

Transformative Transition: The Case for Religious Education in Cross-Curricular Holocaust Education Across the Primary/ Secondary Divide in English Schools

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This chapter sets out to explore the role played by religious education (RE) in English primary and secondary schools and how this does (or could) relate to teaching and learning about the Holocaust. While RE tends to be taught as a discrete subject by specialists in secondary schools, primary school teachers are almost always cross-curricular experts, with little deliberate co-ordination between these age phases. This chapter considers the opportunities and challenges presented by these differing approaches across the primary/secondary divide. It presents a way forward for educators willing to embrace difference and willing to work creatively and collaboratively between disciplines and phases for the good of their pupils' learning.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

17

18 Following the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, it was assumed that
19 education would be of little or no interest to the national coalition gov-
20 ernment formed to guide the UK through the ensuing years. Prime
21 Minister Winston Churchill was certainly cautious of educational legisla-
22 tion, having witnessed first-hand the disastrous political fallout from his
23 own party's 1902 Education Act, which effectively endowed Anglican and
24 Catholic school provision whilst ultimately contributing to the party's
25 defeat at the hands of the Liberals at the 1906 General Election. Despite
26 this concern, Conservative President of the Board of Education (now
27 Secretary of State for Education) Richard Austen Butler began optimisti-
28 cally fashioning a consensus-building, cross-party piece of legislation that
29 set out a vision for post-war education in England and Wales. Butler was
30 at the time a young and idealistic politician, a pragmatist who realised
31 what could be achieved if he worked with—rather than in spite of—his
32 pre-war political opponents and those with influence from within the
33 Anglican and Catholic churches. Butler's approach had the added bonus
34 of being contagious; even the most ardent anti-church educational reform-
35 ers had to concede that his proposal was 'the right policy' for the time.¹
36 The war years had inadvertently brought diverse and disparate social
37 groups together through shared service and suffering. This, together with
38 the example set by the national government, brought about 'a shifting
39 social climate'² that enabled an appetite for coalition-building and inter-
40 ventionist welfare legislation. The churches' collaboration came at a price,
41 however, both financially and ideologically—but it was a price political
42 and social reformers were willing to pay. Butler agreed not only to having
43 the state effectively pay for church schools but also to the law ensuring
44 that the school day would begin with an act of collective worship and to
45 allowing the churches to set their own curriculum for religious instruction
46 (as it was then termed). The current education system in England and
47 Wales finds its roots in the principles established in this 1944 Education
48 Act, although much has changed in the intervening years through various
49 other Acts of Parliament. Heralded remarkably as both a victory for pro-
50 gressives and a triumph of paternalism, the Act established free state edu-
51 cation for all up to the age of 15 and transfer to a tripartite provision at age
52 11 (based on academic aptitude). Religious instruction was the only sub-
53 ject specifically legally defined in the Act. Together with collective worship,

they have remained central (if controversial) tenets of compulsory schooling in England and Wales to this day. 54 55

Religious instruction is now widely referred to as religious education (RE) and sits within the wider parameters of the devolved National Curriculum for England as a statutory subject for students 5–18 years old. Described as ‘a subject in a particular place and time’,³ its meaning, nature, intention and indeed its very name have changed considerably over the last 80 years. In 1944, religious instruction was intended to be ‘non-denominational’, but this meant non-denominationally Christian, rather than religion-neutral. Now, children from their earliest years of schooling encounter a subject that involves studying different religions, beliefs, worldviews and philosophical viewpoints. It both encompasses and embraces moral and ethical discussion, debate and the application of religion to contemporary issues and contexts. Whether discussing ‘special books’ in the early years of primary school or analysing the most complex philosophical texts prior to university entrance in secondary school, it is a place where pupils of all faiths and none can come together to share ideas, challenge their thinking and learn about and from the beliefs and practices of others. 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72

RE, CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES AND THE HOLOCAUST 73

