invisibility factor. Have you noticed how you never hear about all the good things that happen in RE? In the media, in School Management Teams, we need to be influencing people and saying, 'Look, this is happening.' Now there are two ways of doing this. You can write off rude letters to the Editor of the *Times Ed*. My experience is that it doesn't work. What you need to do is to cultivate people. Getting to know people and getting trusted, getting able to slip the message in, is the way forward in the political and in the media arena. We need to work co-operatively. The work of the RE Council, the people who meet from time to time with the DfEE, in a kind of openness to listen which is unprecedented, has done things for RE and I believe it needs to go on doing so. If we work co-operatively, and if we are working out what we ought to say together and then all saying it in different ways, maybe we'll get heard.

Fifthly, we need to be celebrating our successes. The teacher-led demand for short courses which occurred five years ago, and was then announced four years ago at this conference, has raised the figures from less than 20% doing an examined course three years ago to more than 40% of the cohort doing an examined course

now. If we go on from there projecting onwards, how soon can we reach 50%, 60%, 70%? We'll do that by celebrating the successes, the Ofsted-led improvements, the quality of resources. If you go to any conference and look what is available today in terms of books, artefacts, videos and ICT, you can see that the situation is moving steadily forward. We need to have a sense of confidence. For too long RE people have lacked self-confidence, and perhaps at times rightly so. In my judgement, it is now time to take up a more confident stance because we will be listened to more. My experience is that RE in Britain is the envy of the rest of Europe. It is seen as more coherent, more sophisticated, more vibrant, with better relationships, more effective grappling with issues of authenticity and of truth, than anywhere else in Europe. We need to celebrate that. Two days ago I was at a meeting where the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge said that in his judgement, RE had come of age. That made me think. Coming of age, probably around 18, the end of acne, the end of angst, and on into confident adult maturity. My guess is that that is where we should see ourselves, and we should live as mature adults in the educational world.

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Plenary Discussion 3

Ian Wragg

Jeremy Taylor commented that he was presenting his vision of UK RE for the next 5 years against the realities of the classroom experience. So I'm going to ask that the first contributions to our debate come from the classroom teachers here today, because your presence is so welcome and so important, and I'd like it to be made audible for the rest of us.

Sue Hookway

I'm Head of Humanities and RE at a comprehensive school in Henley. I'd like to pull together quite a lot of the things we've heard today. The point has been made that religion is feared, and people are embarrassed by religion in our society, which I think is very true. I want to refer to the editorial in the current *RE Today* written by Stephen Orchard, which mentions some very important concerns about all the draft new curriculum proposals. In those draft proposals, I found it very worrying that RE is only given a very 'grudging' mention (Stephen Orchard's words) as being instrumentally useful in fulfilling the aims of the school, and that seems to be that all that RE is about. I don't think any of us would agree with that; even though it obviously does help fulfil the aims of the school, it's worth far more. I gather that this has been corrected in a later draft – I'll be interested to see how. Secondly, in the draft proposals, spiritual development was not even mentioned. The aims of the school were referred to as the moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The word spiritual was left out. That seemed to me to be a reflection of this embarrassment and fear of religion. 'What shall we do with it? Actually, let's just marginalise it a bit, and put in this big "ship" of Citizenship.'

I think that RE has two crucial roles to play in particular. One has already been referred to by John Keast, and that is that it's absolutely crucial to the direction of Citizenship. Yes this ship is joining the fleet, but the fleet is very directionless. John mentioned some very important questions. What kind of society do we want? What is meant by the good life? What is going to be the basis for relationships and commitment? What should we be striving for? It seems to me that this is where RE has a distinctive contribution to make. It can give a vision of the direction of that society. Citizenship can give the tools to help meet the vision, but RE can give the

vision. The second point is that I don't think we should be frightened by Citizenship. A MORI survey in the *Guardian* in May found that pupils were not interested in politics at all, and in fact it implied that Citizenship was going to have a very hard time catching pupils' interest. I agree with the speaker who said that pupils are interested in usefulness: it is an important criterion. I am Head of a Humanities department where we fight our corner in the option column and try not to make Geography, History and RE compete against each other, but we are all aware of this 'usefulness'. What is going to be the most useful to me? That is not the only thing that pupils are saying. Their parents are saying it very strongly: 'What is going to be the most useful?', but the pupils are not. They are actually philosophers. They are wanting to engage with ideas, with beliefs. Just to quote you one example, a Year 9 pupil, not particularly able, not particularly enthusiastic about school at all, was interested in the whole idea of goodness. Could goodness ever be seen? If it couldn't be seen, was there such a thing as abstract goodness? That from a Year 9 boy, an underachiever, and he really wanted to engage the whole group with this discussion. This illustrates what I'm saying. Pupils are interested in what is lacking in the Citizenship documents: that is beliefs, grounded in religious traditions. I certainly agree with Linda Rudge and I think there is a real problem with the religious 'Festivals, Founders and Frilly Bits' approach, that is where we've left pupils behind. Pupils do want to engage with the beliefs behind those things, with the beliefs that give the foundations to values. They want to wrestle with truth claims and I think our talent in RE is to make it academically rigorous.

I'd like to just leave you with two pictures I have of RE for the future. We should continue to encourage our pupils to learn from RE and I'd like to present a picture of RE as a mirror: a mirror into which they can look to understand not just themselves but the society in which they are operating. How many of them really realise the forces they are subjected to, the forces of consumerism and so on, and even utilitarianism that I was referring to just now, so that they can understand where they are individually and where society is? But RE also needs to act as a window, presenting an alternative vision, a vision of what the faith traditions have been saying for thousands of years. Surely we cannot throw away all this received wisdom which has been grounded so much in beliefs and traditions. I think we need to keep both those sides in balance in the future.

John Keast

The original Citizenship proposals to which Sue Hookway referred have changed. I don't know on how many occasions I've written in the word 'spiritual', and it disappears again in the next layer of editing. But it is in the last version of the Citizenship order that I saw: 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues'. The paragraph has been made much less grudging now than it was before. There's a constant issue that RE is not a National Curriculum subject and therefore its presence in National Curriculum documentation is always problematic.

Mark Steed

I'm a house-master at Oundle School. I teach in the independent sector and therefore my perspective may be slightly different. My point is about assessment. I think we seem to be carried away with a fascination for numbers in our society. We like statistics of the number of people that are doing GCSE – long course, short course. We have a fascination with league tables. We have a fascination with seeing the number of exclusions reduced, or attendance up, or the number of people voting BNP or whatever as a criterion for success. We've looked at a number of criteria today. It strikes me that there are many things in our subject area, and I use that in the broadest sense of the word, that just can't be assessed. The spiritual, the moral, the idea of Citizenship, are not things that I believe we can assess in any strict way. We can assess the facts, the figures, perhaps the understanding, but we can't assess whether someone is a good citizen in that way. We can't assess whether someone's a moral person or whether they've got a decent spirituality about them. Perhaps what I am going to say now is very provocative, but I feel the whole concept of Citizenship education bears testimony to the fact that schools become dysfunctional as societies. We've lost the idea of schools as places where spiritual, moral and citizen values are taught throughout the whole of the schooling, be that in the concert hall, on the games field and particularly the dining hall, and in giving people responsibility. As a house-master my Citizenship education happens at meal times. I sit down with sixty boys three times a day and we have a meal together, and there is a community, we have an identity, we have values, we have order. There is a hierarchy and I feel we have something there that has been lost in many schools. I am not putting up independent boarding schools as being a paradigm, by no means, but there is something from our sector which I feel can inform this debate and I hope that you won't throw the baby out with the bath water when you look at us.

