



A report on the state of
**Hinduism in Religious Education
in UK schools**

14th January 2021



INSIGHT UK
~ SOCIAL MOVEMENT OF BRITISH HINDUS & INDIANS ~



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INSIGHT UK

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Executive Summary

Executive summary

INSIGHT UK is pleased to present the report on the state of Hinduism in Religious Education (RE) in UK schools. INSIGHT UK is an organisation that aims to address the concerns of the British Hindu and British Indian communities.

In 2020, INSIGHT UK conducted a project with a team comprised of highly experienced members of the Hindu community, amongst which are well-known academics, including professors and teachers. The project goal was to assess the current state of Hinduism in RE in UK schools and recommend changes to improve it.

This project was supported by Hindu Council UK, Hindu Forum of Britain, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK), National Council of Hindu Temples UK and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK). We are thankful to everyone who has contributed to this project.

Key Findings

The main findings from this survey concluded:

- 97% of survey respondents say it is important and paramount for their child to learn about Hinduism.
- 98% of survey respondents say the study of Hinduism in RE is low quality and deficient.
- 75% of respondents feel that Hinduism is not taught in a positive light.
- 86% of the respondents are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the teaching of Hinduism in schools within the United Kingdom.
- 76% of primary school parents are unhappy about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.
- 81% of Key Stage 3 and 87% of Key Stage 4 parents are discontented about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.
- There is growing evidence of inaccurate resources used by classroom teachers for teaching Hinduism.
- Hindu parents and pupils feel they do not have a choice to study Hinduism at GCSE level.

Hinduism is the third largest religion practised in the UK, yet this report finds that the teaching of Hinduism in mainstream UK schools is very limited, flawed and often ignored. This imbalance has led to an inaccurate portrayal of Hinduism and can result in feelings of negativity and ignorance when meeting UK citizens belonging to the Hindu faith.

It is found that the lack of awareness and an incorrect portrayal of Hinduism in RE results in:

1. Depriving students of a world view and understanding of the nature, diversity and impact of religion and belief in the contemporary world.
2. Depriving the knowledge of the world's third-largest religion which is followed by one of the most contributing minority communities in the UK.
3. Insensitivity towards Hindu people and their beliefs resulting in bullying and hate crimes.

British Hindus are a well-integrated and highly contributing community in British society. Hinduism teaches values such as peace, universality, inclusivity and one-ness. These values when taught in the right context can enrich and build a more inclusive society. Unfortunately, the current RE curriculum and its teaching of Hinduism does not correctly represent factual Hindu beliefs and values.

All maintained schools have a statutory duty to teach RE. This report provides evidence of the views on how Hinduism is currently taught as part of the RE curriculum. This report concludes with recommended suggestions to address the problems identified at various levels.

We held discussions with many Hindu academics and five major Hindu organisations in the UK supporting this project about the way forward. We are happy to learn that this has resulted in the formation of an independent organisation, the Hindu Education Board (HEB) UK.

Introduction

Introduction

Welcome to the report on the state of Hinduism in Religious Education in UK schools.

One of the four fundamental British values (Department of Education, 2014) is “Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith”. Religious Education (RE) makes a significant contribution to realising this value. It also plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society.

Additionally, RE fosters civilised debate, reasoned argument and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world (Ofsted, 2013).

Section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 (Department of Education, 1996) requires the RE syllabus to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are represented in Great Britain.

Section 78 (1) of the Education Act 2002 (Department of Education, 2002) states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which ‘promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life’.

The UK has a diverse society and our children need an understanding of other religions and world views. Learning about the beliefs and traditions of other people promotes and enables pupils to combat prejudice about the religion and people. Developing such tolerance is crucial in a world that is increasingly fraught with hatred, division and extremism.

During the research and consultation phase of this project, many Hindu community members and organisations raised their view on the lack of representation for Hinduism in RE.

Due to inadequate as well as inaccurate teaching of Hinduism in UK Schools as part of RE, there is a lack of awareness amongst Hindu and non-Hindu students about the Hindu religion. This is leading to conversion issues, bullying and an inferiority complex amongst Hindu children.

The Hindu community in the UK have a circa 1 million population with one of the highest employment rates compared to other religions. They have the highest number of individuals who obtain a degree or equivalent qualification (Office of National Statistics, 2020). As a result, they are one of the highest net contributors of tax per head.

The community is very proud of their contribution; however, many Hindus feel they are not represented adequately and feel discriminated against when it comes to RE in schools.

The research, consultations and survey evidence reveal that pupils leave school with a wrong and sparse understanding of Hinduism. Many inaccuracies of severe gravity were found in the teaching of Hinduism in RE. In the majority of schools, Hinduism is not taught at all for GCSE.

"The misinformation of Hinduism in UK schools is a disservice to Religious Education."

-Professor Nawal Prinja. INSIGHT UK webinar, October 2020.

"The choice is taken away from pupils and parents to accurately study Hinduism in many UK schools".

- Asmita Bhudia, Hinduism Tutor and School Teacher. Focus group with RE tutors, August 2020.

"So many things have come up from this research, it is important for us to recognise them and take it forward in terms of what can be done about this.

Some very concerning factors are bullying, discrimination and under-representation is something we need to tackle".

- Dr Ramesh Pattni OBE. INSIGHT UK webinar, October 2020.

This project aims to ensure the teaching of Hinduism in RE is accurate and available in all UK schools. This report covers the status of Hinduism in RE and sets out recommendations on how to improve the situation.

We hope that you find this report notable and insightful.

Published 14th January 2021

Project Methodology

Project Methodology

The first phase of the project consisted of desk research to investigate current reports, previous surveys and publications covering Hinduism in RE.

This research was then used in the second phase to design questions that could be asked to four focus groups with participants contributing from all over the UK. More than 40 subject matter experts participated in the consultation phase.

Hindu academics and experts in the education field were also interviewed via video conferencing.

In the third phase, an online survey was led through the INSIGHT UK website and via social media. The primary audience of the survey was Hindu parents whose children are currently enrolled in UK schools. However, it was also open to Hindu students who have recently completed their secondary education, alongside Hindu parent governors and Hindu representatives on Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

The survey had responses from 117 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) across England and Wales. There were also many responses from Scotland and Northern Ireland. The survey was distributed at the start of the academic year on 12th September 2020 and ran for one month till 11th October 2020. The results were then analysed by the project team including a senior Data Scientist.

After the survey concluded, INSIGHT UK organised a live webinar on Saturday 24th October 2020 which was viewed by over 300 people. The webinar covered key survey findings and recommendations.

1) Research Phase

Phase 1 - Research Phase

The project team undertook desk research to find out more about RE, its purpose and how Hinduism in RE is taught in UK schools. The areas of research were:

- Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) reports
- Department for Education's role in children's education
- Recent studies and surveys which cover Hinduism and RE
- Current RE syllabus for teaching Hinduism in mainstream UK schools
- Representation of Hindus on Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)
- Hinduism teaching resources available (online and textbooks) for RE teachers

Key findings

Various publications were reviewed and the findings are as below.

- 1) Commission on Religious Education, Final Report, Religion and World Views: the Way Forward, September 2018 (Commission of Religious Education, 2018)
 - Despite its importance, RE is neither effective to prepare pupils adequately for the religious and belief diversity they will encounter, nor to support them to engage deeply with the questions raised by the study of worldviews.
 - The provision and quality of RE are not good enough in many schools. Weak teaching due to lack of adequate training and support for teachers. A majority of recently qualified primary teachers received fewer than three hours of subject-specific training for Hinduism in RE.
 - The new National Entitlement and the national programmes of study will only be effective if teachers have the required subject knowledge to teach them effectively.

- Teachers often lack confidence in teaching Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism as well as non-religious worldviews leading to a continuation and furtherance of unconscious bias in the minds of young children.
 - This may mean that these areas are either not covered, or covered less well, leading to an unbalanced curriculum. In addition, the new programmes of study are likely to require some updating of subject knowledge even for those who are more confident.
 - More still needs to be done to ensure that a wider range of institutional worldviews is taught, particularly Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism, which are sometimes neglected. RE needs a gear change if we are to prepare children and young people for living in the increasingly diverse world in which they find themselves.
- 2) Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK) conducted a nationwide survey in 2006 that found 107 out of the 171 LEAs did not include Hinduism in their RE syllabus.
 - 3) A BBC article on RE writes *"suggesting at least a quarter of schools break the law on teaching RE."* (BBC, 2018)
 - 4) Another BBC article covers some serious concerns (BBC, 2017)
 - By law, RE must be taught by all state-funded schools in England, with detailed syllabuses agreed locally.
 - NATRE says the data, gathered by the Department for Education in 2015 but not published until now, showed that, overall, 26% of secondary's were not offering RE lessons.
 - Among academies, which make up the majority of secondary schools, more than a third (34%) were not offering RE to 11 to 13-year-olds and almost half (44%) were not offering it to 14 to 16-year-olds.
 - 5) Ofsted Report: Religious education: realising the potential (Ofsted, 2013)
 - The teaching of RE in primary schools was poor in 6 out of 10 schools due to weaknesses in teachers' understanding of the subject, a lack of emphasis on subject knowledge, poor and fragmented curriculum planning, very weak assessment, ineffective monitoring and teachers' limited access to effective training.

6) NATRE Primary Survey 2016 (NATRE, 2016)

- More than 44% of RE teachers in primary schools do not even have a GCSE or O level in RE and 75% of those are subject leaders. This might be surprising to many, given that a GCSE short course has been the minimum legal requirement for an Agreed Syllabus to be followed in most schools in this country for more than a decade. We might have expected those who have been teaching for 5 years or less (20% of our respondents) to have studied at least a short course in RE. However, even in this group, more than one in three has no qualification in RE at all.

7) A report titled Connect British Hindus (Hindu Forum of Britain, 2006)

- There was a great deal of dissatisfaction with how children were learning about Hinduism. The needs of Hindu young people in learning about their faith were not met by the UK schools.

Although these reports have been in place for some time, it appears that there have been no actions undertaken to address issues they had highlighted.

Commonly used Hinduism teaching resources

During the research phase, below-listed resources were identified as commonly used by RE teachers to teach Hinduism:

- BBC
- Twinkl
- RE Online
- Explaining Hindu Dharma by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)
- Sixteen Sanskars in the life of Hindu by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)
- Hinduism by Seeta Lakhani (Edited by J Lakhani)
- Times Education Supplement
- Resources endorsed by exam boards

Apart from the books published by Hindu organisations, most of the resources used by RE teachers are found to have many discrepancies, inaccuracies and give a wrong portrayal of Hinduism.

It was found that many social issues like the caste system are taught exclusively as part of Hinduism. The caste system is a social issue, not a religious issue and is not limited to any one community. Our research found that all three legal cases of caste-based discrimination identified in the UK did not involve any Hindu person. Despite that, the caste system is linked just to Hinduism. Also, the findings highlight that outdated social issues like the Sati system are still taught under Hinduism in RE.

2) Consultation Phase

Phase 2 - Consultation Phase

To assess the current situation, there were consultations conducted with various focus groups as below:

- Hindu RE Teachers in UK schools.
- Tutors who teach Hinduism outside of school.
- Hindu parents of primary and secondary school-going children.
- Hindu representatives on SACRE.
- Academics with decades of experience and contributors to teaching resources mentioned above.