The desire to include controversial issues in the curriculum has been widely advocated and discussed.⁴ Robert Stradling asserted that ‘controversial issues [were] an integral and inescapable part of the secondary school curriculum’.⁵ Teachers were deterred from embracing opportunities to discuss such issues, however, by the prescriptive tones of the 1996 Education Act, although this was perhaps an overreaction to a piece of legislation that dichotomously closed down discussions about partisan politics whilst at the same time advocating ‘a balanced presentation of opposing views’ in the classroom.⁶ Two years later, the report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (led by Professor Bernard Crick) clarified the government’s position that in preparing children for the complexities of adult life, ‘Education should not attempt to shelter our nation’s children from even the harsher controversies.’⁷ This exposition facilitated an increasingly ‘more promising political climate for teaching controversial issues’.⁸ As a result, much of the content of the current secondary curriculum has been until recently overtly geared towards evaluative discussions of such issues. Specifications for public examinations in RE over the last 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90

91 decade have illustrated how teaching about controversial issues had
92 become a core part of this subject (although recent changes have seen a
93 return to a more knowledge-based focus). As Crick had observed, RE
94 embraced ‘the very essence of controversy’.⁹ Amongst the myriad of con-
95 troversial issues one might encounter in the RE classroom are matters of
96 life, death, justice, tolerance, prejudice and religious freedom—indeed
97 topics as diverse as the human condition embraces.

98 Undoubtedly, the Holocaust is one such subject that might be embraced
99 within RE. The Holocaust Education Development Programme’s
100 research¹⁰ into secondary school teachers’ attitudes and practices in
101 Holocaust education certainly found this to be true, arguably to their sur-
102 prise (given their declared focus on history teaching). Their data revealed
103 the naivety implicit in their assumptions, with 92 per cent of *all* teachers
104 indicating that they facilitated debate and discussion of the issues raised by
105 the Holocaust, not just the historical facts of it. These outcomes echoed
106 earlier findings around the cross-curricular intentions of Holocaust educa-
107 tion,¹¹ although these studies also focused almost exclusively on secondary
108 education. This is not to say that any one subject is better placed to study
109 issues of morality, ethics or historical facts. It is, rather, to suggest that dif-
110 ferent disciplines can and should learn *from* and work *with* each other, for
111 the mutual benefit of all pupils. This is, on the whole, a problem more
112 evident in secondary schools (where different teachers are likely to teach
113 different subjects) than in primary schools (where a single teacher is likely
114 to teach across subjects). However, research indicates that collaboration is
115 less enthusiastically embraced in practice in secondary schools, with evi-
116 dence suggesting that the relationship between the disciplines of history
117 and religious education is not always clearly defined (if at all).¹² There may
118 be a lack of communication between the two, which at worst may even
119 manifest as active suspicion or hostility between departments that teach-
120 ers¹³ and pupils¹⁴ perceive as being of different status. What emerges at
121 present, then, might be a somewhat messy picture of competing curricular
122 claims on the Holocaust in secondary schools—one that arguably benefits
123 neither teachers nor learners. I do not believe that this discord warrants
124 retreat, however. Ultimately, the Holocaust is not a one-dimensional
125 entity, and any suggestion that it can be tackled or understood by teachers
126 or learners from a single discipline seems as flawed in its arrogance as it is
127 myopic. Foster and Mercier¹⁵ reminded us how ‘the religious dimen-
128 sion’—as much as any other aspect of this multifaceted event—is vital if
129 pupils are to attempt to ‘piece together the many parts of the puzzle’ of

the Holocaust. Primary teachers, it would seem, have a clear advantage here, given that they tend to be interdisciplinary in their expertise. They can be less concerned with any need to compartmentalise learning within the narrow confines of a single discipline. This enables them to present topics such as the Holocaust within the context of different themes, relatively free from the subject or timetable constraints of their secondary counterparts. This is an opportunity (in its collegiality) to explore the various aspects of a complex topic such as the Holocaust from different perspectives, in a way secondary colleagues often cannot.

