



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Secondary Education: Religion

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [6464] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the most recently published School Workforce Census, how many schools with an outstanding Ofsted rating reported zero hours of religious education teaching in year 11; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb: In November 2019, 2,958 state funded secondary schools returned full curriculum information to the Department via the School Workforce Census. This represents 86% of all state funded secondary schools in England.

Of these 2,958 schools, 984 reported no teaching of religious education (RE) or philosophy teaching to Year 11 pupils during the week of the workforce census. One school reported teaching RE or philosophy in mixed year groups, which may include Year 11 pupils.

Of the 984 schools, 144 were judged outstanding in their last Ofsted full inspection. The last full inspection may have been several years prior to 2019. It is therefore not possible to draw any meaningful correlation between information about teaching time on these subjects during the census week and a school's Ofsted rating.

The information above is based on the number of hours of dedicated RE or philosophy teaching recorded by each school for Year 11 pupils. It is possible that other general teaching within the school may include elements of RE, ethics, or philosophy.

State funded schools in England have a duty to teach RE to all pupils aged 5 to 18 years. While academies, free schools and most maintained schools designated as having a religious character may design and follow their own curriculum, all other maintained schools must follow their area's locally agreed syllabus for RE.

Any concerns that a school may not be complying with the requirement to teach RE should, in the first instance, be raised via the school's complaints procedure. If the complaint is not resolved, then the issue can be escalated to the Department's School Complaints Unit.

Animals (Recognition of Sentience) Bill

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [5261] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Animal Sentience Committee announced in the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill will be independent of Government.

Victoria Prentis: The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill creates an expert committee, the Animal Sentience Committee. The Animal Sentience Committee will have the power to scrutinise individual Ministerial policy formulation and implementation decisions. The Committee will set its own priorities and be supported by a secretariat. The Committee can publish reports on how Ministers have paid 'all due regard' to the welfare needs of animals as sentient beings, alongside other considerations. Ministers will need to respond to these reports within three months by means of a written statement to Parliament.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-21/5261>

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Israel

Council of Europe

Israel accedes to Council of Europe's anti-Human Trafficking convention

Israel has become the first-non European country to accede to the [Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#). ...

The Convention has a comprehensive scope of application, encompassing all forms of trafficking (whether national or transnational, linked or not linked to organised crime) and taking in all persons who are victims of trafficking (women, men or children). The forms of exploitation covered by the Convention are, at a minimum, sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs.

The Convention will enter into force in Israel, which is an observer state to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on September 1. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/israel-accedes-to-council-of-europe-s-anti-human-trafficking-convention>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel: Violence, hate speech, discrimination against Palestinian minority must stop – UN expert

A UN human rights expert condemned attacks on Israel's Palestinian minority by extreme right-wing and vigilante groups, including settlers – at times with the reported backing of security forces - and urged Israel to fully and equally protect all of its citizens without discrimination.

Palestinians citizens of Israel, including the Bedouin, constitute an Arab minority representing about 1.5 million people or 20 percent of the population of Israel and face discrimination in many areas.

"Reports of extreme right-wing violence and disproportional use of force by law enforcement officials during protests in recent weeks, including in Sheikh Jarrah,

Damascus Gate and the Al-Aqsa mosque, have led to some of the worst cases of violence against Palestinian citizens of Israel," said Fernand de Varennes, the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues.

"These attacks have been shared on social media and such platforms appear to have been used by extreme right wing groups to advocate hatred that constitutes incitement to violence with impunity to gather people to bring their weapons and attack Palestinians."

The UN expert said the decades-long exclusion and discrimination, including of segregation between Arab and Jewish citizens and lack of equal treatment in terms of rights and privileges, has taken a heavy toll on the Palestinian minority. The absence of protection and bomb shelters in the Bedouin villages in the Naqab has also increased insecurity of the Bedouin minority, he added.

"Given the urgency of the situation, I call on the Government of Israel to firmly condemn all acts of violence, hatred and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel," said de Varennes.

"The authorities must ensure its citizens immediately stop these attacks and that everyone is fully and equally protected without any form of discrimination. Police accused of failing to protect all residents and citizens of Israel without discrimination must be investigated." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27129&LangID=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

Charities Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Race Equality Action Plan: An Anti-racist Wales (closing date 17 June 2021)

<https://gov.wales/race-equality-action-plan-anti-racist-wales>

Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS) (closing date 30 June 2021)

<https://evensurvey.co.uk/>

Protect Duty (closing date 2 July 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty>

Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance (closing date 16 July 2021)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/consultation-document-curriculum-for-wales-religion-values-and-ethics-guidance.pdf>

Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19

(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438