Key Findings

Below are the key findings from the consultation and research phases:

- Many teachers lack the training to teach the Hindu religion.
- Non-specialist teachers are sometimes used to teach RE, therefore their subject knowledge of Hinduism is often limited. This in turn leads to inadequate teaching.
- Inaccurate contents of online teaching resources. Wrongful if not malicious content regarding Hinduism was highlighted. This impacts pupil learning significantly, as false and inaccurate information on Hinduism is being taught and consumed by students.
- The government is not meeting the Hindu community's needs as schools are rewarded for teaching the easiest option, rather than giving a worldview.
- Many Hindu parents have approached their children's schools to express their concerns about the inaccuracies of Hinduism that had been taught in the classroom. There was a particular case that a parent highlighted whose child was studying RE as part of their Key Stage 3 curriculum in a UK state comprehensive school. The mother and child soon discovered that Hinduism was hardly taught as part of the RE curriculum, whilst Islam was preached and not just taught. When the mother expressed her concerns to the headteacher about the imbalance, the school asked

the mother to withdraw her son from RE. This school refused to ask the LEA to review the curriculum and bring a balance of teaching all faiths. In this instance, the child has been deprived of the right to education.

- Parents had expressed that on many occasions, the RE teacher had taught and portrayed Hinduism so negatively and inaccurately during lessons, that their Hindu child had felt extremely disappointed with RE lessons. Children have even reported that their peers expressed contempt towards them based on their misunderstanding about Hinduism.
- Some children complained that during their RE lessons, the Hindu child is found to be the expert on Hinduism and the teacher relies on the Hindu child to share knowledge of the faith with the rest of the class. This is unfair to the child and the class.
- Hindu parents and pupils do not have a choice to study Hinduism at GCSE level as the teachers, school and the LEA decide the religions of study to be taught.
- Solidifying the place of Hinduism as a GCSE seems to be an important factor in driving Hindu children and parents to attend Hinduism classes outside of school. This also gives a sense of the importance of Hinduism in RE for the Hindu community.
- Currently, the only awarding body offering Hinduism as a full course Ordinary level (O level) qualification is Cambridge Assessment International Education. This is incomparable with other faiths having more awarding organisations that offer full courses in GCSE. Hinduism is underrepresented by awarding bodies in the UK.
- There are very few awarding bodies that offer the study of Hinduism alongside the study of other religions, such as Edexcel, AQA, WJEC and OCR. Unfortunately, most UK schools opt to study Abrahamic faiths as they are easier to teach and gain better exam results as a cohort. This does not provide a world view of religions, but rather a narrow vision of beliefs. Hindu pupils that attend these schools, in many cases do not have a say in the choice of the two religions to study. Therefore, many are not able to learn about their faith, but instead, they are forced to

learn what the school chooses for them. In most cases, these are Abrahamic faiths.

- Schools are using inaccurate textbooks and teaching resources that are not a true reflection of Hinduism. This in turn perpetuates the incorrect and unsound ideas about the Hindu religion. For example, Hodder Education produced an AQA accredited textbook that demonstrates a lack of understanding of Hinduism and this publication is full of many errors.
- Teachers are choosing Abrahamic religions as this is the easiest option to teach, as often these Abrahamic religions have similarities with each other. As Christian and Muslim school student numbers are larger, the schools are also likely to choose these religions as their choice of study at GCSE. This is thought to help improve the schools' examinations scores. Therefore, the teaching of Hinduism and other religions is severely impacted.
- *"Teaching in many of the GCSE lessons observed placed too much emphasis on ways of passing the examination rather than focusing on extending pupils learning about religion and belief." [4] (Ofsted, 2013)*

3) Survey Phase

Phase 3 - Survey Phase

After completing the previous phases, there was a strong requirement to substantiate the findings with evidence-based data.

It was deemed appropriate to publish a survey to gauge sentiments from Hindu parents and validate the concerns about the availability and teaching of Hinduism in the UK. This would allow decisions to be based on objective information and provide solid recommendations.

The primary audience for the survey were Hindu parents but it was also made open to students who recently completed their studies and wanted to give feedback. The survey was structured in 6 distinct sections. Each section was optional so that specific age groups could be targeted in one survey.

- Primary school (Year 1-6)
- Secondary school: Key stage 3 (Year 7-9)
- Secondary school: Key stage 4 (Year 10-11)
- SACRE members
- School governors
- General feelings

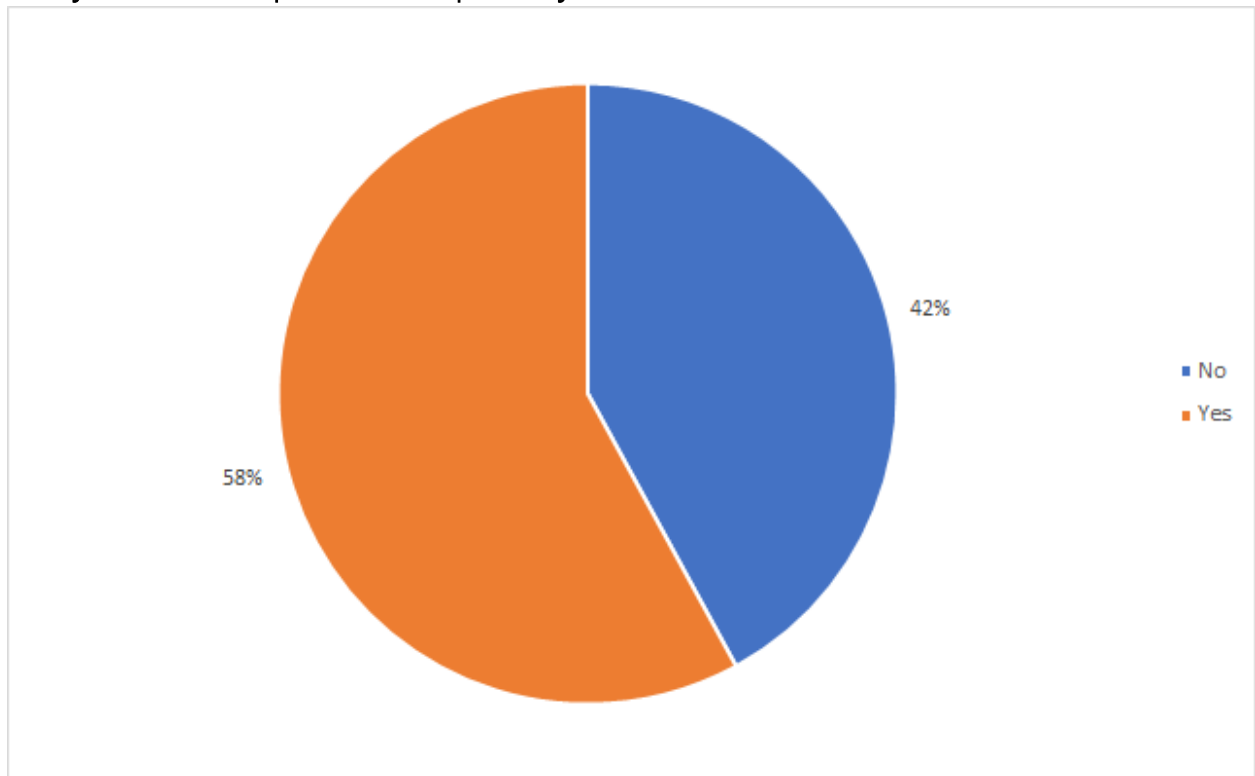
This is one of the most successful Hindu surveys in the history of the UK, based on:

- The number of responses it received.
- A high degree of confidence and a lower margin of error based on the number of responses.
- Response distribution showing good representation from all 4 countries: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Responses received from across the country not confined to the population density of the Hindu community in the UK.
- The project supported and guided by 5 major Hindu organizations in the country: Hindu Council UK, Hindu Forum of Britain, Hindu

Swayamsevak Sangh (UK), National Council of Hindu Temples UK and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK).

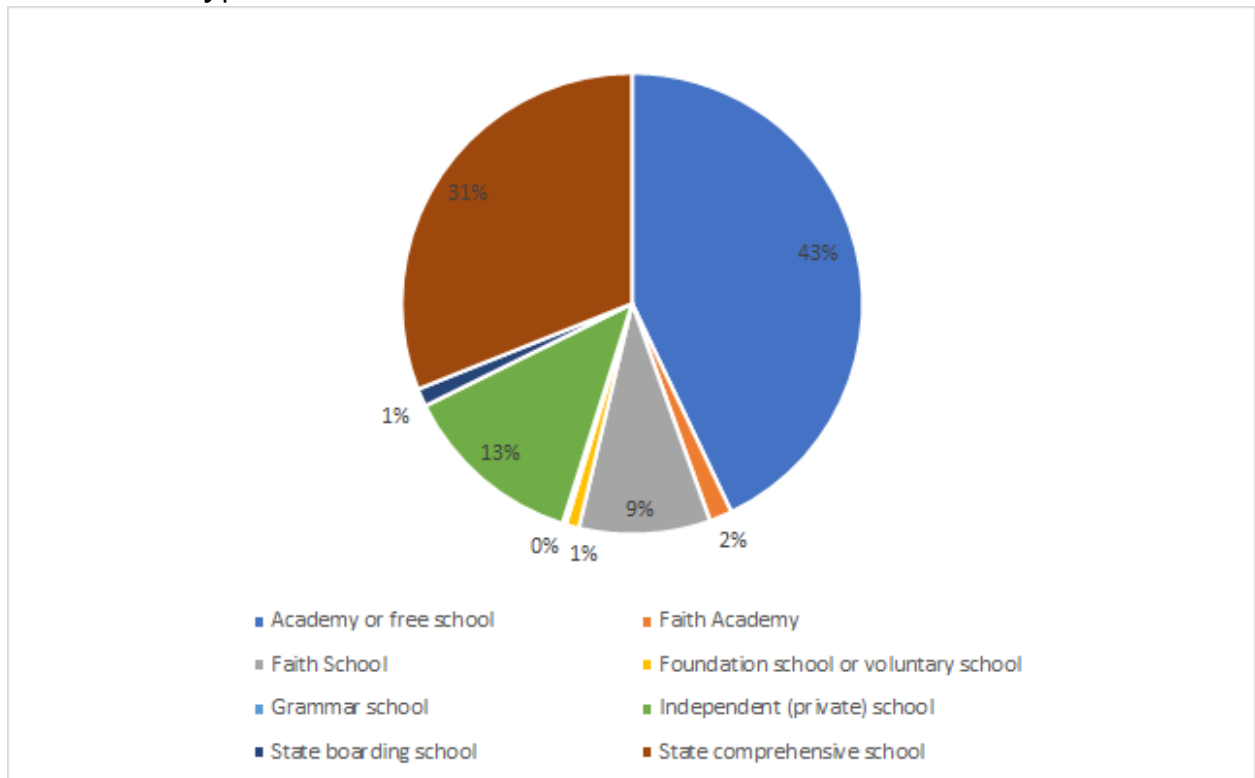
Survey findings - Primary schools (Year 1-6)

Are you a Hindu parent of a primary school child?



