

# Teachers Are Losing Their Religion - Part Two

Are you interested in the religious nature of schools and teachers? You're in luck! This is the second of a two-part investigation into religion in our schools. If you missed it, [Part One is here](#).

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This week we look at: Religious admissions, the future of recruitment in religious schools, the Gove Bibles (what are those?!), and we end on the big question of whether religious teachers are also more traditional... Enjoy!

## 1. The Lost Gove Bibles

Michael Gove, the former education secretary, decreed in 2012 that all schools would be sent a gigantic, ornate version of the King James Bible. [It cost almost £400,000](#). Now, not only do 85% of you have no idea where they are in your school, but lots of you got in touch via social media to say you had no idea what a Gove Bible even is! What kind of legacy is that?!?

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## 2. Are RE teachers more religious than the rest?

[Last week on the blog](#) we talked about your religious beliefs (falling fast) and your adherence to delivering religious education and worship (requires improvement). Someone got in touch to ask whether RE teachers are religious. Of more than 500 teachers who teach at least some RE classes - 57% say they are not religious and just 25% regularly attend a religious service.

## 3. Can teachers talk about religion?

Most teachers feel very comfortable talking to students about their own religious beliefs. Perhaps it's unsurprising that atheists working in faith schools feel least comfortable and religious believers working in faith schools feel most comfortable. This will become an increasing issue as faith schools inevitably find they cannot fill posts from their own religious community. (function() { 'use strict'; window.addEventListener('message', function(event) { if (typeof event.data['datawrapper-height'] !== 'undefined') { for (var chartId in event.data['datawrapper-height']) { var iframe = document.getElementById('datawrapper-chart-' + chartId) || document.querySelector("iframe[src\*='" + chartId + "']"); if (!iframe) {

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#### 4. Admissions about admissions

One thing that makes faith schools unique in England is that they are able to select on the social characteristics of the parents – no other state-funded school can do such a curious thing! Often they select based on complex rules about how religious the parents can prove themselves to be. We were amazed to see how against religious selection most teachers were, even those who are actively religious themselves (remember, we define active as attending a religious service for more than just important holy days). Just 36% of teachers who are actively religious, and 20% of those inactively religious, and 4% of those non-religious, believe the status quo of faith selection should continue.

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Catholic schools have traditionally served Catholic communities who were historically disadvantaged in so many ways. By contrast, many Anglican schools are just 'the village school'. We therefore expected teachers in Catholic schools to feel selection was particularly important, as it would protect school places for those within its communities. However, while those teaching in Catholic schools were indeed the most in favour of religious selection, just 36% agreed with it versus 41% disagreeing (and the rest uncertain). Even in Catholic schools, more people are against selection by religion than are for it!

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There is also the question of whether faith schools are really selecting religious families, or just choosing families who are conscientious enough to turn up on a Sunday twice a month for two years (thereby often ensuring a more affluent intake). Most of us know people who have pulled this fiddle. Still, regardless of the type of school you teach in, almost half of you are clear that this is unethical – though one-in-ten think it is fine!

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5. Should a child have to go to a faith school?

Whilst stories of parents cheating admissions are popular, we talk less about the frequency with which we FORCE children to attend faith schools because there are no spaces elsewhere. When asked, 23% of you feel it is acceptable for a child from a non-religious family to be allocated a place against their will at a Catholic school. This happens all the time - 10% of secondary places are at Catholic schools but the percentage of Catholics in the population is far lower. Slightly fewer (17%) of you feel it is acceptable for a children from a Christian family

to be allocated a place against their will at a Sikh school. ([This caused a furore back in 2015 in Leeds.](#)) In the latter case, a majority (55%) believe children should not have forced allocation to a Sikh school. Which is fine. But it costs money to maintain spare capacity in schools to achieve this.