Gwen Hill

I'm Head of RE in Minsthorpe Community College in North Yorkshire. I read the *Precedings* with great interest and found much of the information in there very thought-provoking. I think one sentence that stood out for me was that good quality Religious Education is uncomfortable. It stays in my mind, and I think for me as a practitioner, the lessons that have helped students the most are the ones that have made them feel uncomfortable, that have made them think seriously about where they are and where they're going. I feel that good quality RE is uncomfortable. It isn't somewhere where you can sit and pass the lesson by and walk out. I think it's a subject where students go out and think for some time after the lesson about what they're actually learning, and that's what I wanted to share.

Paul Hopkins

I'm one of the REfIT team and one of the Farmington Fellows. Question Two was about RE for the future and several things have struck me today. Jack Priestley's

question about what you teach someone who's going to die in six months is the thing that will stay with me from today. It was also sparked off by Christian Aid's slogan, 'We believe in life before death.' I think RE teaching is about teaching for life. I'm someone who has taught maths and science and history and geography as well, and of all the things which set you up for life, RE does it the best. The maths you need for life you've probably learnt by the age of about seven. The English for life you've learnt really when you've learnt to read. But the RE for life you're learning until the day you die, whether that's in three months' time or eighty years.

I want to share with you a little bit about the future, and the future for RE lies partly in ICT, as it does for all of us everywhere else. Last year I received my first course work for GCSE RE that was never written down ever, until the time it was printed off to be sent to the exam board. The students e-mailed me their course work, I made comments on that e-mail, and e-mailed it back. It may not be a representative sample, but in a school where the average pupil is below the national average ability, all four of the pupils got A* pieces of coursework. Isn't that interactive nature the heart of good RE? The interactive dialogue which the ICT enabled outside the classroom increased the opportunities and eventually the academic success of those pupils. Unfortunately they didn't all get an A* in the exam, but that's life. The good RE that's going on in the ICT field is among the best ICT in the country and that's what we need to stand up and shout about. I think it's very much as Jeremy Taylor said about celebrating success. If you're not yet into RE in ICT, you're going to be trained in the next three years. Stand up and shout, demand your place, because so often RE is pushed down to the bottom, but you've got as much right as anyone else. I'd like to ask the panel whether they see RE fitting into ICT, or what do people want from the ICT people in RE?

Jeremy Taylor

Children can tackle course work very well through ICT. Perhaps they get into it because there are positive vibes about it other than the positive vibes about RE. Whether it's just an initial effect, a sort of newness effect, or whether it will go on I'm not sure. I think it will go on, because I think if you tap into things that are authentic, they come into the classroom in other ways in many subjects. I think one of the things ICT can bring to RE is a range of contacts, and a range of authentic contacts, which are not quite the same when they are mediated through a book or even through video. If they contact another school in Jerusalem, it's going to be more realistic than watching a video of someone else going to Jerusalem, to take a single example. Also, it can help children into thinking, analysing, moving material around and having to handle it.

Linda Rudge

ICT is a very useful tool and way of communicating, though obviously it isn't the only way of learning in RE. When I talk to students, mentors and schools my main concern is based on the usual problems of resourcing and access: we think money

is going to be available for training, and we need to spread the word about this. Make sure you are in there and make sure you get your share. There are of course ethical concerns about the use of ICT, which have been expressed by the churches and other faith groups about the training of teachers and the handling of material. I don't think we should lose sight of those concerns, because this tool is not necessarily the tool for everyone. Although it has a lot to offer in the future, there are reservations.

Phil Leivers

I'm Head of Department in a secondary school in Solihull. In that role I am continually putting pressure on our Senior Management Team and Governors, fighting for RE. If RE has come of age and we ought to join the agenda, then perhaps we should be fending for ourselves all the time. Perhaps the panel might want to advocate that RE should be included in the National Curriculum.

Linda Rudge

I can see some very distinct advantages for Religious Education to be included in the National Curriculum alongside all the other subjects. We would of course have to address immediately the question of withdrawal, and John Hull and others have made various proposals about how that could be addressed: would parents have the right to withdraw their children from anything they weren't particularly impressed by? You would have to wrestle with the legislation and almost wrestle with some human rights, so there are issues there. However, I've always said in public forums that I do believe that Religious Education, if it's education, should be treated the same as everything else. While the withdrawal clauses are attached to it, there are problems, both for teachers and for parents withdrawing their pupils.

Of course, if RE had been part of the National Curriculum a couple of years ago, my primary colleagues would have seen it disappear. That's something we have to remember. While it remains outside the control of the Secretary of State, RE has a certain autonomy and a certain position where it is protected. Stephen Orchard has highlighted the dangers here of a new developing area of the curriculum which offers personal development through a secularised programme. It may be possible in five or ten years' time for a Government to say, 'We don't need RE as part of the National Curriculum because we have Citizenship.' At that point they could tamper with the legislation more comfortably, perhaps because some of the old voices that used to protect us are no longer there (I'm thinking of course about the reorganisation of the House of Lords). It would be nice, wouldn't it, to think that RE was the same as everything else, but at times I wipe my brow and think, 'Thank goodness we were outside that particular round of reorganisation.'

Jeremy Taylor

In an ideal world, yes, I would like to be part of the National Curriculum, but the downside of loss of autonomy and political vulnerability concern me, so I think different things on different days.

Phil Albans

I'm the Chair of PCfRE, and my day job is a Deputy Head in an inner-city Coventry primary school. In a sense it's that part of my day job that influences what I'm going to say. This conference has given us an opportunity to look back over the last five or ten years at the political scene and the political agenda, how it has affected RE and the sort of work that we in the RE world have done in order to improve the situation. We've also had an opportunity to look forward a bit. I want to pick up what Jeremy Taylor said when he talked about how effective we've been as RE people when we've joined the agenda. You've only to look at the advertisements in the back of the *Times Educational Supplement* to see how government agenda is reflected in the sorts of jobs that are advertised. A couple of years ago there were pages of jobs for Literacy Consultants, swiftly followed by pages of jobs for Numeracy Consultants, and now it's the turn of the Directors of Education Action Zones. That's an agenda that's been set by government, and if RE is to be effective, it's maybe an agenda we have to join. Perhaps we should consider the sort of contribution that we (either as RE teachers or representatives of RE organisations) can make to that agenda, and consider how effective RE can be in that rather specialised area of work, with some quite disenfranchised pupils and disadvantaged pupils and their families. Following hotfoot on that, of course, is the Government agenda on inclusion and what that means. A couple of years ago I had a colleague who was a Farmington Fellow, working on RE and Special Educational Needs. If you saw the *Times Ed*. last week, you'll have seen that Farmington has now got some further funding in order to develop work on SEN and Religious Education. Let's get back to the agenda of inclusion in schools and what that means for Religious Education. We are likely to have a situation in schools where we have children who have a range of Special Educational Needs working alongside mainstream children. I think there are some implications there for what RE is going to be on that sort of agenda. So as we look forward over the next five years, some quite interesting issues are going to arise for us as RE specialists and RE organisations.

John Holden

I'm Head of RE at a secondary school in Cumbria. I have a very straightforward question for the panel. Jeremy Taylor talked about going out and maintaining the pressure, especially towards the legal entitlement that pupils have for RE at Key Stages 4 and 5. I wonder if anyone on the panel can give advice on how we can get Senior Management Teams to take seriously the legal entitlement pupils have for RE, particularly at Key Stage 5?

