

Failure to meet statutory requirements on RE will be taken into consideration in the Ofsted 'quality of education' judgement.

UK Government – Education Committee – Ofsted

Dame Christine Ryan: Chair of Ofsted, gave evidence to the parliamentary Education Committee in September 2021 and was asked about the inspection of RE by the Chair; Robert Halfon MP. The committee showed real concern about schools and academies breaking the law by not teaching RE to pupils in all year groups. NATRE has noted an increase in OFSTED reporting on the lack of RE in schools.

We were pleased that Robert Halfon MP, cited data collected by NATRE and quoted in the Ofsted Research Review 2021.

The result of the exchange below was this statement from Dame Christine provided as additional evidence to the committee:

“If during inspection inspectors found that the school’s provision for RE was of poor quality, including if it did not meet its statutory obligations, then they would use this evidence, along with the wider evidence collected from other subjects, to assess the school’s overall quality of education” [Accountability hearings - Committees - UK Parliament](#)



Dame Christine Ryan: Chair of Ofsted
<<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3>>, via Wikimedia

Q949 Chair: In May, Ofsted published a research report into how schools deliver religious education. It showed that in secondary schools only 44% met the threshold of curriculum time, with 34% of all academies reporting no timetabled religious education, which is against the law. This has been a particular concern given the intolerance and anti-Semitism exhibited in some schools at the end of the last academic year and the legal requirement of schools in this area and in their duty to teach respect for other religions, which is one of the protected characteristics, as you know. What action has Ofsted taken in response to this report and have any schools been downgraded as a result of their lack of teaching of RE?

Dame Christine Ryan: That is an operational question and unfortunately, I do not have the operational information before me, but no such concern has been raised with the board as far as I am aware. **Certainly, if that is a question you would like me to seek an answer to, I will happily pass it to my colleagues.**

Q950 Chair: As delivery in RE is a legal requirement, will Ofsted treat schools who do not deliver in this area as it would without delivering adequately in regard to the protected characteristics?

Dame Christine Ryan: Again, I am afraid that is **an operational matter** for the chief inspector, it is not something that would come to the board.

Q951 Chair: All right. The reason why I ask is that clearly Ofsted jumps on schools that it feels are not teaching RSHE, and if there are legal requirements to teach RE and some schools are not doing it, surely it is a matter of balance that Ofsted also makes it very clear that this is not acceptable?

Dame Christine Ryan: Balance in inspection is what it is all about. These things are often not hard and fast and it is the job of the chief inspector, in creating a framework and guidance for inspectors, to ensure that balance is reached and that things are dealt with in a proportionate way.

Read the committee transcript here: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/2746/pdf/>