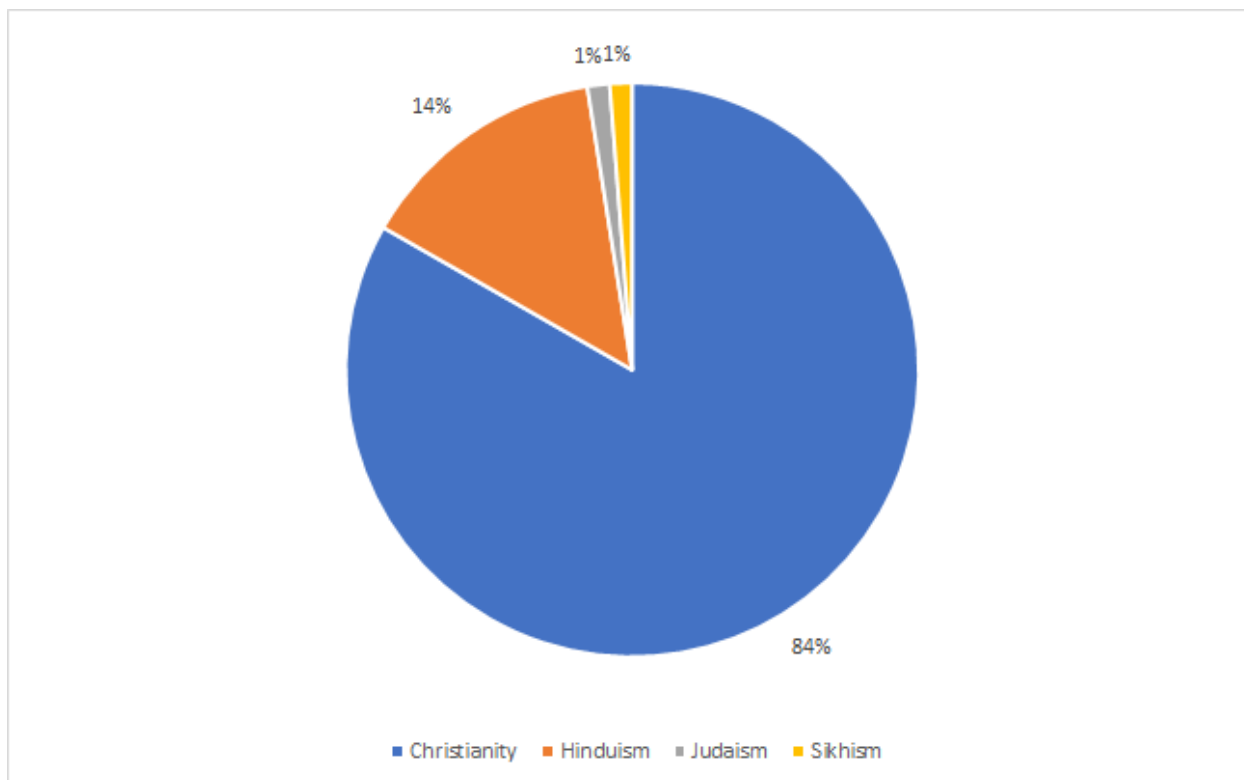
58% of respondents had a child at primary school. The Primary School section received responses from over 300 schools covering more than 150 LEAs across England, Wales, Northern Ireland & Scotland.

What is the type of school?



The vast majority of primary schools were academy schools, free schools or state comprehensive schools.

If it is a faith-based school, please select which faith it is from the options below.



The vast majority of faith schools were Christian schools.

If known, please select the resources used by the RE teacher to teach Hinduism.

Various free-text responses were given to this optional question, including:

- Twinkl (21%)
- BBC (20%)
- Explaining Hindu Dharma by VHP (UK) (6%)

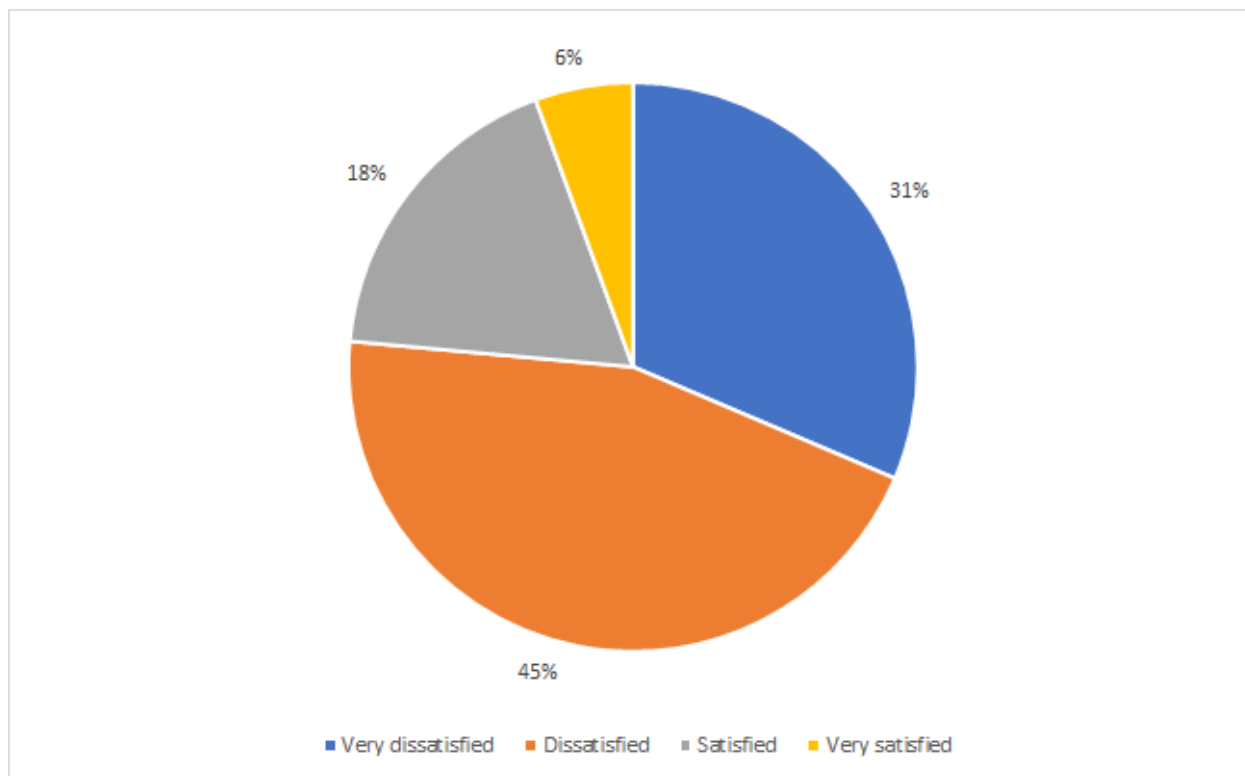
However, the majority of respondents mentioned they were not sure or aware of what resources were being used.

If known, please list the content/topics covered by the RE teacher to teach Hinduism.

Various free-text responses were given to this optional question, including but not limited to Hindu festivals, sati tradition, caste system, Ramayana, Hindu gods, gender disparity in education, slums and poverty, the concept of

Brahman, reincarnation, Hanuman is a monkey god and Ganesha is an elephant god.

If Hinduism is taught, what is your opinion on the teacher(s) knowledge of Hinduism?



76% of Hindu parents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.

Conclusion:

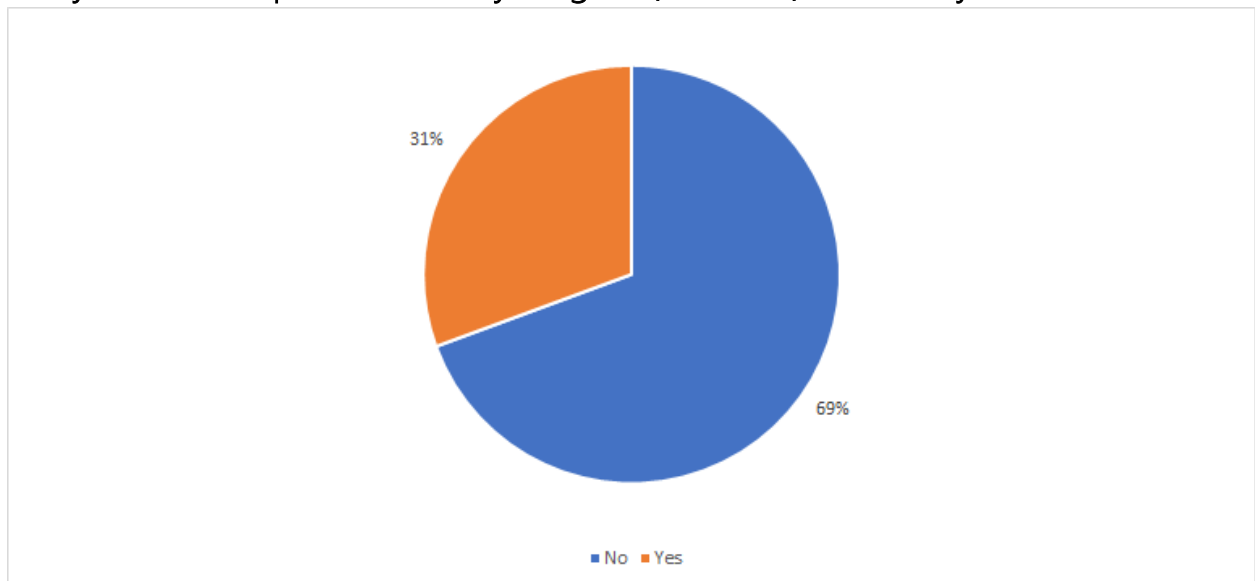
The findings demonstrate many instances of misinformation as well as social issues that are being taught as part of Hinduism in UK schools.

A survey respondent raised that their child's school in London teaches that bad Karma results in being born as an untouchable in your next birth. Untouchability is linked to the caste system which is a social issue, not a religious one and is not limited to any one community. Our research found that all three legal cases of caste-based discrimination identified in the UK did not involve any Hindu person. However, the caste system is taught in UK schools exclusively as part of Hinduism.

Also, the findings highlight that outdated social issues like the sati system are still taught under Hinduism in RE. It was noted there was an inappropriate link made between the religion and gender disparity in education in India.

Survey findings - Key stage 3 (Year 7-9)

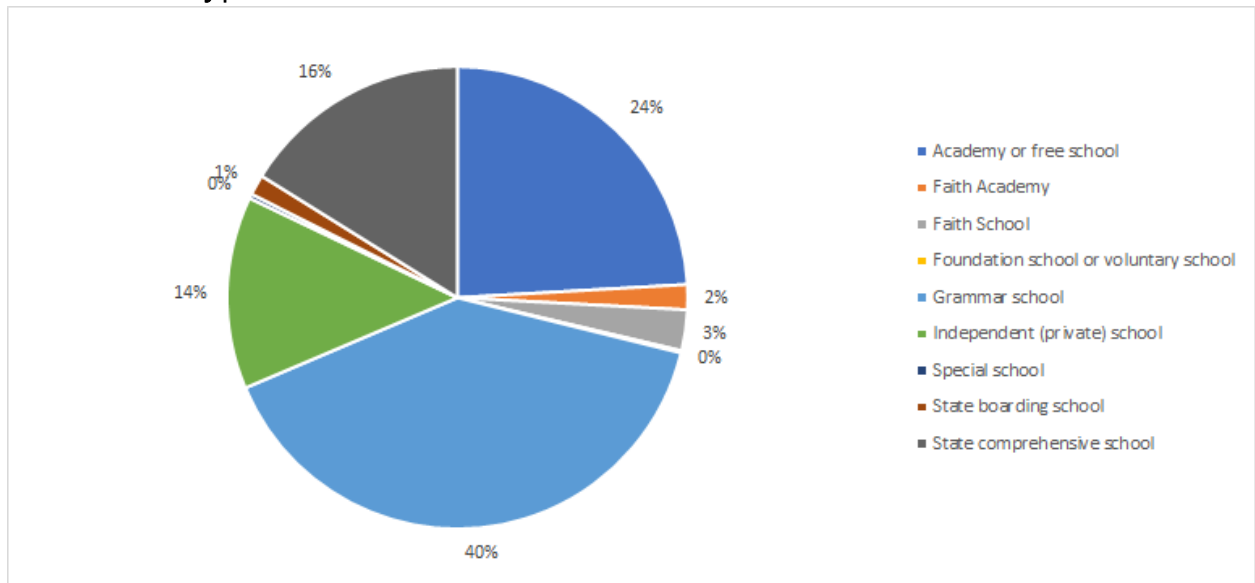
Are you a Hindu parent of a Key Stage 3 (Year 7-9) secondary school child?