John Keast

It's an issue that's surfaced from several different directions in the last year or so, although it's been around for a longer period of time than that. One of the difficulties is the comparative lack of different routes for RE beyond sixteen. The

AS and the A level routes, which are very academic, suit some but only a few: it's not really a popular choice for very many. Apart from that, the range of provision is very limited. We are familiar with the alternatives like sixth-form conferences or day events, or General Studies or Complementary Studies or whatever it is. The whole range of these I think were set out in a SCAA document, *RE post-sixteen,* back in 1995. It didn't really make any difference, and we still have this very large amount of non-compliance. We tried to pick up this issue at a conference in June, and looked at the possibility of an RE route beyond sixteen through vocational education. Without going into any detail, this would look at the opportunities for taking RE further in relation to its implications for business, travel, leisure, tourism, healthcare, and so on – recognised vocational areas. We hope as a result of that conference and the support of the St Gabriel's Programme who paid for it, to establish a national group to look at widening the range of RE qualifications post-sixteen. In that way we hope to widen the options and help to do something about this widespread non-compliance.

Peter Cantley

I'm Head of Twyford High School in Acton Town. My point is that the validity of RE has suffered at the hands of science education. To use one of Lesslie Newbigin's phrases, 'Religion lies outside the plausibility structures of many people.' This is undoubtedly because science has undermined the truth claims of religions. Hence the political will to extract values upon which we all agree from religions, and repackage them in PSE and Citizenship. What does the panel think Religious Educationalists should be doing outside the classroom through their professional bodies to address the root of this problem?

Linda Rudge

If you're talking about what they should be doing through their professional bodies, obviously there are national associations that can ask the right questions, and enter into dialogue with science professional bodies, for example, about some of these issues. But I think there are things people can do within schools. Talk to colleagues, exchange documentation, do audits of the curriculum to look at where the areas of overlap or possible contention are. I think this morning highlighted very well this problem of the nature of the debate between science and religion. Of course, pupils in schools are often given a very simplistic view of the area of science. I'm not making derogatory comments about science colleagues at this point. There is enormous pressure through the National Curriculum on science to cover so much. I have a colleague who's a science teacher on an MA programme, and he was researching the attitudes of people to science education. He discovered all sorts of areas in common between RE and science, about pupil attitudes, concerns, areas of beliefs and values, ethics etc. I think inter-disciplinary work is vital. As we touched on earlier, with Citizenship and PSHE as areas of conversation, we must continue the dialogue with other subjects, not only to

communicate our subject, but to receive more information about theirs. This dialogue is a two-way thing. There's a tendency sometimes to rush off and tell people what RE is really about, without listening to what other colleagues have been going through and doing themselves over the last ten years.

Jeremy Taylor

I think Mike Poole had it right this morning: actually the debate has moved on beyond the position you are putting forward. The category mistake that he identified is much more widely recognised between science and RE teachers, and certainly the sort of co-operation he was talking of has worked in our school. We agree where in our syllabus issues of origins and purpose and ultimate questions like that can tie into their work on evolution, cosmology or whatever. If you are open about it then we find that's a workable relationship. Much as I respect Lesslie Newbigin, I don't buy his point on this. I think it's reflecting the past, and the debate has moved on amongst youngsters, if not always their parents.

Graham Langtree

I'm the RE Inspector in Dorset and former Chair of AREIAC. I'd like to make an observation first of all about this debate on the National Curriculum and the place of RE. I do genuinely believe there's a third way on this issue. I think AREIAC's development work on attainments in RE, and the level base which John Keast has taken on in QCA, is absolutely vital, and I am personally *for* nationally agreed standards. But I am also for local determination. It still seems to me there's a critical role for teachers in 'ownership'. Teachers are actively involved in the development of Agreed Syllabuses; you have this rather unusual amorphous mix of human beings, representatives of the other principal religions, politicians and teachers, coming together and framing an Agreed Syllabus to meet particular local needs and concerns while matching into some national context on standards. That seems to me to be a helpful way forward.

My other observation is really to do with this issue of assessment. Jeremy Taylor was right about the active encouragement of RE in the market place in terms of increasing numbers of pupils taking the short course and accreditation in RE. However, RE is still about refreshing the parts the National Curriculum doesn't reach, in terms of children's and young people's spiritual capacity, and that ability to ask important questions and to develop key skills and attitudes. So how do we reconcile the tension that exists between that aspect, and being in the market place with a very sharp focus on that which is measurable? Tim Brighouse has said, 'What we really need to try and do, is to measure what we value, and not just value what we can measure.' I'm very interested in how the panel feels about the real tension between RE and its SMSC and personal development dimensions, and RE out in this market place in relation to standards. They are not mutually incompatible in my view, but I'd welcome your comments.

John Keast

I accept that there is a tension in the assessment area between wanting to measure, having the statistics, etc., which I think is all part of the accountability age in which we live. I don't think we should claim that we ought not to be accountable. There's a tension between that and the wider, perhaps more fundamental ways in which children learn which you cannot measure. I think that applies to some other areas of the curriculum as well as to RE, and it is a pity if the measurements and the results of measurement tend to get more prominence than the other ways in which children make progress and learn. I suppose that the way that I resolve this tension, from the point of view of working in RE and looking at national expectations, is to say that we can test progress in knowledge, we can test progress in understanding, and we can assess skill development. GCSE offers some models there through the evaluative and application skills, but we need to be very careful that we don't go beyond the assessment of skill development into a pseudo-assessment of personal beliefs, values, character, worth, etc. We may privately have opinions about each other, and children that come into that category, but we can't claim to be assessing them. So my way of resolving the tension is to try to stick to what is a publicly accountable way of measuring knowledge, understanding and skills. I hope that that's what we do to show how the subject is accountable, but in such a way that we're not stifling the wider aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which will go on, which we cannot see, and which will not come to fruition until much later on.

Erica Brown

I'm Head of Research and Development in Special Education at Westminster College, Oxford, with particular responsibility for the education of life-limited and life-threatened children. I've been exceedingly heartened today to feel that this has been an inclusive forum as far as I'm concerned. Very often if you teach and work with children who are on the margins of society, you sometimes feel as an educator rather like the kids: nominally included in education, but actually not really included at all. I welcome the reference to beginnings and endings of life and particularly to the range of ability in children. What I feel lies at the heart of the discussion of Religious Education and Special Educational Needs is actually the quality of the educational experience. Working with children who have no verbal language, working with children who may only experience an activity, who may not be able to respond to that activity and who may not be able to have a learning outcome, is actually an incredibly salutary experience. I feel we've spoken a lot today about communication. Religion is all about communication, and I suppose if there's one plea from my colleagues, and particularly from the children and the parents with whom I work, that is to say that Religious Education above every other subject should surely meet the individual children at their point of need.

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Conclusion

Ian Wragg

I'm not going to try to summarise everything today. A Deputy Head once told me he was aghast when an Ofsted Inspector said to him, 'That would have been an assembly if you'd had a moment of reflection.' Even if I were arrogant enough to attempt a summary, would that suffice to explain this conference and all it means to us? Or is the summing-up and reflection something that's ongoing?