The discussion so far would seem to lead to two conclusions: first, that the Holocaust has a place in the RE classroom (as the evidence suggests), certainly as much as it does in the history classroom. Second, we might conclude that wherever it is being taught, the Holocaust is being presented to some extent as a moral or controversial issue. In secondary schools, it might be considered a moral concern by an RE teacher (for example) who focuses on issues of prejudice or discrimination relating to the Holocaust. Similarly, a secondary history teacher might explore issues around the origins or motivations of the Holocaust. In a primary school, this might be reflected in the cross-curricular approach taken by the teacher, for example, discussing the story of Anne Frank in terms of the historical and moral actions of those concerned. In any of these school contexts, the benefits of cross-curricular study are self-evident. As a teacher of RE, I agree with Hector's¹⁶ opinion that the topic of the Holocaust sits 'particularly comfortably' within the RE curriculum because RE teachers feel 'a little more confident' in teaching difficult issues such as this. This relationship can be 'hazy',¹⁷ however, and these are issues I shall return to later. Regardless, there can be no doubt that the Holocaust is as much a part of the RE agenda in English primary and secondary schools, as religion is a part of any academic discussion of the Holocaust.

The second assumption (stated earlier) is problematic, however. I find fault in the assumption that the Holocaust should be viewed as a *controversial* issue. This is because of the lack of clarity evident in the literature concerning what exactly a *controversial* issue might be. Whilst many have attempted a definition,¹⁸ only minimal consensus has emerged. If we return to the Crick Report, we are told that:

A controversial issue is an issue about which there is no fixed or universally held point of view. Such issues are those which commonly divide society and for which significant groups offer conflicting explanations and solutions.

168 There may, for example, be conflicting views on such matters as how a prob-
169 lem has arisen and who is to blame.¹⁹

170 My response to this description would be to question whether this defi-
171 nition fits with a contemporary understanding of the Holocaust in
172 England. It is for historians to debate the minutiae of the historiography
173 of the events surrounding the attempted extermination of European
174 Jewry, but I would argue that—from a western European perspective at
175 least—it is not a topic that fits Crick’s criteria. There are certainly fixed or
176 universally held points of view on the Holocaust; we can agree at least that
177 it was *wrong*, for example. The Holocaust does not commonly divide soci-
178 ety, nor do ‘significant groups’ offer conflicting explanations, not in the
179 mainstream at least. Historians might debate the origins of the Holocaust,
180 but these subtleties elude most of the general public. A simple search for a
181 dictionary definition of the word *controversial* reveals explanations centred
182 on the concept of *disagreement*, and I do not believe such divergence
183 exists around the Holocaust in the public sphere in England, the UK as a
184 whole, or in the National Curriculum. This is where I would suggest a
185 subtle but important difference in the language employed (particularly in
186 the educational sphere) in favour of addressing the Holocaust in schools
187 as a *sensitive* issue, rather than a *controversial* one. A sensitive issue might
188 be defined by the threat it poses to those interacting with it,²⁰ and learning
189 about a sensitive issue will undoubtedly ‘be an uncomfortable experience’
190 (if not necessarily an educationally unproductive one²¹). While academics
191 might debate areas of historical controversy or contestation (such as the
192 debate around the uniqueness of the Holocaust in the context of contem-
193 porary genocide), I feel drawn to assert that teaching and learning about
194 the Holocaust in the classroom more correctly falls within the parameters
195 of a sensitive issue. In clearly asserting it as such, I can continue to build
196 my case in defence of the role of RE in teaching about the Holocaust.

197 TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST IN RE: 198 A CONTEMPORARY CONCERN

199 The nature of Holocaust education in English secondary schools has been
200 the focus of much scrutiny in recent years.²² The growing body of research
201 on the topic lies in sharp relief to what came before, exemplified by the
202 UK’s derisory Country Report to the Task Force for International

Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 2006.²³ Whilst scant academic evidence from the previous decade gave little cause for serious concern about the place of the Holocaust within the secondary curriculum, it did suggest that provision was somewhat variable and dependent upon individual teachers' expertise and enthusiasm (and fairly non-existent in primary schools). Defined by the extensive work of Geoffrey Short at Hertfordshire University,²⁴ the socio-political landscape prior to 2006 facilitated three key developments in Holocaust education: the introduction in 1997 of one-day visits to Poland for 17-year-old school students with the Holocaust Educational Trust (the *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project), the establishment 4 years later of 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK and the development of citizenship as a cross-curricular area within the National Curriculum from 2002.²⁵ The inclusion of this final development illustrates the influence of Short's preceding work and exemplifies a difficult relationship for many historians.