31% of respondents had a child at studying at Key stage 3.

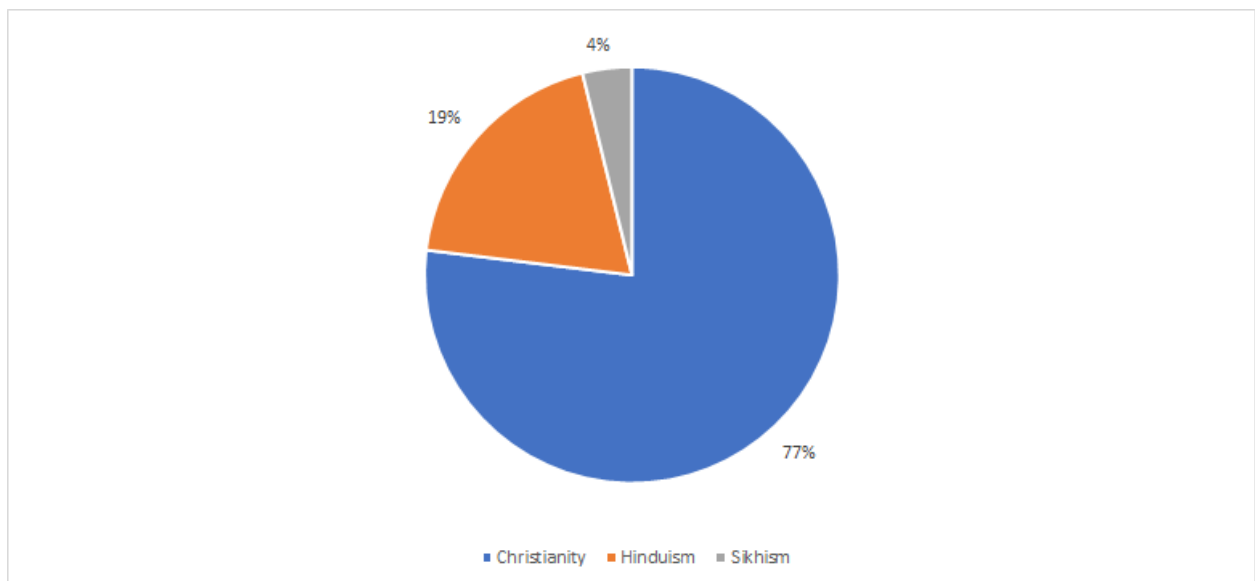
The Secondary School (Key Stage 3) section received responses from more than 400 schools covering more than 100 LEAs across England, Wales, Northern Ireland & Scotland.

What is the type of school?



There was a diverse range of schools from this age bracket. More than 80% of schools have their RE syllabus dictated by their LEAs.

If it is a faith-based school, please select which faith it is from the options below.



The vast majority of faith schools were Christian schools.

If known, please select the resources used by the RE teacher to teach Hinduism.

Various free-text responses were given to this optional question, including:

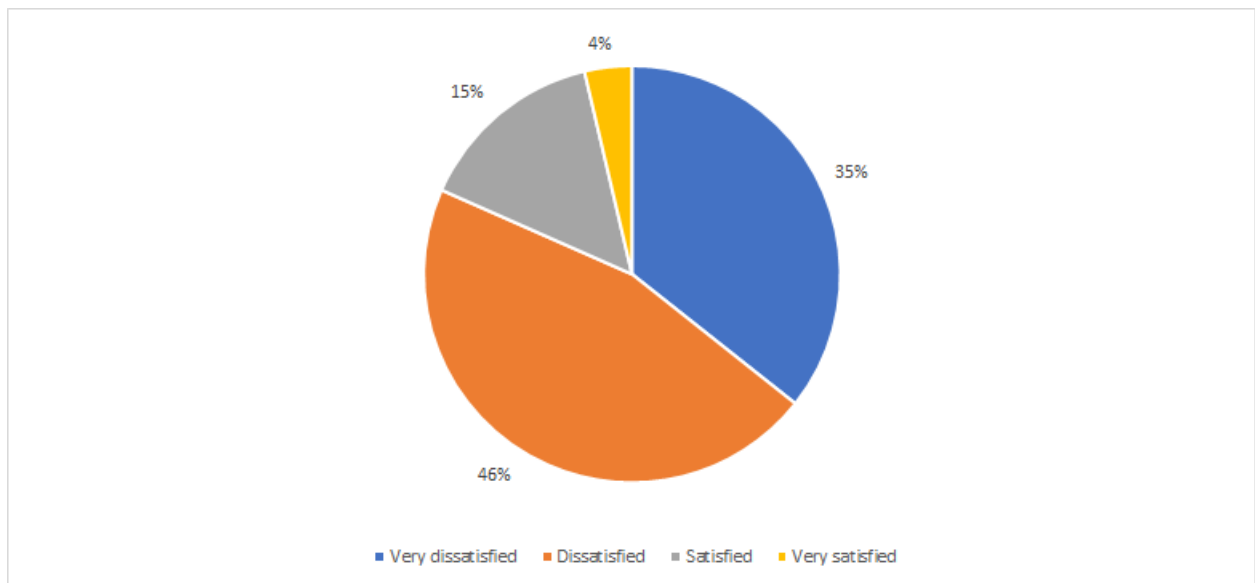
- BBC (36%)
- Twinkl (6%)
- Explaining Hindu Dharma by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK) (6%)
- Hinduism by Seeta Lakhani (Edited by J Lakhani) (2%)

However, the majority of respondents mentioned they were not sure or aware of what resources were being used.

If known, please list the content/topics covered by the RE teacher to teach Hinduism.

Various free-text responses were given to this optional question, including but not limited to the significance of caste system, too many gods and goddesses, animal worship, Hindu symbols, Aryan invasion, Ramayana, Hindu temples, Hindu marriages and sati tradition, moksha, reincarnation, and gender inequality.

If Hinduism is taught, what is your opinion on the teacher(s) knowledge of Hinduism?



81% of survey respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.

Conclusion:

The findings highlight many instances of misinformation as well as social issues that are being taught as part of Hinduism in UK schools.

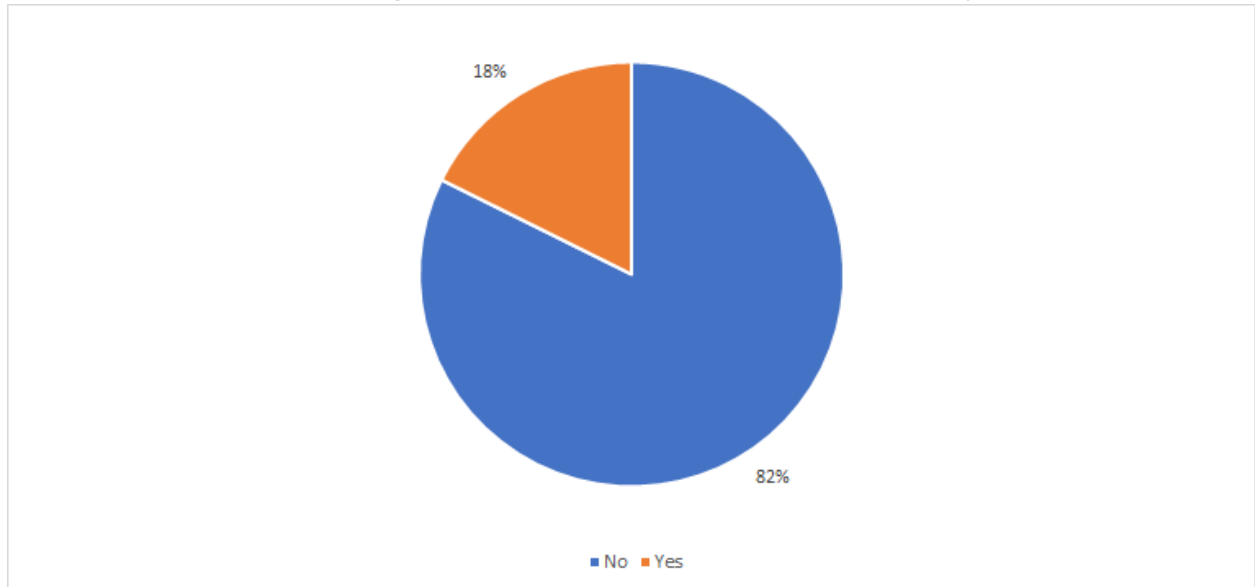
The caste system is a social issue, not a religious issue and is not limited to any one community. Our research found that all three legal cases of caste-based discrimination identified in the UK did not involve any Hindu person. However, the caste system is taught in UK schools exclusively as part of Hinduism.

Outdated social issues like the sati system as well as disproved theories like Aryan Invasion are being taught under Hinduism in RE.

Many important Hindu symbols are not being taught, such as the Swastika which represents universal peace. This leads to confusion and misunderstanding amongst young impressionable minds. An example of this can be seen by students equating and associating the Hindu Swastika with the Nazi hooked cross (Hakenkreuz).

