



Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

The Very Reverend Doctor John Hall
Chair of the Commission on Religious Education
c/o Religious Education Council
CAN Mezzanine
49-51 East Road
London N1 6AH

06 DEC 2018

Dr D Hall,

I want to thank you for all the hard work undertaken by the Commission on Religious Education over the past two years, culminating in the final report "Religion and Worldviews: the way forward". I recognize the immense effort the Commission has put into gathering evidence and views, providing insightful analysis of issues, and proposing actions to address these.

It is clear that you have secured a general consensus among those with a specific interest in Religious Education (RE) on some important matters. Both subsequent media coverage and correspondence I have received also make it clear, as one might expect, that some stakeholders have concerns that making statutory the inclusion of "worldviews" risks diluting the teaching of RE, and concerns as well about some of the finer detail of the Commission's recommendations.

I appreciate the issues that your report highlights. It is mandatory for all state funded schools to teach RE and it is important that they do this well. Good quality religious education not only helps schools meet their legal duty to promote children and young people's spiritual and moral development. It also gives them knowledge of the values and traditions of Britain and other countries, and so fosters mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Therefore, it is important to continue to work hard to recruit new RE teachers and to ensure that they acquire good subject knowledge. This is why I recently announced improvements to bursaries for initial teacher training so that RE trainees with a 1st, 2:1, 2:2, PhD or Master's will now receive £9,000.

I have also announced funding for RE subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses of up to 8 weeks. These courses are designed to help these applicants gain the depth of knowledge needed to train to teach their chosen subject. Candidates that take SKE courses may have studied the subject at A-level, but not at degree level, or have studied an unrelated degree but have relevant professional experience. Eligible candidates will receive a training

This page is intentionally left blank