Lucy Russell's work²⁶ picked up on that of Husbands²⁷ in her consideration of two traditions in secondary school history. These could broadly be seen as the *great tradition* and the *alternative tradition*. The former focused on the cultural capital to be gained through the acquisition of historical knowledge in the belief that this and the demonstration of such knowledge (facts) were a prerequisite to success in the adult world. The latter tradition focused on the gaining of skills for future life and employment, viewing the study of history equally in terms of the transferable skills pupils could gain from its study. Demonstrably, Short's work had been illustrative and supportive of the latter tradition. This is clearly exemplified in his consideration of how a study of the Holocaust might contribute to anti-racist outcomes with school pupils,²⁸ in which he explicitly linked the Holocaust with anti-racist, pro-citizenship, pro-social outcomes. Indeed, it is his perceived failure of these intentions that are evident throughout his more recent retrospective evaluation of his own work, the work of others and the developing social and educational contexts within which Holocaust education had evolved over the last 25 years.²⁹ In this later piece, Short lamented what he concluded had been the abject 'failure' of Holocaust education in secondary schools. On reflection, Short believed that Holocaust education had been unsuccessful in fulfilling its anti-racist objectives (which he had promoted), that its teachers were still poorly equipped to teach the topic and that not enough curriculum time had been devoted to the topic. These views had been reinforced—albeit for varying intentions—by Pettigrew et al.'s analysis of current trends in

242 practices and outcomes in secondary schools six years previously.³⁰
243 However, Short's conclusions add to the evidence in their apposition to
244 Pettigrew's—whilst Short had long been an advocate of the anti-racist
245 potential of Holocaust Education, Pettigrew's research centre unmistakably
246 had not. Whether the appropriation of the Holocaust as a means for
247 teaching contemporary lessons is desirable (as Short suggests) or undesirable
248 (as Pettigrew et al. suggest), the evidence from both suggests it *is*
249 happening. With explicit curriculum requirements only in place for the
250 study of the Holocaust in secondary schools, it is reasonable to suggest
251 similar intentions might prevail in primary schools—with the possibility
252 that such anti-racist intentions might be even more to the fore given the
253 age of the children.

254 In their extensive survey of secondary teachers from various disciplines,
255 Pettigrew et al. found that whilst an overwhelming majority of respon-
256 dents agreed that the Holocaust should remain a compulsory part of the
257 secondary curriculum, the most commonly cited goal in their teaching
258 (from the limited range offered to them) was 'to develop an understand-
259 ing of the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping in
260 society'.³¹ Their second most cited reason was 'to learn the lessons of the
261 Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens
262 again'.³² The findings suggest that the majority of teachers were gearing
263 their lessons towards societal/actionable objectives and outcomes. Such
264 intentions would appear to be more naturally the purview of subjects such
265 as RE or citizenship than history (or at least to fall broadly across the dis-
266 ciplines rather than exclusively within one). However, of these two other
267 subjects, only RE has a defined syllabus across primary and secondary edu-
268 cation which must be followed by primary and secondary pupils. Citiz-
269 nership is a statutory foundation subject, with a prescribed programme
270 of study only for 11- to 14-year-olds (the programme of study for 5- to
271 11-year olds is non-statutory, as is the subject). RE, however, has a syl-
272 labus defined across compulsory schooling by local agreement or religious
273 body to be followed by *all* pupils in *all* state funded primary and second-
274 ary schools. So it is that whilst primary teachers are *encouraged* to provide
275 a citizenship curriculum for their pupils, they *must* provide a RE curricu-
276 lum. This article does not seek to promote RE above other foundation
277 subjects (such as citizenship or history), but it does aim to point out the
278 opportunities best provided by this statutory subject at all ages. As Short
279 observed, 'religious education (RE) has the potential to make a distinctive
280 and valuable contribution to students' understanding of the Holocaust',³³

and it is uniquely positioned to do so, with a legally enshrined reach over pupils from 5 to 18 (no other subject in the English National Curriculum has such a provision). However, such claims to the centrality of RE in teaching about the Holocaust are widely contested by the historical establishment (perhaps reflecting the hierarchy of subjects already alluded to here). Gregory summed up this consensus in observing that ‘at the very heart of teaching about the Holocaust must be an accurate account of what as a matter of brute fact happened’.³⁴ Significantly, however, in so doing he also acknowledged that this would necessarily include an exploration of issues of ‘prejudice, racism, discrimination and stereotyping’. The issue, then, may be one of priorities. It might be plausible to assume that a secondary school historian would teach about the Holocaust primarily to convey issues of factual history, whilst an RE teacher (or a primary school teacher) might place the topic of the Holocaust within a moral parameter, such as ‘racism and prejudice’. This might illustrate an incongruity of priorities, but teachers and academics must consider whether these aims are mutually exclusive.