Survey findings - Key stage 4 (Year 10-11)

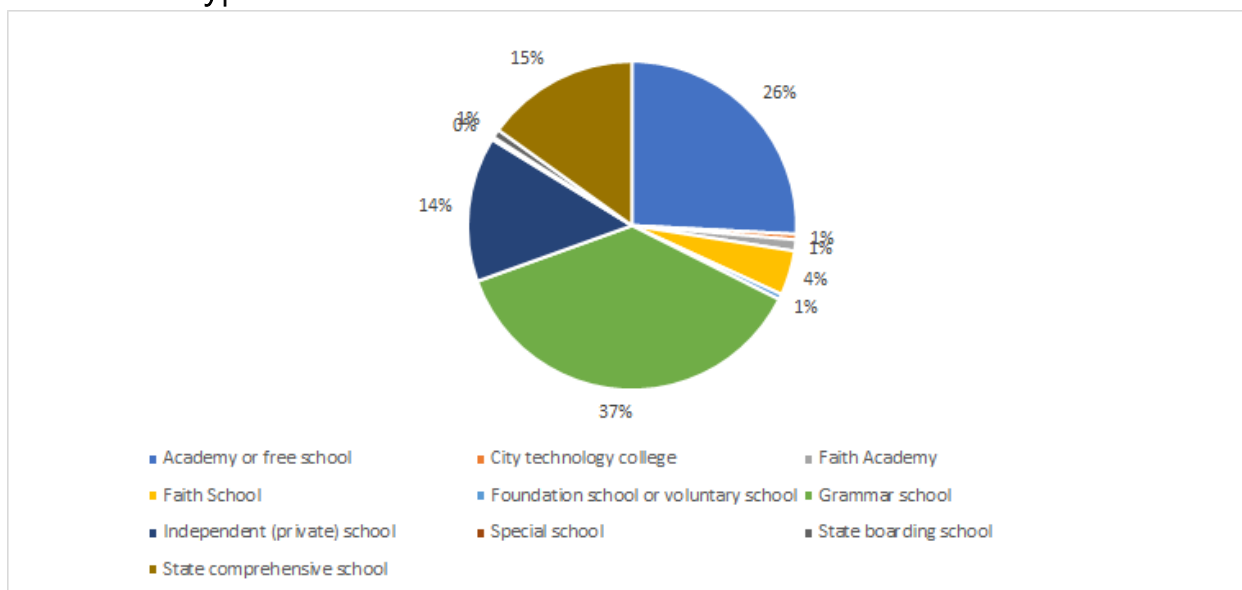
Are you a Hindu parent of a Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11) secondary school child or a student who is taking GCSEs or completed GCSEs recently?



18% of respondents had a child studying at GCSE level.

The Secondary School (Key Stage 4) section received responses from more than 250 schools covering more than 75 LEAs across England, Wales, Northern Ireland & Scotland.

What is the type of school?



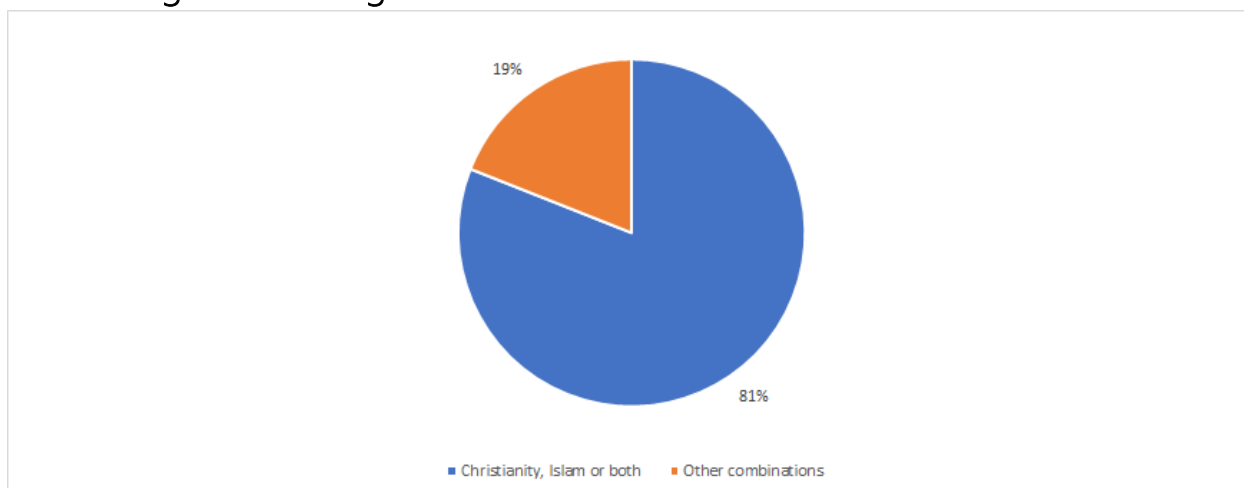
There was a diverse range of schools from this age bracket.

If known, please select the resources used by the RE teacher to teach Hinduism.

Various free-text responses were given to this optional question, including:

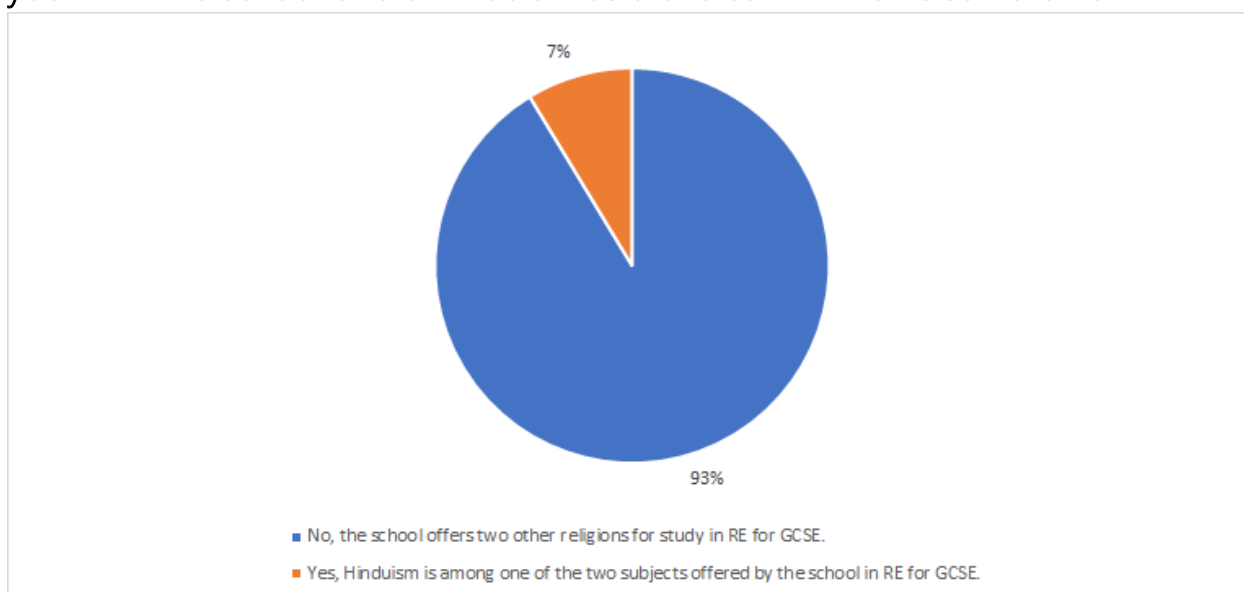
- BBC (40%)
- Local SACRE prepared material (17%)
- Explaining Hindu Dharma by VHP (UK) (8%)
- Twinkl (6%)
- Hinduism by Seeta Lakhani (Edited by J Lakhani) (2%)
- Hodder Education and AQA GCSE Religious Studies, Specification-A textbook

Which religions are taught for GCSE?



81% of respondents say that either Christianity or Islam is taught as full GCSE, or both of these religions as half GCSE. With the remaining combinations at 19%, many combinations do not include Hinduism, for example, the combination could be Christianity and Buddhism or Christianity and Judaism.

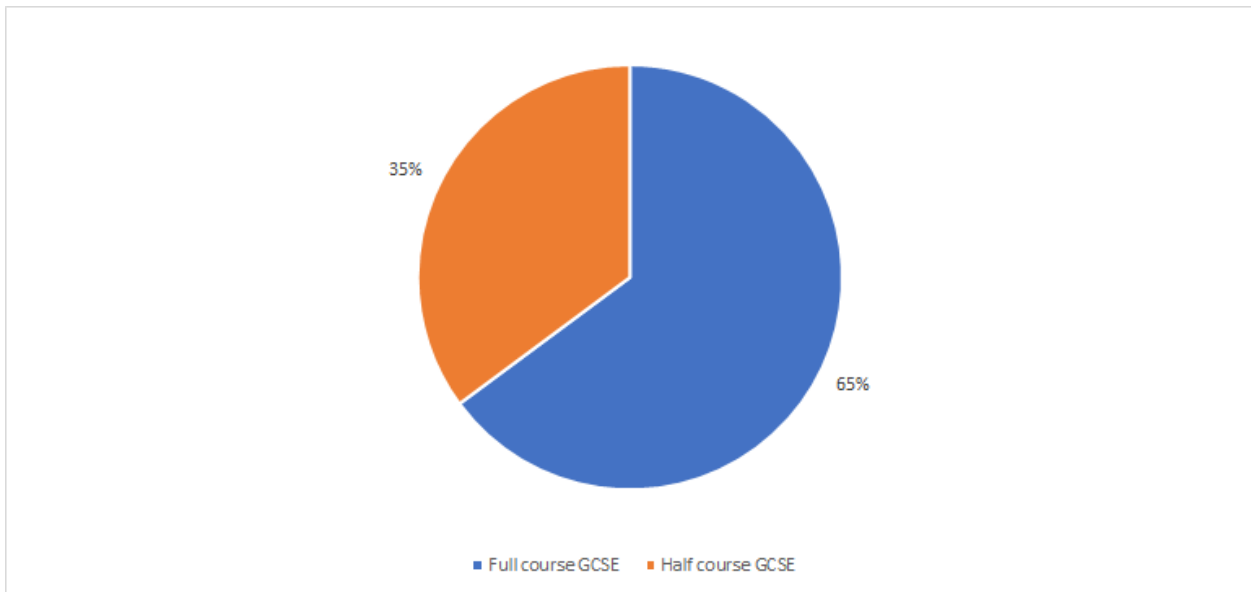
For GCSE in Religious Education, schools often opt to study two religions. Do you think the school offers Hinduism as a choice in RE for GCSE exams?



93% of respondents say that Hinduism is not offered at all for GCSE.