In this afternoon's session on 'Development' there has been a very great focus on possibilities and not on problems, and on the self-confidence that is needed in the RE world. I'm glad that we do face the future optimistically, knowing the difficulties but focusing on the possibilities. When I started out teaching RE forty-one years ago, I'd have been amazed if anyone had suggested to me that the day would come when we had a Professor of Religious Education. That we have six professors now, is wonderful.

In the RE Festival material a fifteen-year-old boy wrote, 'RE is a pause.' This morning we were given such a pause. At lunchtime several teachers said to me what a great day it was, when they could be away from the chalk-face just for a moment to pause. Our thoughts on the 'Essence of RE' this morning not only reminded me how important our subject is, but also reassured me that it is in very good hands.

Colin Alves

I have to thank all those who organised and presented this conference today. Special thanks are due to Carol Robinson who collated and produced the *Precedings*, which proved to be a very useful document for everyone.

Today has been deliberately an interactive sort of conference, and so we have not asked anybody to stand up and propose resolutions and then vote on them and make decisions about precisely what we do next. On the other hand, we do feel there is a need to follow on from where we have reached today. So the St Gabriel's Programme will soon be arranging a seminar on what is needed next in the light of these discussions. We haven't finished yet, as it were. Thank you very

much for your contributions, from the floor and from the panel, and we look forward to seeing what the seminar makes of it all.

(Most of Colin Alves' final speech has been reported in the Introduction.)

Appendix 1 – Papers from Panellists

The Essence of Religious Education

John Hull

The essence of Religious Education is its core or its heart, that which it ought always to possess, whatever its outward circumstances.

We must distinguish between religion and Religious Education. Educational religion is not the same as Religious Education. The former refers to religion in the first instance, as qualified by its educational properties. The main purpose of a religion might be to educate its members rather than to offer salvation. We might contrast educational religions with salvific ones. However, the noun in the expression we are discussing is not religion but education, and religion thus defines the type of education which is in mind. Thus, whatever Religious Education might be, it will be initially defined as educational. In other words, Religious Education will be a subject within the practice of education, or an aspect of education as a whole, a quality of education.

Today we are mainly concerned with teaching and learning about religion and religions as part of the educational curriculum, and only secondarily about religious values penetrating the whole curriculum.

What, then, are the essential features of teaching and learning *about*, or *from* religion as part of the educational curriculum in Britain? Let us distinguish education from training, instruction, indoctrination, socialisation and schooling. Education as we practise it has connections with all of these processes and may, at least in part, contain some of them, but the values of education are not defined by any of these other processes. Education includes (i) a wider cognitive perspective, (ii) a broader social dimension, and (iii) a deeper understanding of the human.

Similarly, Religious Education may be distinguished from religious training, religious instruction, religious indoctrination, religious socialisation, and religious schooling, although it may overlap or include to a certain extent some of these processes. We may also distinguish between Religious Education and religious evangelisation, catechising, and religious nurture. Religious Education is whatever education is, in

so far as this may be expressed through learning and teaching about, of or from religions and religion.

We must ask therefore not whether *religion* contributes to the spiritual development of the pupil, but whether Religious *Education* might do this. It is not the nature of religion but the nature of the study of religion which is of principal interest here. The study of religion will involve (i) widening the cognitive perspective of the learner, (ii) broadening the learner's social outlook and (iii) deepening the humanity or human-ness of the learner. Up to a point, it will do all these things regardless of the content of the religion being studied, since these are the attributes of education as such.

Nevertheless, the nature of religion does affect the study of religion, just as the nature of history affects the study of history. It is in the nature of religion to offer the widest possible cognitive perspective to those who believe in it and those who study it. It is also in the nature of religion to place those who believe and study it in the widest possible social context, and it is in the nature of religion to deepen the humanity of those who participate in religion through believing it or through studying it. We see in this way that religion and education support each other.

However, when we turn to specific manifestations of religion, we find that they sometimes restrict cognitive perspective, by preventing or inhibiting inquiry, and they sometimes turn social perspective into a kind of tribalism. Rather than deepening humanity, they sometimes appear to be parasitic upon humanity, distorting the human person rather than fulfilling her or him. The same is true of the education (if we can still call it education) which is carried on under the influence of such religions.

The British way of doing Religious Education (which requires a broad world-religions curriculum, and is offered as an entitlement to all pupils regardless of their faith or lack of it, taught by well-trained teachers of goodwill regardless of their own personal religious faith or lack of it) demands and supports the wide and noble confluence of religion and education. It is in this confluence of religious and educational ideals that Religious Education achieves its utopian promise.

This means that when the complexity of technical knowledge and factual information which seems to be required by modern life presses in upon pupils and upon schools, it is the calling of Religious Education to witness to a wider cognitive perspective, wider even than the partitioning of knowledge which the curriculum suggests, wider than the experience of the pupil. When the pressures of globalised financial competition tend to inhibit world-wide human identity and to compress education within national aspirations, the calling of Religious Education is to the widest possible social perspective, into human solidarity, into loyalty to the species. Finally, when the human itself is restricted to a unit of measurement, or to a potential product, or to an indicator of achievement, then the calling of Religious Education is to witness to the human vocation.

Why should we teach RE?

Bob Jackson

I don't think it's at all easy or even possible to separate the 'why' from the 'what' and the 'how'! Back in 1987 I wrote:

> Religious Education ... should be characterised neither by its database nor by its contributions to pupils' personal development, but by both. Without a study of religions, the subject is likely to attract idiosyncratic and tendentious interpretations of the nature of religion while, at the same time, tending to lose its identity, as it did in the 1960s. Without the opportunity for pupils to engage with the material they study – and in some cases make a contribution to it – the subject will have limited personal relevance to those who pursue it.

I haven't changed my basic view on this, but I have changed the way I would express it, and my view about the relationship between the two key elements. I still think there are real dangers of distortion in views of RE that see 'content' as *entirely* instrumental to the 'development' of the student.

I now see the two elements as inseparable, as part of a reflexive relationship between 'object of study' and 'student'. Also, whereas in the tradition of RE in Britain the relationship between studies of religions and personal development, or 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion, etc., came out of liberal, existential theology (it's there in the Durham Report, for example), it now finds support within recent approaches to the social sciences. Anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists are profoundly interested in issues of reflexivity. Once the hermeneutical relationship between material and student has been appreciated, then there are implications for pedagogy. More attention needs to be given to the concerns, questions, experiences, beliefs, values, etc. of the student than would have traditionally been given. Moreover, sometimes it might be the world view of the student that is the object of study.

I would still *start* with a 'liberal education' justification for RE. *Education should explore all areas* of *human knowledge and experience (*cf. Hirst in the UK and Phenix in the USA for different versions of the argument). The religions of the world are part of that experience, and so their ideas, beliefs, values and ways of

life should be studied. How they are represented and interpreted are further crucial questions which are not separable from the content. (Getting the balance of content right to meet particular circumstances, and motivating students to participate are separate issues.)

Education should also be concerned with scholarship. I don't mean this in an exclusive way. I am talking about promoting the values and skills of scholarship – a quest for accuracy, sound methodology and balanced critical judgement.

I think we have a duty to represent religious traditions and the religious world views of individuals in the least distorted way possible. In a climate where many representations of such material are distorted (listen to news broadcasts when religion is featured, or look at the portrayal of Islam in the tabloids), sometimes deliberately, sometimes not, we owe this to the traditions. We owe this because we are *educators.*

The *dharma* of the educator is to prize scholarship – accuracy, sound methodology, balanced judgement.