SUPPORTING THE LEARNER THROUGH RE: A TRIPARTITE APPROACH

The majority of the research in Holocaust education in England has focused on secondary teachers’ perspectives. This seems to me to be a somewhat hierarchical, *top-down* approach to the problem—simultaneously foregrounding secondary education over primary education, and teachers over learners. My doctoral study³⁵ focused on the experiences of the learner, a *bottom-up* approach (albeit only in a secondary setting). Based on interviews with 48 students aged between 13 and 17 in a single English school, the study revealed a number of significant inconsistencies in pupils’ learning. These included factual inaccuracies in subject knowledge, confusion over the wider contemporary and historical contexts of the Holocaust and a need for more emotionally supportive Holocaust education. The school of my study appeared to be fairly representative of Holocaust education in English schools insofar as the History Department took the lead, with the RE Department also contributing, but with little co-operation between the two departments concerning their delivery. The History Department arranged for pupils to have the opportunity to hear from a Holocaust survivor each year, whilst the RE Department took the

317 lead with the school's annual Holocaust Memorial Day chapel service (a
318 whole school act of collective worship). Unsurprisingly, the head of the
319 History Department was primarily concerned with issues related to con-
320 veying historically accurate content (such as pupils being able to use the
321 correct terminology), whilst the head of RE felt his lessons were more
322 'empathetic' in tone.³⁶ Despite the evident lack of communication with his
323 neighbouring department, the head of RE did try to plan lessons that com-
324 plemented their learning in history. He also felt it was important to allow
325 his pupils the space to feel they could freely discuss wider issues around the
326 topic. Ultimately, however, he did not feel they quite connected with the
327 topic, reflecting that they found it 'slightly divorced from their frame of
328 reference, I guess'.³⁷ Thus, the two departments illustrated exactly the ten-
329 sions already discussed earlier, with explicitly divergent aims and inten-
330 tions, exercised in isolation. Furthermore, the pupils picked up on this
331 disciplinary segregation to some extent, often showing a need to justify its
332 inclusion in RE (which they did in terms of studying moral issues, good
333 and evil, or—less frequently—the roots of antisemitism, or in studying
334 Judaism more broadly). Notably, there was a lack of clarity in their minds
335 as to the extent to which the Holocaust had been covered in RE at all.
336 Their understanding of how (or whether) the Holocaust fitted into their
337 RE was uneven, but it was consistent with the wider research findings in
338 the field—history dealt with the factual, whilst RE dealt with the emo-
339 tional and moral. While all of this reflected the haziness Burke³⁸ referred
340 to in describing the relationship between the disciplines, any such interdis-
341 ciplinary confusion—or, indeed, tension—has the potential to be educa-
342 tionally unproductive as pupils get caught in the middle of a timetabling
343 power struggle of sorts. Most tellingly, this was articulated by 15-year-old
344 Declan, who described this tension as being between an outcome-
345 dependent subject (history, where success was exemplified through exami-
346 nation results) and a process-focused subject (RE, where success was
347 demonstrated through discussion and debate). His views were com-
348 pounded by his observation that the latter subject was 'not work pres-
349 sured'³⁹ in the same way that the former was. What Declan alluded to here
350 was evocative of Stradling's⁴⁰ distinction between the product-based and
351 process-based approaches to teaching difficult issues, and the pupils
352 seemed unclear as to which was more important—or more useful—to
353 them or the school.