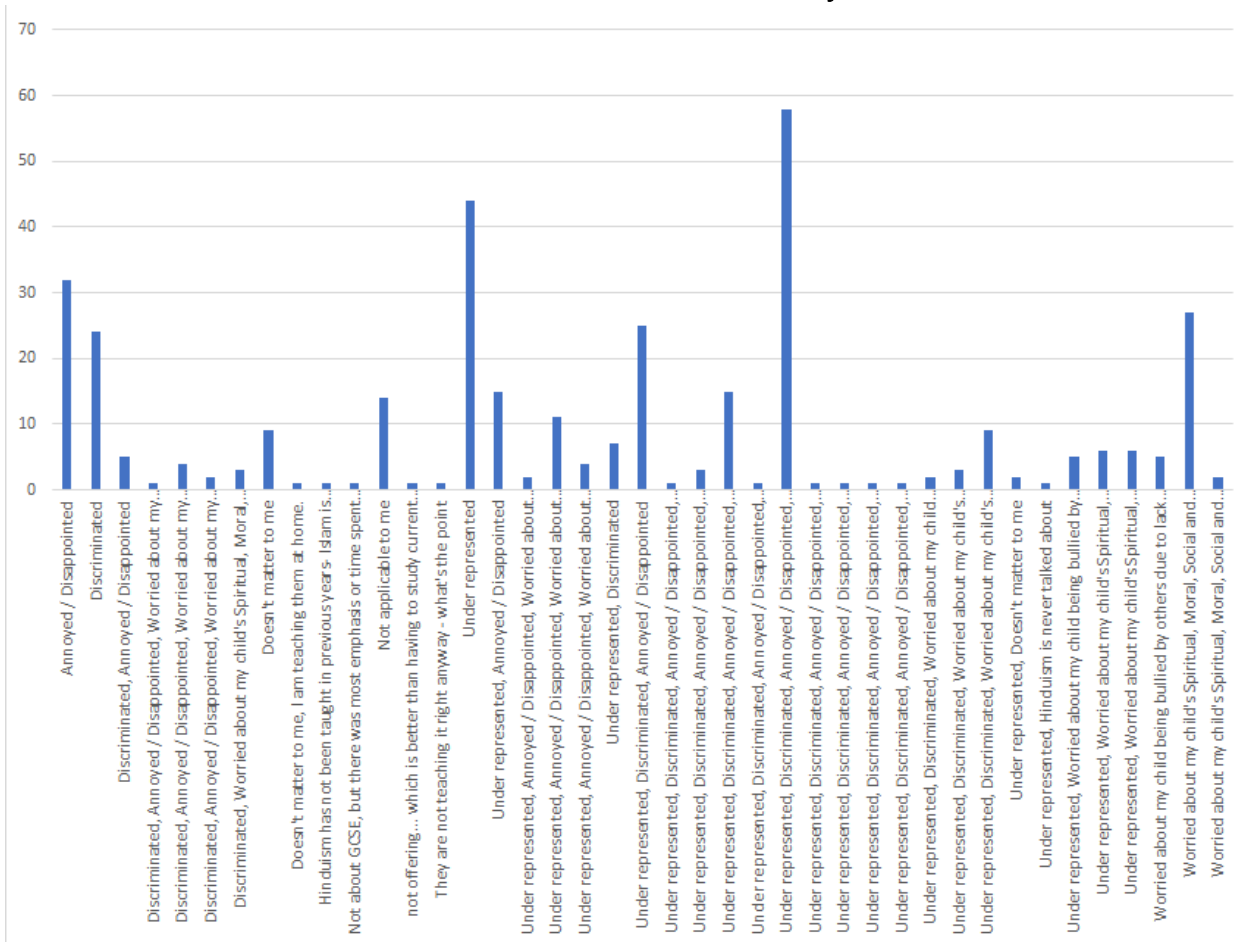
This further validates the previous survey question that the availability of Hinduism is very low compared to other religions.

If the school offers Hinduism for GCSE, is it half or full course GCSE?



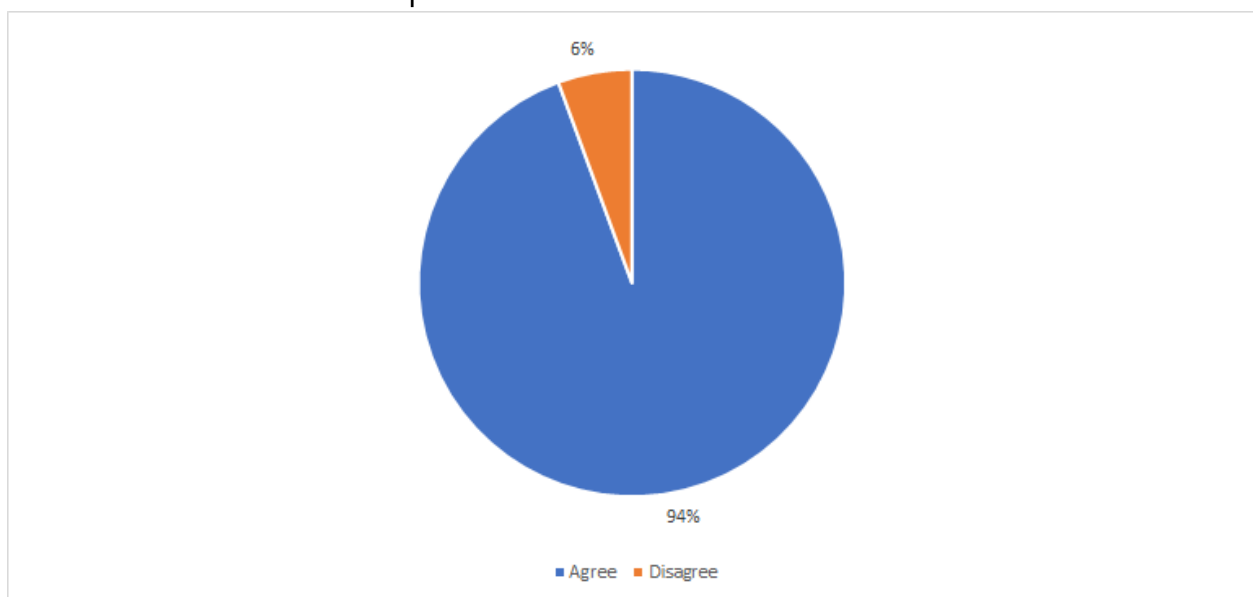
On the rare occasion that Hinduism was offered, it was only a full GCSE in around two-thirds of schools.

If Hinduism is not offered as a GCSE course, how do you feel?



This multi-choice question yielded a variety of responses, but there was a clear common theme that respondents felt underrepresented and discriminated against when Hinduism isn't offered. This included being worried about their child's social and moral development, and concern that they might get bullied. When it came to feelings about Hinduism not being available for GCSE, the majority of respondents said they felt underrepresented, discriminated, disappointed, annoyed and worried about their child being bullied.

Do you think if Hinduism is offered as a full course GCSE, it will encourage more students to take it up?

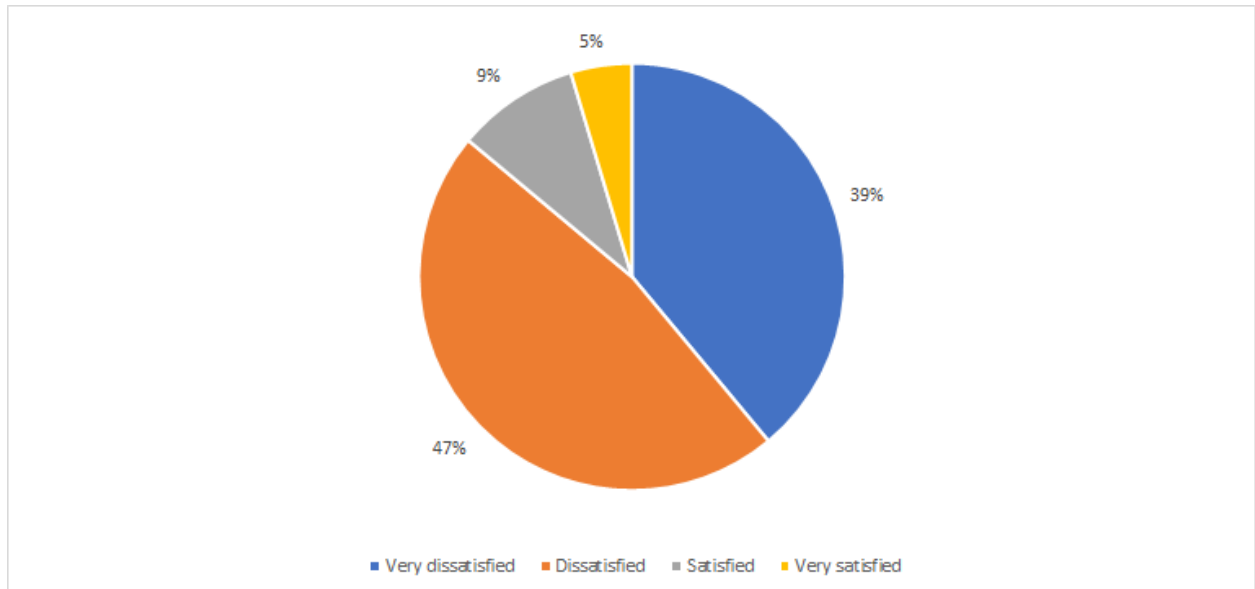


Almost all respondents agree that if Hinduism is offered as a full GCSE, more pupils would take it up

If known, please list the content/topics covered by the RE teacher to teach Hinduism.

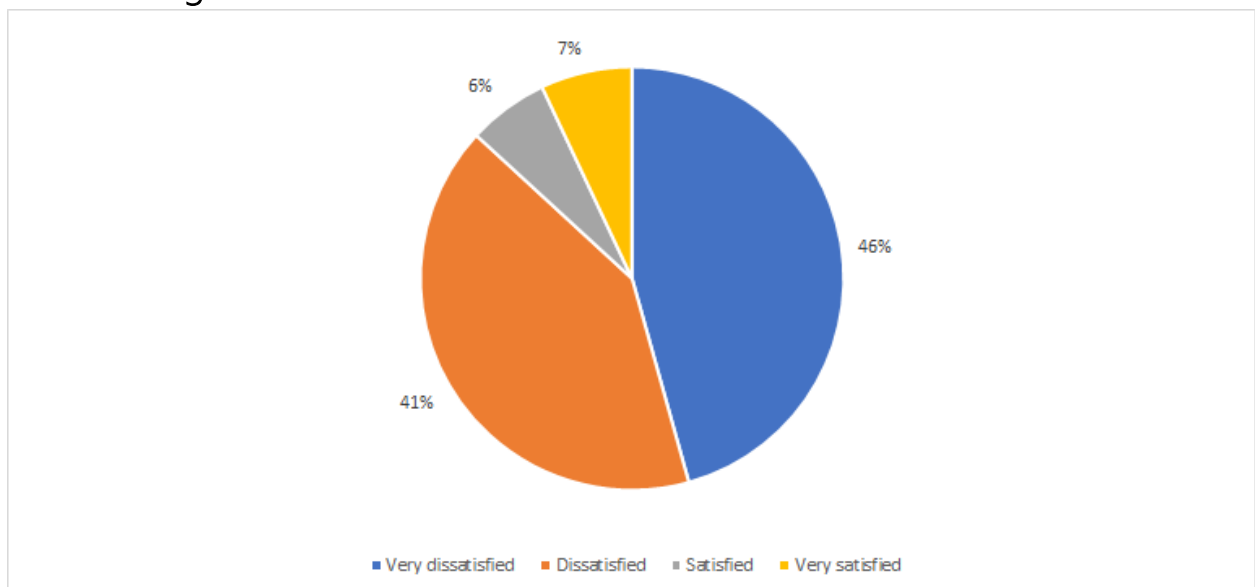
Various free-text responses were given to this optional question, including but not limited to Hindu festivals, sati tradition, caste system, many gods and goddesses, Aryan invasion, Ramayana, gender inequality, cremation, karma, religious intolerance of Hindus towards Muslims and Christians, Hindus turning to terrorism, Hinduism & nuclear weapons, Mahabharata and reincarnation.

If Hinduism is taught, what is your opinion on the teacher(s) knowledge of Hinduism?



86% of Hindu parents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their teachers' knowledge of Hinduism at GCSE level.

How satisfied are you and your child with their learning of Hinduism as part of their Religious Education at school?



87% of Hindu parents and children were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the learning of Hinduism at GCSE level.