I would go further in saying that RE needs to be aware of work in history and cultural studies that has given close attention to the issue of how Westerners have portrayed religions and cultures in the past and often continue to do so in the present. We need to have a critical awareness of how the powerful have represented others, and how some of these distorted representations have been perpetuated. In introducing this critical element I am already dealing with reflexivity.

Here are three aspects of reflexivity that I would want to encourage:

1. the learner re-assessing her or his understanding of her or his own way of life (cf. Grimmitt's term 'learning from religion' and Rorty's term 'edification');
2. making a constructive critique of the material studied at a distance (cf. Ricoeur's term 'distanciation');
3. developing a running critique of the methods used in RE.

First, one of the key aims of RE is concerned with helping pupils to reflect on their studies of ways of life that are different in some respects from their own, and being open to a reassessment of their own position. I do not see this kind of reflective activity as being separable from the process of interpreting religious material. The interpretative process might (but would not have to) start from the insider's language and experience, then move to that of the student, and then oscillate between the two. Thus the activity of grasping another's way of life is inseparable in practice from that of pondering on the issues and questions raised by it. Teachers cannot delay the process of reflection to a later date, just as they cannot guarantee that it will happen. They can, however, enable it by providing structured opportunities for reflection. It also happens to be the case that making this type of connection often helps to motivate students to participate more fully in RE.

Whatever differences there might appear to be culturally or religiously between the student's way of life and the way of life being studied, there may also be points of contact, cross-over points and points of commonality. What might appear to be entirely different and 'other' at first glance can end up linking with one's own experience in such a way that new perspectives are created, or unquestioned presuppositions or received wisdom are challenged. This might happen at a personal level or at a wider socio-cultural level (e.g. in being critical of widely held assumptions about financial wealth or the goals of education).

Edification need not only result from studying religions or cultures other than one's own. The study of one's own ancestral religion or culture can also give new insights in re-examining one's sense of religious identity.

Secondly, part of the reflexive process is to be able to engage critically with that which is studied. Paul Ricoeur speaks of 'distanciation' – having got close to the material studied and attempted to understand its meanings, creating a critical distance in order to apply skills of academic criticism and to engage with it from one's own religious or secular perspective.

Thirdly, just as researchers should spend time reflecting on the effectiveness and the ethics of the methods they have used, so a critique of the methods used in RE should be part of its content. This methodological self-awareness can reveal issues of representation, and can also generate creative ideas for improvement, in the presentation of material studied to others, for example. Methodological reflection can also help students to become more aware of bias in the techniques used in other forms of presentation. Once they have engaged in some methodological self-criticism they might better undertake a critique of, say, the representation of Islam in popular newspapers.

Pupils may be changed through taking part in the interpretative process – whether or not it involves a deepening of their understanding of their own tradition. If this seems threatening to some parents, perhaps it is worth considering that children from any religious background (especially those from ethnic minorities) have to face the juxtaposition of their 'home' way of life and those which constitute the pluralistic, predominantly secular and increasingly globalised society around them. Putting it slightly differently, quite apart from religious plurality, all individuals are exposed in varying degrees to the plurality of late- or post-modernity. Religious Education can, at least, be a forum for a structured exploration of some of the issues.

I see no reason why RE should not start at any point on the hermeneutic circle whether with a critical overview of a 'whole' religious tradition, with a study of an individual person or case study or with a concern or question from students.

So, to summarise, why teach RE?

Here are my primary reasons:

- To develop an understanding of a particular area of human experience manifested in religious traditions.
- To enable students to reflect on their learning in order to re-assess their understanding of their own ways of life together with 'conventional' unexamined assumptions.
- To enable students to make a constructive critique of what they study, from academic and personal perspectives.
- To review and refine the methods used to gain an understanding of the ways of life of others.

None of this implies a particular view of religious truth; it can be studied by anyone of any faith or none, provided the methodological ground rules are accepted.

There are knowledge, skills and attitudes embedded in these primary aims that would contribute to secondary aims such as promoting spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, citizenship and even literacy! Putting it in non-DfEE language, against a backdrop of late- or post-modernity, RE of this type might help students to live with uncertainty and plurality; to challenge received wisdom and the 'normal', and to integrate received and adopted beliefs and values in order to live well.

Why should we teach RE?

Terence Copley

1. Religions and spiritualities have been and remain a very potent force on the surface of the planet, not necessarily for good. If we want to understand humankind more deeply, and if we want to see the powerful forces that can shape and re-shape civilisations and cultures, we have to attend to religions.

Because of the caveat above ('not necessarily for good'): we may adduce Nazi 'spirituality' and certain sects and suicide/murder cults to be classic examples of the 'bad' in this field. It means that we are not *commending* religions and spiritualities as superior to non-religious or secular life-stances, merely as deserving of serious study. Religions and spiritualities have

- toppled empires
- toppled themselves in cycles of reformation or renewal
- deeply influenced cultures by means of their art, literature, language, music, architecture, dance, drama, legal systems etc.
- interacted with each other to produce change.

Religions (however we define the term) are potent, dynamic, subversive and complex, evolving organisms; they need to be presented as such in RE, not as static belief systems, or museums or zoos, in which exotic creatures can be found. We do not wish to commend RE solely for the reasons for which the study of dinosaurs appears universally fascinating.

There is also an important reverse of this argument: to be religiously and/or spiritually 'illiterate' disadvantages a person in reading signals in their national or planetary culture that explain 'where we are' and how we came to be here. It could deprive such a person of the key to understanding other individuals and cultures, leaving them prey to sheer ignorance and prejudice. Prejudices have been exploited sufficiently in the twentieth century alone to be demonstrated as dangerous mass killers.

2. Religions make truth claims, sometimes conflicting or contradictory, that merit attention.

Education should be about the pursuit of truth. Religions therefore deserve

consideration within education as they deal with the essence of reality and claims made about it. Religions constitute world views, i.e. comprehensive ways of looking at the world and interpreting one's existence within that framework. As we study in detail the truth claims of others and their world views, we sometimes begin to analyse or simply become aware of our own world view better, or identify our own assumptions more clearly. This can bring a critique to bear on a culture (e.g. of post-modernism) and also individual 'growth' or development in self-understanding and in understanding of others. Thus there may be both *intellectual value* in the study of religions and *personal value,* both valid irrespective of whether the student holds a religious faith or not.

3. Children, whose 'rights' feature large in our current self-understanding, have the 'right to know' about religions and the 'right to opt' for a religious way of life (and equally the right to opt for a non-religious way of life). These options imply the importance of knowledge and understanding.

There is also an important reverse of this argument : education, in contrast, has no 'right' to expunge religions from children's programmes of study, leaving them to unthinking scientism or an unquestioning self-centred view of the universe in which fulfilling 'my' wishes, desires, ambitions becomes the main motivating force.

4. Western European culture appears to be embarrassed both about religions and God: RE can help.

RE is called to address these matters and to help children to address them without embarrassment and to talk openly (but not neutrally, which is impossible for individuals and cultures) about them. This is difficult, but still possible within a culture obsessed with individual autonomy and the fear of 'indoctrination', but which has shown itself quite unresistant to secular 'indoctrination' on a massive basis.

'Spiritual' has become a preferred term to 'religious'. People feel able to promote 'spiritual development' but suspect the promotion of 'religious development' as sectarian or divisive. The aftermath of the death of Diana was evidence of an inarticulate mass spirituality or longing. RE should be dealing in this area as well as in 'official' religions. It should not be deflected from this task by the criticism possible from within some institutional religions that such mass sentiments are 'folk religion', a 'rag bag' of New-Age-type practices, inauthentic and superficial aspects of belief, etc.