354 As educators, we might choose to see evidence of these explicit distinc-
355 tions between our subjects as at best unhelpful and at worst a professional

threat in an already heavily marketised educational climate (particularly for the subject that is seen as *inferior* by the student as the customer). However, I would prefer to see these distinctions as *opportunities*, despite any risks this might involve to our perceived professional fiefdoms. If we are being candid, it may be reasonable to assume that most RE specialists are by definition not historians, and vice versa. Rather than speak of the skill sets we *do not* have, I would argue that it is more helpful to open the conversation in terms of the skills we *do* have and how these might complement one another. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) guidelines *What to Teach About the Holocaust*⁴¹ specify three outcomes for teaching about the topic. They advocate that Holocaust education should (in general):

1. Advance knowledge about this unprecedented destruction
2. Preserve the memory of those who suffered
3. Encourage educators and students to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust and as they apply in today’s world.

IHRA justifies these three outcomes from their bases within the three widely accepted definitions of the Holocaust offered by the Imperial War Museum (London), Yad Vashem (Jerusalem) and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC). While I acknowledge the contested nature both of these stated outcomes and of these three definitions, I think IHRA offers the best we have at a unified opinion. Yet these three outcomes do not sit easily together, and those from different disciplines might find them deeply divisive. In an effort to ease these tensions, I offer in what follows an outline as to how the outcomes might more comfortably complement each other through the support of RE:

Outcome 1: It starts before it begins—introducing young learners to Judaism

In my extensive experience as a teacher in both primary and secondary schools, the majority of my career has been spent in the age groups bridging the traditional primary/secondary divide (teaching 10- 13-year-olds). During my career I have become weary of secondary school teachers’ trite laments that their pupils don’t seem to have learned anything in their subject at primary school. The reality is that primary schools *do* teach about Judaism—and anecdotal evidence suggests they do so probably more

391 often than any other comparative world religion, except perhaps Islam. It
 392 is generally accepted that an essential element of effective Holocaust edu-
 393 cation is that pupils are taught about pre-war Jewish life.⁴² As Short noted,
 394 ‘any misunderstanding which contributes to the alien characterisation of
 395 Judaism must be a matter for concern. Teachers of religious education
 396 obviously have a major responsibility here’.⁴³ His concerns, based on
 397 empirical evidence, were that pupils either failed to relate to them (they
 398 saw them as ‘other’) or that they did not understand the complexity inher-
 399 ent in someone identifying (or being identified) as ‘Jewish’. Short’s evi-
 400 dence was based on the responses of 11- to 14-year-olds, furthering the
 401 case for more complicated teaching of Judaism in primary school, particu-
 402 larly in the years immediately before transition across the primary/second-
 403 ary divide. RE in primary schools must therefore address issues around the
 404 self and the other (supported by any programme for citizenship education
 405 that might exist in a school), but also around the multifaceted nature of
 406 Jewish identity. Without such an understanding as a precursor, they will
 407 not understand the nature of Jewish persecution during the Holocaust or
 408 the rich diversity of pre-war Jewish life as anything other than a perfunct-
 409 ory recall of a distant (and distanced) community. Successful RE around
 410 Judaism—particularly in the primary school—will have the effect of
 411 enabling the school to ‘do what they can to develop their pupils’ ability to
 412 see things as others see them’.⁴⁴ This will, in turn, equip pupils with the
 413 skills to be able to *connect* with the Jews of the pre-war communities across
 414 Europe and with the victims of the subsequent Holocaust. If the first (or
 415 second) steps are missing or inadequate, then the pupils might only iden-
 416 tify with the victims by their persecution (if at all), thereby locking them
 417 into a perpetrator-led, ‘othered’ narrative that is both distancing and
 418 unhelpful.