Conclusion:

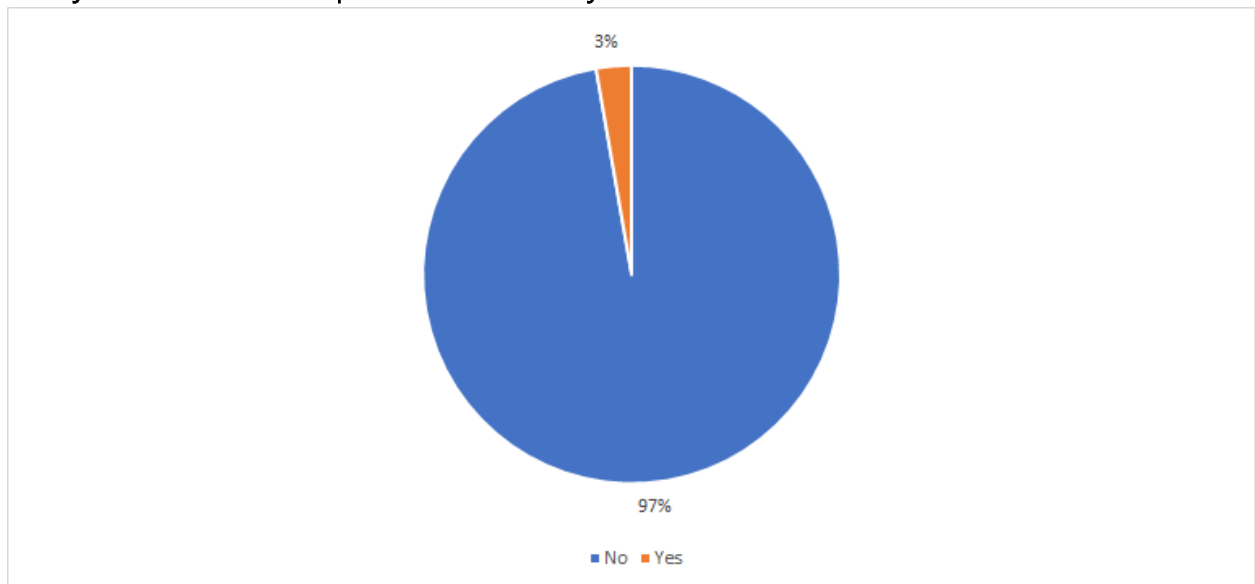
The findings highlight that many social issues, disproved theories and misinformation that are being taught exclusively as part of Hinduism in UK schools.

The caste system is a social issue, not a religious issue and is not limited to any one community. However, the caste system is taught in UK schools exclusively as part of Hinduism.

Disproved theories like the myth of the Aryan invasion are being taught. India possessing nuclear weapons was incorrectly associated with Hinduism. False and misleading information on Hindu intolerance towards others and even reference to Hindu terrorism were found to be taught in RE.

Survey findings - Standing Advisory Councils on RE (SACRE) section

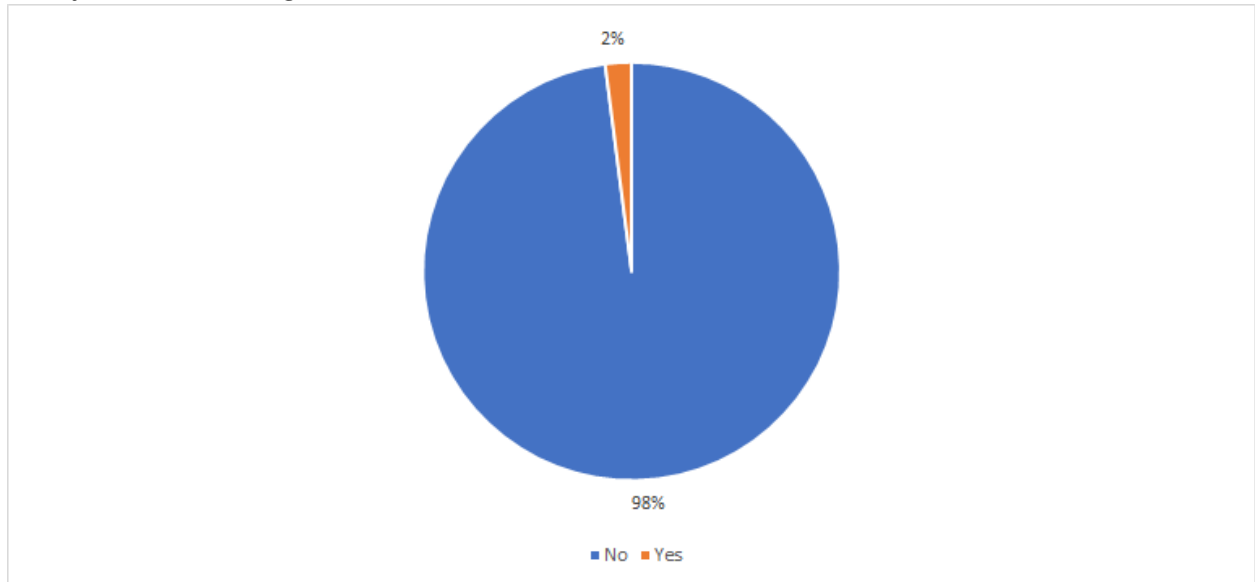
Are you the Hindu representative on your local SACRE?



3% of survey respondents are found to be part of the local SACRE.

Survey findings - School Governor section

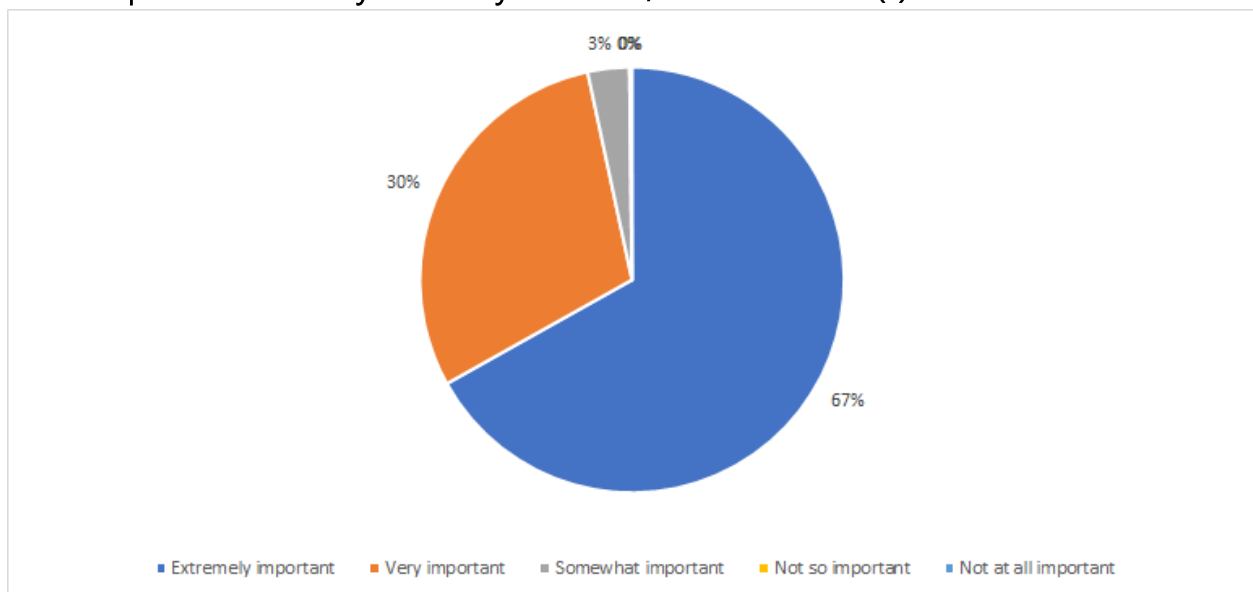
Are you a school governor?



2% of survey respondents were school governors.

General questions for Hindu Parents

How important is it to you that your child/children learn(s) about Hinduism?



97% of parents felt it is very important or extremely important to learn about Hinduism, suggesting there is a strong appetite from the Hindu community who want their children to learn the religion.

Do you adopt any alternative methods to teach Hinduism to your child?

Respondents gave various combinations of responses to this optional question. Most used home-schooling to teach Hinduism:

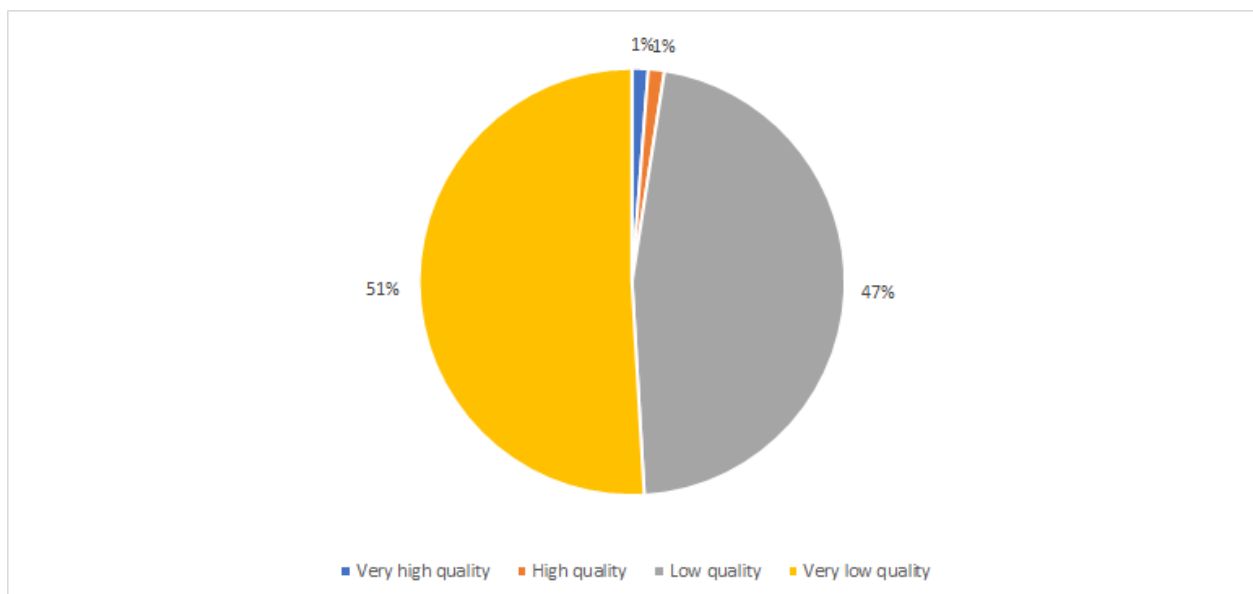
- Home-schooling
- Relatives, grandparents
- Balagokulam - Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK), Baalvihar (Chinmaya Mission), Baalvikas (Sathya Sai Group), Shakha - Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) etc.
- Hinduism classes
- Online

What areas/values of Hinduism do you feel should be taught in all schools?