5. RE can be a process as well as a product.

The present traditions of UK RE tend to be content-driven (e.g. learning about religions) or passive (learning from 'religion' [sic]). But RE should induct children into *theologising* for themselves. Despite the 1970s tendency to relegate 'theology' to the seminary in favour of 'neutral' phenomenological RS, theology is simply the study of religion from a declared perspective: theism, agnosticism, etc.

Theology can make people religiously literate by offering hermeneutic keys for narratives, insider views of where doctrines and beliefs came from, etc. If people engage in theological questions and issues, the point of studying religions becomes clearer, but the RE process becomes neither passive for the student (absorbing what the great masters and mistresses of the religious life have done and said and then being tested on knowledge and understanding) nor subsumed into PSE or some other student-centred but religion-exempt exercise. When people theologise, they are active participants in debate, in dialogue with different traditions, and more aware of their own. ICT may offer new ways of interacting theologically.

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Appendix 2 – Consultation Analysis

Introduction

This consultation was conducted nationally prior to the St Gabriel's Centenary Conference, *RE – Essence and Development*, which was held on 30 September 1999. The intention was to obtain as many views and ideas as possible, which could then inform the conference discussions.

Three questions were asked:

- Please identify *up to three* developments which have taken place over the last five years at your own local and/or national level which you feel have helped to improve RE's status and standing within the curriculum.
- Please identify *up to three* future developments at your own local and/or national level which you feel would particularly help to improve RE's status and standing within the curriculum.
- What relationship, if any, do you think there should be between RE and the various elements of the framework for PSHE and Citizenship within the school curriculum?

The third question was discussed with John Keast of QCA, who had been working on this issue on behalf of QCA. We are grateful for his advice.

Method

Details of the consultation were circulated to:

- readers of *RE Today* (June 1999 – circulation 8,300). An article explained the consultation and detailed the questions, inviting readers to participate;
- recipients of the St Gabriel's Programme newsletter – 750 RE professionals, including all diocesan and LEA RE advisers, and 400 RE teachers and co-ordinators;
- everyone invited to the conference.

Recipients were asked to pass the details to their colleagues, or in the case of organisations, to their members. The closing date for replies was 31 July 1999.

This was after the end of the consultation on the Secretary of State's proposals for curriculum change.

Inevitably, respondents were self-selecting. Efforts were made to encourage responses from teachers: the consultation details specified that some individual respondents would be invited to participate in the conference and that cover costs would be paid to enable RE teachers or co-ordinators to do so. In addition, time was provided at the St Gabriel's Programme RE Teacher Weekend for delegates to discuss the consultation questions.

Some respondents did not limit themselves to three points as requested when answering questions one and two. All the points they raised were included in the analysis. Not all respondents answered all three questions.

Where responses received from teachers were at variance with those from non-teaching RE professionals, or supported issues not normally perceived as important to teachers, this was noted.

An overview of responses

Altogether replies were received from 28 groups of RE teachers (covering 250 individual teachers between them), and from representatives of 22 RE-related organisations. Additional individual replies were received from 7 teachers and 10 other RE professionals. Given the nature of the consultation, this is a very encouraging response, and can be taken as representative of many of those working in RE.

Question 1

Three main developments emerged as being widely perceived to have improved the status of RE.

- RE GCSE Short Courses. The majority of responses mentioned this. Over half of these responses came from groups of teachers. Comments included:
  - 'the GCSE short courses have enabled many more students to study RE to an examination level'
  - 'provided a framework for accreditation for all students at the end of 11 years of RE'
  - 'more taking A level'.
- Agreed Syllabuses, both in principle and in practice, were mentioned by a considerable number of respondents. Responses from groups of teachers tended to praise them more generally, probably because the teachers were using different syllabuses. However, two-fifths of responses praising a particular Agreed Syllabus came from teachers. The requirement to review Agreed Syllabuses was important to a small group. A few of those who praised Agreed Syllabuses also

valued the Model Syllabuses.

- The effectiveness of Ofsted. A third of all responses mentioned this, half of which were from groups of teachers. Comments included:
  - 'the pressure which Ofsted has placed upon headteachers to fulfil their statutory obligations in relation to RE'
  - 'the role of Ofsted in highlighting attainment, progress, response and the quality of teaching in RE'.

Other developments regarded by roughly a quarter of the responses as having helped improve the status of RE were:

- national events, such as the RE Festival and JC 2000;
- RE as part of the core in the primary phase.

A number of responses (between 4 and 10 in each case) mentioned:

- the appointment of RE Advisers (diocesan or LEA) (9). RE Advisers were mentioned again in responses to question 2;
- local Inset (8);
- local networks (6 – all these responses were from teachers);
- Dearing's recommendation of 5% of curriculum time for RE (4 – all these responses were from teacher groups). This issue was mentioned by teacher groups in response to question 2;
- RE's contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (5);
- more resources (4 – all these responses were from teachers);
- QCA advice/guidance (4). This was mentioned again in responses to question 2.

Question 2

Unsurprisingly, there was considerably less consensus in answering this question. A number of ideas were generated, but in many cases, featured in only one response. The two areas of most concern were national standards and training, particularly in-service training. In each of these instances, over half of the responses raised the issue, and these two areas were by far the most significant in the responses received.

- Training. There was a strong feeling that more training was required, particularly in-service training, to improve the quality of teaching. The primary phase, mixed mode courses for co-ordinators and training for non-specialists were identified as particular areas of concern. A few teachers wanted a national programme of training, and some called for more government funding.
- National Standards. A considerable number of respondents wanted national standards or levels of attainment, but one response actively opposed this, arguing that RE had a distinctive status and should not be treated the same as other curriculum subjects. A small number (3

responses) wanted RE as part of the national curriculum. A slightly larger number (6) wanted a national Agreed Syllabus. These 9 responses came entirely from teacher groups. One individual respondent wanted national co-ordination of the subject to reduce the subject's dependence on LEAs or individual schools.

Additionally, reasonable numbers of responses (between 7 and 11) mentioned each of the following areas.

- Networking. Several respondents called for better local links, with a couple of responses saying this was particularly needed in the primary phase, where good practice could be shared. There was also a call for regional conferences.
- ICT. There was a clearly perceived need for more use of ICT in RE, and for a better-developed and -understood rationale for this.
- Some respondents wanted more national events to promote RE, including another National RE Festival and the use of the millennium as an opportunity to raise the subject's status.
- Some responses from teacher groups wanted improvements to the status of RE in terms of time allocation in schools (in particular, the application in practice of the Dearing proposals). Some respondents called for more support from the SMT or headteacher. There was a suggestion that RE should be part of the core in the secondary phase.
- A number of teacher groups drew particular attention to KS 5. It was felt that more RE was needed post-sixteen. There was a suggestion of further integration with vocational courses, and another suggestion of a modular approach.
- Multi-faith RE was another area where more practical help was required, focussed by one respondent on primary RE. There were several requests for more opportunities for pupils to visit faith communities.

A number of issues were raised by smaller numbers of respondents (between 2 and 6). These included the following points.

- The role of the LEA. Two responses suggested that LEAs should be required to have an RE Adviser. It is perhaps surprising that so few responses highlighted this, an area of concern for many RE organisations since the reorganisation of LEAs into unitary authorities. Nine responses to question 1 listed the appointment of an RE Adviser as having helped to improve the status of RE.
- The role of QCA. There were requests for schemes of work supporting recent curriculum developments to be produced, and for more guidance in general.
- Special Educational Needs. Three responses wanted more work to be done at this level.

