

Promoting and delivering RS effectively at Key Stage 4

Religious Studies

What is the big picture? – preparing the ground for your case

- Are you/the SLT aware of **requirements for RE** in your school context? E.g. [LA maintained](#) (see also page 6 of this [statutory guidance](#)), academy/free school ([see DfE guidance](#)), VA/VC?
- **What are the school's priorities?** E.g. Mission statement, strategic plan, values statement?
- **What do parents want?** Parent forum, governors' minutes – have parents been 'educated' about value of RE? E.g. NATRE video, open days, parent evenings?
- **Socio, cultural and economic context** of the community – demographics, political climate locally, changes in these?
- **Progression:** what are the destinations of children? How can RE contribute to securing these?

Challenges:

- changes to school performance tables that discount the GCSE short course
- over-crowding of the Key Stage 4 curriculum including the EBacc leaving less space for options and 'compulsory' subjects but [statutory requirement remains](#) (pg6)
- proposal for a compulsory EBacc at key stage 4
- a shortage of teachers trained to teach RE –[but we are campaigning](#)
- an appreciation that all GCSEs will require a similar time to teach and cannot therefore RS can be taught on a hour a week
- Ofqual requirements for **ALL** subjects in [Ofqual register](#) (120-140 guided learning hours)
- recognition that the reformed [GCSE](#) and [A level](#) RS will require more specialist knowledge and expertise and will require specialists to teach it well
- as a last resort and not initiated within the school, might someone e.g. a SACRE make a [formal complaint?](#) or for an academy [here](#)

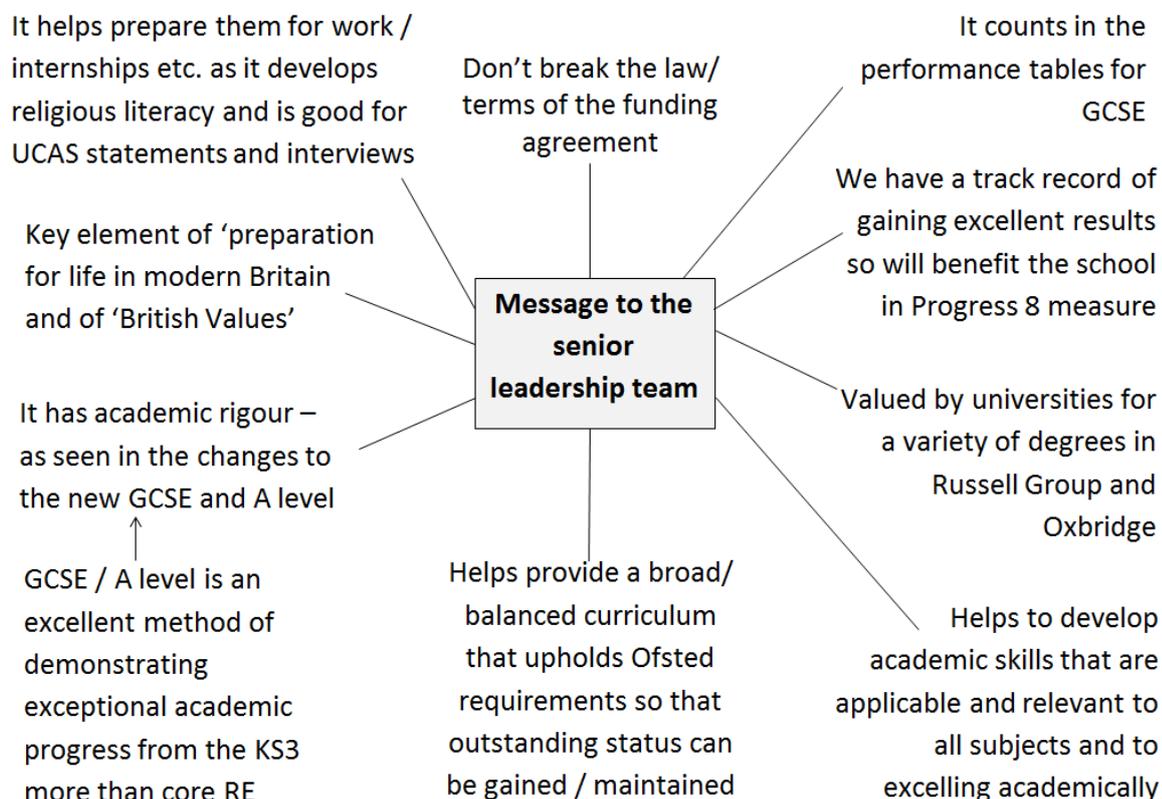
Opportunities:

- the replacement of the 5A*-C with progress 8 as the main performance measure. Can you use this to argue for GCSE full course for all?
- the emphasis in government policy on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the OFSTED framework for inspection (see page 36ff and 70ff)
- Government emphasis on British Values' in general and on "mutual respect and understanding of people with different religions and beliefs" in particular
- changes in the focus in OFSTED inspections to include 'preparation for life in modern Britain' as one of the elements of reports
- the changes to the legal duties on schools to publish information on their curriculum for each subject for each year group on their websites and OFSTED monitoring of this in relation to narrowing the curriculum (see statement on Birmingham schools Ofsted enquiry)
- the reform of GCSE RS with the aim to remove the criticism that some GCSE RS specifications are not academically rigorous

Wider benefits of studying RS

- Fostering positive community relations e.g. All party parliamentary report
- Contributes to SMSCD and your school ethos: see DfE guidance
- European context - Toledo principles
- Popularity with students see NATRE videos
- Valued by parents and employers see RE for REal' findings
- Progression routes: e.g. 'facilitating subjects –the myth'
- Personal development e.g. Character/virtue education e.g. CE discussion paper (Oct 2015)
- Preparation for life in modern Britain: e.g. tolerance and respect, religious literacy
- Following an academically rigorous course that develops valuable skills e.g. critical thinking, debating skills

How can I make the case for examination RS?



Building a strategy

- Select the most relevant arguments for your context
- Find your allies: LA/diocesan advisers, other HT, other departments/faculties, 'key players' in the school
- Pace the debate – pick your battles
- Consider a range of possible curricular patterns
- promote the status e.g., REQM CDQS, 'visitors' e.g. politicians – use the media toolkit
- Celebrate success
- Use the data e.g. 2015 GCSE progress 8 data
- Curriculum design in the best interests of the students
- Be positive and constructive at all times!