419 *Outcome 2: It continues after it ends—inviting young learners towards acts*
 420 *of remembrance and commemoration*

421 In the two years prior to Britain’s first formal marking of Holocaust
 422 Memorial Day in 2001, the government’s consultation process became
 423 embroiled in an ‘unsavory’ debate over its definition, intentions and prac-
 424 ticalities.⁴⁵ At the heart of this debate were tensions around the political
 425 intentions of the day and whether or not we should commemorate the
 426 event at all (given that it did not happen here directly). It is self-evident
 427 that knowledge does not require action per se, but surely schools are

places that are more than sites of knowledge acquisition, since they are about helping to shape the next generation. Although it is perhaps now a custom more broadly honoured in its spirit than in strict observance of the law, English schools are still under a legal requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship for pupils of all ages. As such, acts of worship, reflection, prayer and commemoration should be commonplace in our schools and are legally intertwined in the very essence of English schooling (given its roots in church-led education, discussed earlier). Some would argue that this is unhelpful—harmful even—in the cause of sound Holocaust education because they feel that ‘too much emphasis has been placed on the duties of memory and commemoration’²⁴⁶ over factual knowledge. Certainly, one could argue that the organisation charged with curating national commemoration in England (Holocaust Memorial Day Trust—HMDT) is *at least* as concerned with remembrance as it is with promoting knowledge about the events of the Holocaust. HMDT’s annual report for 2017⁴⁷ showed there were 7700 commemorative activities in the UK, including a wealth of creative arts and memorial events. Whilst most of these events are aimed at older pupils and adults, HMDT has always endeavoured to produce resources aimed at primary-aged pupils, including lesson plans, worksheets and suggestions for acts of collective worship. For the youngest pupils, these resources have often blurred the lines between Holocaust education and citizenship education in their understandable efforts to protect a young audience from the horrors of the Holocaust. Whilst this could leave resources exposed to criticism for their possible lack of historical rigour in favour of citizenship, I would argue that this is not necessarily a bad thing. Rather than distracting from a singular aim, this duality could facilitate transformative outcomes in both. Schools are places where collective memories are shaped and communicated with children, and this process can help them understand the significance of the events of the Holocaust, even if they are not aware of the full reality of those truths just yet. If the aims of the first outcome (discussed earlier) have been successfully met, then the aims of this second outcome might seem to be a natural expression of them.

Outcome 3: It ends before it starts—inoculating learners against repetition

In my opinion, whether a particular teacher subscribes to the view that the Holocaust has contemporary moral lessons or not has become irrelevant to the debate. The evidence suggests overwhelmingly that it is

465 happening, and has been for many years—so maybe the profession’s ener-
 466 gies would be better spent focusing on *how* these lessons can be drawn out
 467 and how they can be effectively *communicated* to pupils of every age.
 468 Evidence suggests that the Holocaust is ‘held’ in different ways in the col-
 469 lective memory of different groups and nations.⁴⁸ How the Holocaust as
 470 an entity settles into a collective memory is not always an easy (or desir-
 471 able) process,⁴⁹ but undoubtedly it does. This process will likely be shaped
 472 through various influences, such as the passage of time, international
 473 political relations and historical actions (or inactions). As the group’s aca-
 474 demic community, media, public and politicians shape the memory within
 475 the public sphere, they are likely to be expressed in its education system
 476 through its teachers, the explicit curriculum and textbooks. How history
 477 is presented is by its nature a moral and ethical process⁵⁰—we want our
 478 children to hold views that are broadly in keeping with our own construc-
 479 tions in an effort to sustain the moral consensus of our society. If the aims
 480 of the first and second outcomes are met (knowledge and commemora-
 481 tion), then those of the third outcome might be seen as a natural, desirable
 482 corollary—if pupils know about it and commemorate it, they will there-
 483 fore strive to stop it from happening again.

484 ENVISIONING THE TRIPARTITE APPROACH

485 Implementing a tripartite approach such as this in Holocaust education
 486 would undoubtedly be messy. Co-operation between primary and second-
 487 ary schools or between secondary school departments can often be at best
 488 limited, at worst non-existent. Just as the Holocaust is jealously guarded
 489 by those who define it within the transnational sphere, so too can there be
 490 a form of suspicious silence between age phases and departments in schools
 491 as to who ‘owns’ which aspects of Holocaust education. But I believe we
 492 must set aside these quarrels in the interests of our young learners, in
 493 favour of a joined-up, holistic educational experience that is cross-phase
 494 and interdisciplinary. Harris⁵¹ reminded us that the Holocaust is a subject
 495 we must teach ‘under pain of judgment’, and I suggest that the only way
 496 we can settle this argument is to work co-operatively, acknowledging both
 497 each other’s strengths *and* weaknesses and embracing both to create a
 498 truly interprofessional approach to this most complex of topics.