- Collective Worship. There were a few calls to end Collective Worship, and a number asking for a rationale for RE distinct from Collective Worship.
- More resources. Only three responses called for more resources, two of which came from were teacher groups. This is perhaps fewer than might have been expected.
- There were some requests for more government support, including a public statement from David Blunkett supporting RE.
- Two responses raised the issue of 'learning from' RE; one suggested classroom-based research on it, the other asked for more guidance. It is perhaps surprising that not more respondents raised this issue.

Other suggestions included from individual teacher groups:

- removing the conscience clause;
- educating influential people about RE;
- improving communication between QCA, LEAs, SACREs and schools.

Question Three

This question produced a wide range of views, and considerable ambiguity. Many respondents were clearly not yet decided on what the relationship should be between RE and the various elements of PSHE and Citizenship. Some had not even decided if there should be any relationship. Most responses contained a variety of arguments, although the responses from teachers were often less ambiguous and more likely to express reservations, particularly about practical arrangements for the curriculum changes.

Among one-third of responses from which it was possible to detect a strong general position on whether there should be a relationship, opinion was divided equally.

Of the respondents whose general position was discernible, those who were teachers were much more likely to view any relationship negatively. There was a strong sense among their replies that RE should maintain a separate position. Their biggest concern was that Citizenship and PSHE would deprive RE of curriculum time. These teachers also thought that RE is a distinct subject, no more linked to PSHE and Citizenship than any other. One response from a group of teachers said that other subjects might be better placed than RE to make a relationship with PSHE and Citizenship, while another said there ought to be a link between every subject. Some of these teachers also thought that RE teachers should not be expected to teach PSHE; one response said that to do so would lower the status of RE.

Underlying all the negative comments about a possible relationship there was a sense that RE would suffer if linked to PSHE and Citizenship. This is not at all

surprising, given that all these respondents were writing from the perspective of RE professionals. One view that received support was most neatly summarised by the respondent who wrote ' RE should not be subsumed within a "catch-all"! curriculum area, which is likely to be dominated by the Government's current agenda.' One respondent said , 'Care should be taken to ensure that RE does not feel compelled to jump onto every new bandwagon and risk losing its status as a subject in its own right.' The danger to RE was perceived by one respondent as being a shift of focus to the socio-ethics content of religion, at the expense of other aspects. Another response, from a group of teachers, feared that RE would lose its questioning and spiritual aspects if it was seen as PSHE. There was, however, a further fear that RE would have to assume aspects of PSHE and Citizenship in order to survive, and a sense that RE teachers would do this if necessary.

The majority of those respondents who were positive about a relationship between RE and PSHE and Citizenship saw clear 'relationships between the three and distinctive areas for each'. Several respondents suggested that an audit of RE would identify areas of overlap, and enable the subjects to function separately. There was a strong feeling that many of the aspects of PSHE and Citizenship were already covered by RE. One respondent listed several items in the curriculum proposals that could be considered in 'learning from' or 'learning about' religion. Close liaison and interlinking is needed, not least to ensure pupils do not get different messages from different teachers. One respondent saw strong potential for interlinking, and several respondents saw this as occurring in areas such as rights, responsibilities, community, identity and belonging. This was seen by some as a genuine opportunity for a cross-curricular and team approach.

Several respondents saw Citizenship as the secular side of RE, needing to be underpinned by beliefs and values. Some respondents thought RE should be proactive and engage with Citizenship and PSHE, taking a lead in planning these subjects. This was extended by other respondents to cover the rest of the curriculum. Both those respondents who favoured a relationship, and those who did not, emphasised that PSHE should relate to all aspects of the curriculum. One respondent called for 'less defending of perceived distinctive territories and more recognition that both religious and non-religious beliefs are significant in the development of values, attitudes and choices.'

One respondent was positively encouraged by the thought that RE could usefully be part of Citizenship education, and an element of PSHE. Another felt that giving the moral aspects of the subject to Citizenship would enable RE to concentrate more on the study of religion.

There was some criticism of the Secretary of State's consultation papers, and one respondent felt Bernard Crick's 'personal secular stance' had been 'privileged in the curriculum review as no ideology or religion ever should be.' Several respondents wanted more clarity about the proposals.

The responses revealed many different perceptions of education and RE, only a few of which were discussed explicitly. One respondent saw the current notion of education as too limited. Another suggested a more radical review, splitting the confused areas into RE (Attainment Target 1[Learning about Religions]), Moral Education, Citizenship, and Relationships, all of which would be National Curriculum subjects. One respondent pointed out the irony that RE, PSHE and Citizenship would all be taught mostly by non-specialists.

Conclusion

As was hoped, the consultation succeeded in collating a wide range of ideas and opinions. These provided a useful source of discussion at the centenary conference.

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Appendix 3 – The St Gabriel's Programme

The St Gabriel's Programme supports Religious Education, especially through action research, in-service training and seminars. It is a collaboration between the St Gabriel's Trust and Culham College Institute.

The St Gabriel's Programme:

- promotes national collaboration
- identifies and addresses unmet needs
- brings RE teachers together
- develops skills
- builds on good practice in RE
- benefits teachers, trainers and learners.

Since 1997, the St Gabriel's Programme has brought together 200 RE teachers annually for a weekend's in-service training, 'The RE Teacher Weekend'. In 1999, the Programme also supported 'Raising Standards in RE', a residential conference for RE teachers in the North West. It also supports RE in-service training through action research, running an action research project involving 20 organisations and offering grants to clusters of schools undertaking teacher-led INSET.

Two previous national conferences, 'RE: The Way Ahead?', held in 1992, and 'National Collaboration in RE', held in 1995, made significant contributions to RE. The first conference led to the development of model syllabuses. The 1995 conference saw the announcement of short-course GCSEs in RE and the National RE Festival.

The programme has organised and supported a wide range of seminars, intended to facilitate collaboration, share best practice and develop the subject. Recent work in this area includes:

- Sharing Ideas: RE and the Millennium
- RE Futures – in collaboration with Professional Council for RE
- Clergy and RE in Schools
- Christian content in PGCE courses
- Research in RE
- Cathedral Education Centres

- RE 16–19
- AREIAC (inspectors and advisers) regional seminars on attainment
- Christian Theology and Education.

Additionally, the St Gabriel's Programme supports the Engaging the Curriculum project and a national distance learning MA in RE. It has also produced a register of research in RE. Publications include *The RE Directory*, a first-stop resource document for teachers; *Teaching about Science and Religion* by Michael Poole; and *Collective Worship Reviewed*, the report on a national consultation, part-funded by the programme.

There is a twice-yearly newsletter, *Supporting RE*, which is received by all RE professionals who have been involved in the programme.