Respondents gave various combinations of responses to this optional question, including:

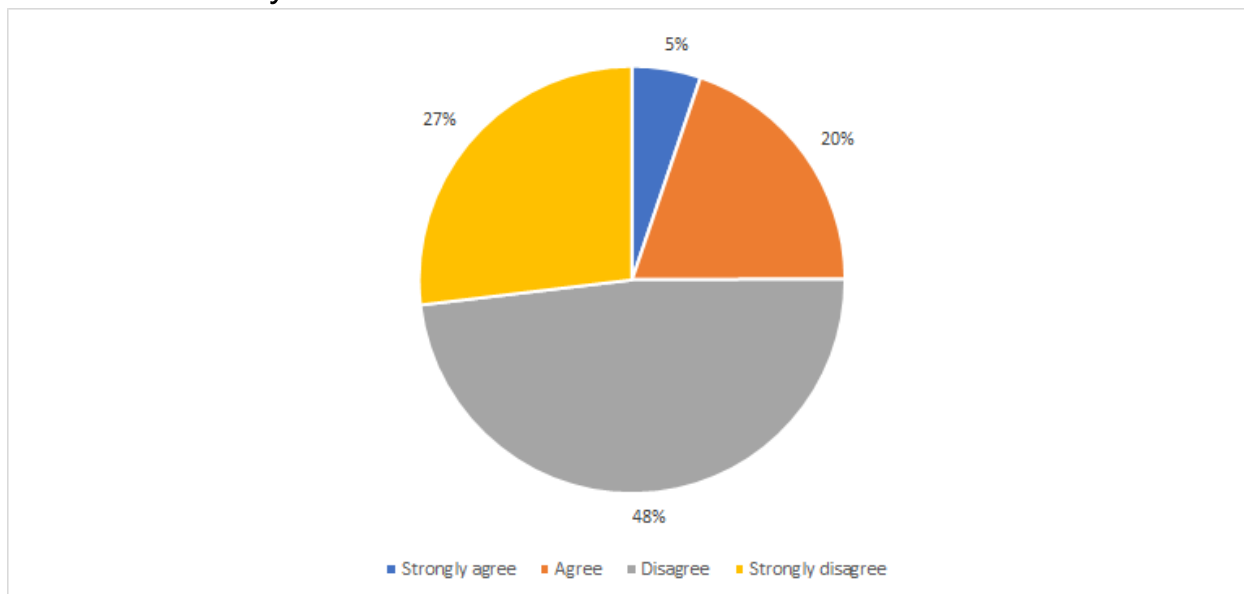
- Yoga
- Ayurveda
- Meditation
- Law of Karma
- Vedic Mathematics
- Hindu cultural values (Sanskaras)
- The scientific rationale behind Hindu customs
- Hindu scriptures e.g. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Vedas, Gita etc.

What is your general feeling about the quality of Hinduism being taught in schools?



Almost all respondents felt the quality of Hinduism taught was poor.

Do you feel that your child is taught Hinduism at school in a positive light and with accuracy?



75% of respondents felt that Hinduism is not taught positively and accurately. The majority of respondents who expressed that Hinduism is taught positively and accurately, were the parents of children attending a Hindu faith school.

Have you noticed anything that should not be taught or anything that has been taught incorrectly about Hinduism in schools?

Various free-text responses were given to this optional question, including:

- Sati tradition
- Caste system
- Hanuman is a monkey god
- Hinduism is against women's rights
- The myth of Aryan invasion
- Misinformation is taught under the concept of Karma and incarnation. For example, it is taught that bad karma results in next birth as an untouchable.

Have you ever offered to support, or have you supported the school to teach Hinduism?

23% of respondents have offered to support, or have supported the school to teach Hinduism. This indicates that teachers may need help from Hindu parents to fill in knowledge gaps.

Would you be interested to improve the standard of teaching Hinduism in schools?

The majority of respondents stated that they would like to help improve the teaching in some shape or form, including standing as a SACRE member, helping schools with Hinduism, teaching Hinduism outside of school, or even becoming a RE teacher for a school.

Finally, any other comments you would like to mention about how Hinduism is taught:

There were hundreds of comments submitted for this question. The overwhelming theme was concerns raised that Hinduism was not being taught at all in comparison to other religions and the quality of teaching was poor.

Key findings from Survey Phase

Hinduism is the third-largest religious demographic in the UK. However, as Hindus are concentrated in certain areas of the UK such as Brent, Hayes, Leicester etc., this model means that such a large faith does not have the opportunity to have its voice heard at the national level. An example of that is the current syllabus content of Hinduism being taught as part of RE, across all UK schools. RE is the first exposure for British children to Hinduism and currently, they are not being provided with an adequate world view when they meet others in the UK.

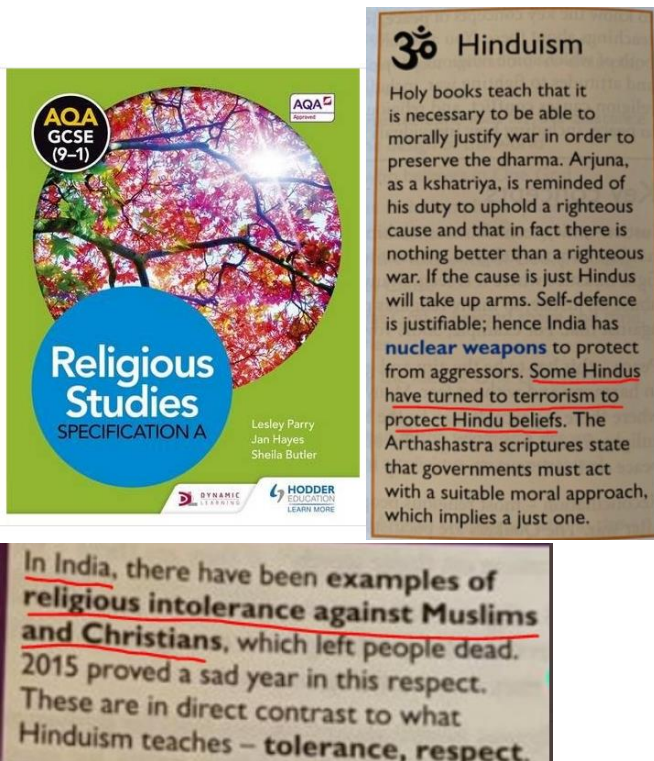
A large amount of erroneous content in Hinduism teaching resources was found to be used in UK schools. Below are a few instances from the vast list of inaccurate resources.

Example 1: Hodder Education and AQA GCSE Religious Studies, Specification A textbook

The images below show a resource book that is used by many teachers and students for AQA GCSE Religious Studies, Specification A, 2016. A secondary school named Langley School in Solihull in West Midlands encouraged pupils to use this textbook as a part of the RE course.

Reportedly, the text was issued by Hodder Education and has been a part of the AQA GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Specification A" since May 27, 2016. It conveyed the logo of the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) and was titled, 'GCSE Religious Studies: Religion, Peace and Conflict.'

AQA is the awarding body that lays down specifications and holds exams for GCSE and A levels in the UK. The publication has since been withdrawn.



Above (left to right): Cover page of AQA Religious Studies, Specification A, 2016 book. Middle and right images show text extracts.

The text mentions imprecise and controversial statements about Hinduism which is not a true reflection of the faith.

Example 2: TES Resources website

Many inaccurate teaching materials can be found on TES Resources website for teaching Hinduism. This is a website where resources are designed by teachers for teachers. This popular resource website is used by many UK teachers.


https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/hinduism-6174692

The Caste System

To understand what a class system is.
To be able to recognise the implications of a rigid class system.

Answer the questions at the bottom of the sheet in full sentences

1. I think that the caste system is useful because...
2. I think the caste system is bad because...
3. I think that we do/do not have a class system in Britain today because....



Resource author: ellejayken

Merchant Taylors' School, Hertfordshire

Above: TES Teaching Resource (2014, October 28)

Some resources on the TES website mention inaccurate information and associate the caste system with Hinduism. The caste system is a social issue, not a religious issue and is not limited to any one community.

Recommendations

Recommendations

The data is clear and unequivocal in highlighting that both the quality and availability of Hinduism in RE in the UK is poor. As a result, various recommendations have been drafted for different target groups as listed below.

Government and Policy Makers

- Establish a relationship with the Department for Education as the go-to body for RE Hinduism teaching.
- Working with policymakers to standardise the syllabus across the country, with an emphasis on providing the same level of focus and exposure as other faiths and world views.
- Push for all Hindu pupils to be given the opportunity to study Hinduism as part of GCSE Religious Studies.
- Awareness campaigns with Councillors, Mayors, MPs, and members of the House of Lords.

SACRE

- Collaboration with the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) to ensure involvement with the newly formed Hindu board.
- Ensuring Hindu representation on each local SACRE with the involvement of Hindu temples.
- Building a pool of SACRE Hindu representatives that would help form a standardised syllabus, including training and annual conferences.
- Pushing for a syllabus that promotes a diverse portfolio of Hindu culture including Yoga, Meditation, Ayurveda and vegetarianism with a focus on teaching, not preaching.
- Ensuring Hinduism education resources are factual, credible and available in all UK schools.

Schools

- Providing training for RE teachers to learn about Hinduism.
- Provide standardised resources for ease of teaching.
- Ensuring Hindu representation on school governing boards.
- Donation schemes for books and resources, for example, Hindu symbols, chanting beads, bells and other items to help teach.
- Encouraging cross-curricular activities like Yoga, Meditation, Vedic Maths, Sanskrit etc.
- Creation of a National Conference of Hindu Teachers.

Examination Boards

- Establishing a working relationship to help to review and standardise the syllabus to make it appealing for teachers and students.
- Validate contents with the newly formed Hindu board.
- Help to review the resources and provide verified resource lists.
- Explore paid opportunities, for example, advisors.

Hindu Community

- Collaborating with leading Hindu organisations and community members working in this field.
- Regular awareness campaigns to highlight the significance of RE through social media, articles and videos
- Campaign to encourage Hindus to write to their Local MPs with regards to issues concerning the community about RE teaching.
- Encouragement to join an Association of Hindu Teachers and Hindu Parent Network, and creating the infrastructure to maintain contact and communications with all such members.
- Hindu students to be encouraged to take up Hinduism.
- Connect the community to work for resource companies like Twinkl.

- Distribute teaching courses for teachers, pre-recorded learning videos, for example with VOICE and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK).
- Encouraging Hindu community members to become RE teachers.
- Collaboration with Hindu temples in the UK to become accountable for the teaching of Hinduism and encourage the use of their facilities.
- Raising funds and providing scholarships for new teachers.
- Creating awareness among the community about the role different bodies play in what their child learns. For example, SACRE, Governors etc.
- Providing online courses to prepare for Hinduism in GCSE.
- Providing presentations for school visits to the temple.
- Highlighting success stories of students opting for Hinduism as a full GCSE course, to attract more students.

Others

- Working with organisations like Twinkl and the BBC to review and update their resources.
- Collaboration with OFSTED inspectors to review the quality of Hinduism teaching.
- Creation of a centralised "School Guide for Teaching Hinduism in RE" where teachers can retrieve all the recommended resources from approved sources.
- Explore funding from the Department for Education for faith-based schools to start Hindu Faith Schools.
- Donating Hindu resources to local libraries and hotels, including copies of the Bhagavad Gita.
- Collaborating with the National Hindu Students' Forum (NHSF) to ensure there are sufficient resources and attention is given to awareness campaigns in universities.

What next?

What next?

The project findings and recommendations highlight the need for a dedicated organisation to take this work forward.

The vision of the organisation will be to create opportunities for high-quality education in Hinduism in RE in UK schools. To achieve this, the organisation will engage with multiple stakeholders such as the national government, local authorities, exam boards, publishers, teachers, parents and students.

We held discussions with many Hindu academics and five major Hindu organisations in the UK supporting this project about the way forward. We are happy to learn that this has resulted in the formation of an independent organisation, the Hindu Education Board (HEB) UK.

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- Dr Tribhovan Jotangia, President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)
- Mr. Dhiraj Shah, President of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK)

Last but not the least, we would like to thank the thousands of survey respondents who made this one of the most successful Hindu surveys in the history of the UK.



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