

Notes to accompany the release of school level data from the 2020 DfE School Workforce Census.



This data was reported by schools to the DfE as part of the school census in November 2020. The national data trends were published in June, but this dataset was extracted from the data as part of a memorandum of understanding between NATRE and the DfE. 2928 schools are included in the sample which includes the majority of state funded secondary schools. but not all; some have not reported any data this year for a variety of reasons.

Hours taught for years 7 to 13, in subjects RE, philosophy and all subjects, reported by a sample of state-funded secondary schools with electronic timetabling software, School Workforce Census 2020

To note:

1. I calculate that around 20% of schools that completed their SWF this year chose not to report of RE but did report other subjects – some of those reported the more obvious “0.0%” last year.
2. Where schools reported that they allocate teaching hours to a specific year group, but have not included RE in that report, this is indicated by a dot in that year group column. SACREs are advised to investigate this issue as it appears unlikely that a discrete lesson of RE is being taught in these circumstances.
3. I’ve created a couple of new columns to indicate possible reporting issues e.g. where RE is either possibly not reported or under reported but Philosophy is reported (instead?). This can easily happen if the lesson on the timetable is Philosophy and Ethics or even Philosophy, Religion and Ethics. The timetabling software often looks at the first part of the title and makes a judgment about which code to allocate. Some schools report RE and Philosophy.
4. There has been an increase in provision in some schools and a decrease in others. These two figures, as a proportion of reporting schools, are roughly the same. Increases and decreases are labelled. Some of the differences are very small.
5. Where schools report zero hours in any year group, these are highlighted in pink.

The usual health warning applies: This data is a conversation starter not a definitive indicator of what schools are doing so SACREs need to treat the information alongside other information such as the school website, public examination results (where available) and school visits. I always write to schools to ask them to clarify, if there is no data or if the data suggests they are non-compliant.

The next step for a SACRE might be to use its statutory remit ‘to advise the local authority’ to formally report the fact that schools in their area have reported data to the DfE that suggests they are non-compliant with the law in relation to RE and in the case of academies, their funding agreements. The LA can be asked to investigate and report their findings back to SACRE after a conversation with a school leader.

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