Appendix 4 – Delegate List

Albans, Phil *Chair, PCfRE*

Alves, Colin *Trustee, St Gabriel's Trust*

Amer, Fatma *Director of Education and Interfaith Relations, Islamic Cultural Centre and London Central Mosque*

Attfield, D G

Austin, Jane *Inspector/Adviser, Salford Education Centre*

Barnes, Phillip *Lecturer in Religious Studies and Education, University of Ulster*

Barron, Sonia *RE Teacher*

Bartlett, Doreen *Farmington Millennium Award Holder*

Baxter, Angelika *Peterborough Multicultural Education Service*

Berrisford, Lewis *Theology and Education MA Student, King's College, London*

Bloodworth, Nigel *General Adviser (RE), West Sussex County Council*

Borthwick, Linda *Director, Southwark Diocesan Board of Education*

Bowerman, Rachel *RE General Adviser, Enfield LEA*

Brimicombe, Mark *RE Adviser, Devon Curriculum Service*

Brooke, Jane *CEM/NASACRE*

Broomfield, Colin *Secretary to Trustees, Hockerill Trust*

Brown, Alan *Schools Officer (RE), Church of England Board of Education*

Brown, Alison *RE Teacher, Parkview Primary School, Derby*

Brown, Erica *Head of Special Education, Westminster College*

Burton, Peter *Publisher for RE, Stanley Thornes Publishers*

Butler, Roger *RE Inspector, Ealing London Borough Council*

Cantley, Peter *Head of RE, Twyford C of E High School*

Chadwick, Priscilla *Chair, St Gabriel's Trust*

Chipperton, Jane *Teacher, St Albans Diocese*

Cooling, Trevor *Head of Centre, The Stapleford Centre*

Copley, Terence *University of Exeter*

Coster, Catherine *Adviser to Schools, Diocese of Bristol*

Croft, J A *Farmington Institute*

Cush, Denise *Senior Lecturer in RE/ Acting Head of Dept (Study of Religion), Bath Spa University College*

Dainton, Sheila *Policy Unit, ATL*

Davies, C *Head of RE, Christ the King Catholic School*

Davies, Paula *Head of RE, St David's High, Saltrey*

D'Cruz, Karl *SACRE Adviser, Hackney LEA*

Erricker, Clive *Children and Worldviews Project/ Reader in Study of Religions, University College, Chichester*

Fitzjohn, Sue *RE Co-ordinator, Head, St John's CE First School*

Francis, Ros *Head of RS, St Mary's School*

Gay, John *Director, Culham College Institute*

Greenough, Jan *Project Officer, Culham College Institute*

Griffin, Margaret *President, SHA /Headteacher, Axton Chase School*

Grove, Julie *RE Adviser, Solihull*

Guy, Shane *Trustee, St Gabriel's Trust*

Hall, John *General Secretary, Church of England Board of Education*

Hammond, John *Lecturer in RE/S, University College of St Martin, Lancaster*

Harle, Julia *RE Co-ordinator, Northbourne CE Primary School*

Hartland, Ian *Adviser for RE, Kent Advisory Service*

Hartley, Gill *Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education*

Hartley, Peter *Director of Education, Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education*

Hill, Gwen *Head of Department, RE, Minsthorpe Community College*

Hoddinott, Brenda *Open Learning Course Leader, RE Today/CEM*

Holden, J A *Head of RE, Dallam School*

Holt, Ann *Director, CARE for Education*

Hookway, Sue *Head of Humanities and RE, Gillotts School, Henley*

Hopkins, Paul *Freelance Educational Consultant*

Hopper, Catherine *Education Officer, The Clear Vision Trust*

Howson, John *Education Data Surveys Ltd*

Hughes, Fred *Head of School, School of Theology & RS, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education*

Hull, John *University of Birmingham*

Humphrey, Peter *Catholic Education Service*

Jackson, Peter *Chaplain and Head of RS, Harrow School /Chairman of ISRSA*

Jackson, Robert *Institute of Education, University of Warwick*

Jinks, Yvonne *RE Teacher, Duchess's High School, Alnwick, Northumberland*

Keast, John *Professional Officer for RE, QCA*

Kendall, Sue *Lecturer in Primary RE, Goldsmiths College*

Lamb, Anne *Trustee, St Gabriel's Trust*

Lancaster, Gabriel *Chairman, Kent SACRE*

Lang, Roger *Ulverston Victoria High School*

Langtree, Graham *RE Adviser, Dorset LEA*

Lavender, Stephen *County Adviser for RE; Association of RE Advisers, Inspectors and Consultants*

Lazenby, Diana *Senior Project Associate, Culham College Insitute*

Leeson, John *NASACRE, Hounslow*

Leivers, Phil *Farmington Fellow / Head of Department, Lode Heath School, Solihull*

Logan, John *Director,BFSS National RE Centre*

Lord, Eric *Culham College Institute*

Marshall-Taylor, Geoff *Executive Producer, BBC*

Mason, Marilyn *Education Officer, British Humanist Association*

Matthews, Anne *Culham College Institute*

McCarthy, Kevin *Farmington Fellow, Remembering Education*

Mears, Mary *RMEP*

Milmer, Loraine *RE Co-ordinator, Princes Risborough School*

Ogden, Vanessa *Hurlingham and Chelsea High School*

Oliver, George *Jerusalem Trust*

Orchard, Janet *National Society Fellow/Head of RE & Humanities, Central Foundation Girls' School*

Orchard, Stephen *Director, CEM*

Parfitt, Tony *Senior Project Associate, Culham College Institute*

Pemberton, Eric *Adviser, Leicester LEA*

Pendlebury-Green, Arthur *Trustee, St Gabriel's Trust*

Pestridge, Jenny *Deputy Diocesan Director of Education, Exeter Diocese*

Pickup, Maggie *Director, St Peter's Saltley Trust*

Poole, Michael *Visiting Research Fellow, King's College London*

Price, Christine *RE Co-ordinator, Carswell Primary School*

Priestley, Jack

Prior, Lesley *Advisory Teacher for RE, London Borough of Hounslow*

Quinn, Sarah *Head of Sixth Form, Central Foundation Girls' School*

Rawle, Martin *CEM Wales*

Renshaw, Tina *RETRI Development Officer, Culham College Institute*

Robinson, Carol *St Gabriel's Development Officer, Culham College Institute*

Robson, Geoff *Educational Consultant*

Rogers, James *Professional Officer, TTA*

Rogers, Martin *Director, Farmington Institute for Christian Education*

Rudge, Linda *Director, Keswick Hall Centre for R&D in RE*

Sajid, Imam Abduljalil *Chair, Muslim Council of Britain/Director, The Brighton Islamic Mission*

Shoreland, John *Catholic Education Service*

Singh, Kanwaljit Kaur *Chair, British Sikh Education Council*

Smith, D Linnet *Research Associate, Centre for Theology and Education, Trinity College, Carmarthen*

Smith, Maurice *General Adviser, Humanities, Tameside MBC*

Steed, Mark *RE Teacher, Oundle School*

Stockley, Beth *Advisory Teacher for Religious Education, Education Standards Unit, Brent*

Strange, Fenella *RE Teacher*

Taylor, Jeremy *Chair, EFTRE/ Project Director, REfIT*

Thompson, Jan *RE Adviser, Bromley LEA*

Threadkell, Sarah *RE Co-ordinator and IAPS RE Co-ordinator, The Manor Preparatory School*

Totterdell, Michael *Dean of Teacher Education, Institute of Education*

Tulloch, Karen *RE Co-ordinator, Broadwater Primary School*

Uden, Paul *Secondary School RE Adviser, Westminster Diocese Education Service*

Vale, Isobel *Oxfordshire Schools Inspectorate*

Walshe, Meg *Society of the Sacred Heart*

Weatherley, Lilian *Diocesan RE Adviser, Winchester Diocese*

Wood, Gillian *Education Secretary, Free Churches Council*

Wood, Kathleen *Education Officer, The Methodist Church*

Wragg, Ian *Chair, RE Council of England and Wales*