## 6. Should non-religious teachers work in faith schools?

The non-believers among you who currently work in faith schools would, all else being equal, prefer not to work in one. And 40% of non-believers who currently work in secular schools strongly agree they would not want to work in a faith school. Assuming the pool of religious teachers continues to decline (which it almost certainly will), these statistics suggest a potential to future recruitment crisis for faith schools. (function() { 'use strict'; window.addEventListener('message', function(event) { if (typeof event.data['datawrapper-height'] !== 'undefined') { for (var chartId in event.data['datawrapper-height']) { var iframe = document.getElementById('datawrapper-chart-' + chartId) || document.querySelector("iframe[src\*='" + chartId + "']"); if (!iframe) { continue; } iframe.style.height = event.data['datawrapper-height'][chartId] + 'px'; } } });

## 7. How could England get rid of religious schools?

So, with all this data, what should this small island state of formerly god-fearing mortals do? One option is: muddle through! Allow faith schools whilst ignoring the fact that many pupils do not receive the legislative diet of worship and RE. Muddling works. At Teacher Tapp we quite like muddling. But 69% of you who are not religious want to see an end to state funding of religious schools. Only a minority of religious teachers want to get rid, but they are an ever-shrinking share of teachers. (function() { 'use strict'; window.addEventListener('message', function(event) { if (typeof event.data['datawrapper-height'] !== 'undefined') { for (var chartId in event.data['datawrapper-height']) { var iframe = document.getElementById('datawrapper-chart-' + chartId) || document.querySelector("iframe[src\*='" + chartId + "']"); if (!iframe) { continue; } iframe.style.height = event.data['datawrapper-height'][chartId] + 'px'; } } }); An even greater number of you would like to see no new faith schools open. This option was favoured by 73% who are not religious, 43% who are inactively religious and 26% who are actively religious. (function() { 'use strict'; window.addEventListener('message', function(event) { if (typeof event.data['datawrapper-height'] !== 'undefined') { for (var chartId in event.data['datawrapper-height']) { var iframe = document.getElementById('datawrapper-chart-' + chartId) || document.querySelector("iframe[src\*='" + chartId + "']"); if (!iframe) { continue; } iframe.style.height = event.data['datawrapper-height'][chartId] + 'px'; } } });

## 8. Are religious teachers more likely to be 'traditionalist' or 'progressive'?

It's the summer silly season on edu-social media and nothing gets tweets more exciting than results to polls about how child-orientated and progressive teachers are. We asked three questions about how much you try to accommodate students' interests, about whether you believe your primary role is to help students become learners, and whether you believe discovery learning is 'best'. We know from the past that results from these three questions are correlated and that primary teachers tend to be more progressive or child-orientated in their response. Cue shock on twitter when they discover that many teachers really do have quite a progressive bent! (function() { 'use strict'; window.addEventListener('message', function(event) { if (typeof event.data['datawrapper-height'] !== 'undefined') { for (var

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But, why did we ask these questions at the end of the run on religion? Well, a Teacher Tapper got in touch via a back channel to declare they were sure that teachers with religious beliefs were more traditional in their views on teaching. "That's interesting", we said, and decided to see if they were right. So we created the scale below by aggregating our three progressive questions.

- A low score means the teacher holds more progressive views.
- A high score means the teacher holds more traditional views.

We plotted the scores, and grouped by whether the teacher (a) regularly attended religious services (e.g. more than key holy days), (b) irregularly attended services, or (c) declared themselves not religious. What did we find? They were wrong! Teachers with religious beliefs are no more or less likely to be traditionalists in their views on education than those who are non-believers! Praise be! 

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 Right, that's the end of that! Over the next few weeks we are digging into: CLASSROOMS. Does yours have a decent temperature? What equipment is in it? Who does the displays? Tune in to future Monday blogs to find out more.

Finally, we know you are big fans of the tips, so here are last week's:

- [Why aren't children behaving as well as they once did?](#)
- [What's in the Teacher Tapp CPD Canon Raffle this year?](#)
- [The role of forgetting in memory](#)
- [Can we predict the knowledge needed for comprehension?](#)
- [The psychology of conformity helps with classroom behaviour](#)
- [Give your name value](#)