499 Eckmann⁵² recognised that ‘history cannot be transposed to the pres-
 500 ent in a linear way’. Even if it could, I don’t think it would be an uncom-
 501 plicated matter, if indeed it were desirable. So if we try to simply

manipulate history to teach us moral lessons, we do an injustice to both past and present. In this chapter I have tried to set out a rationale for the inclusion of RE in the process of educating young people about the Holocaust in an effort to both support and (necessarily) complicate teaching and learning. In her paper, Eckmann evoked the work of the Swiss thinker Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827)—in particular his philosophy that education should be a triangular enterprise of head, heart and hands. She advocated an approach to Holocaust education that similarly involves the head (subject knowledge), the heart (memory and commemoration) and the hands (human rights education). She calls these three ‘cardinal points’, whilst recognising the ‘complex tension’ that may exist between them.⁵³ I agree but suggest that rather than seeing a tension, we can marry these ‘cardinal points’ for their mutual benefit and the benefit of the children in our primary and secondary schools, as follows:

Holocaust Education and the Head: Historical knowledge about the events of the Holocaust is of principal importance. History specialists in primary and secondary schools should take the lead in developing and delivering these schemes of work, in collaboration with their RE specialist colleagues, to ensure a consistent and accurate historical knowledge base across a diversity of subject areas and topics.

Holocaust Education and the Heart: The nature of this content will necessarily disturb the young learner’s sensibilities. RE specialists can support this learning through their teaching of various appropriate topics, from primary school upwards. These topics will include themes such as Judaism, antisemitism, racism and prejudice, morality, human rights education, death education, tolerance and so forth at age-appropriate, emergent levels. By working with their history colleagues, RE teachers can help embed a deeper understanding for their pupils on an emotionally constructive level.

Holocaust Education and the Hands: If a pupil’s learning is to have resonance within their understanding of their place in society, they will need to express their learning within the public sphere. This might be through an act of memorialisation or commemoration, such as a Holocaust Memorial Day activity. Both history and RE specialists (and others) can contribute to expressions of Holocaust education within the public sphere in school, drawing on their mutual strengths and expertise.

CONCLUSIONS

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539 This chapter has undertaken to establish a case for RE in Holocaust educa-
540 tion through a consideration of its unique position within the English
541 curriculum and its particular suitability for teaching and learning in this
542 most sensitive of issues. It has sought to highlight the advantages of a
543 cross-curricular approach—more naturally achievable in primary schools,
544 but not impossible in secondary schools. The curriculum, like the majority
545 of contemporary research in the area, focuses on Holocaust education in
546 the latter stages of compulsory schooling. Yet a focus on prevention, atti-
547 tudinal change, anti-racist education or memorialisation must surely begin
548 earlier. The tripartite approach put forward here (with the suggestion of a
549 marrying of head, heart and hand) cannot be left until secondary school.
550 It must begin with primary schools, or else teachers' attempts will be frus-
551 trated. This approach will not be without its critics—both philosophically
552 and in practice in schools. The reality is that teachers from different age
553 phases or disciplines are as likely to be well equipped (or not) at different
554 aspects of this tripartite methodology. I am advocating a cross-phase,
555 cross-curricular approach to Holocaust education in which RE plays a sig-
556 nificant, *supportive*, collaborative and continuous role. Some educators
557 and academics advocate the primacy of history, and I don't disagree with
558 them. Others believe in the appropriateness of using the Holocaust to
559 teach contemporary lessons, and I don't disagree with them. Others
560 debate the appropriateness (or not) of teaching about the Holocaust in
561 primary schools, and I don't necessarily disagree with this, either. But
562 where they disagree with each other, I take issue. What I am advocating is
563 a need to embrace *all* of these points of view, and that to fail to do so is in
564 fact a form of gross negligence. The history of the Holocaust is contextu-
565 alised by the moral choices made within it, but those moral actions are
566 equally contextualised by their place in history. It is only by leading pupils
567 towards a complex understanding of this 'bi-directionality'²⁵⁴ that they can
568 start to make sense of the context, the actions and their relevance to their
569 contemporary lives, expressed through knowledge, empathy and com-
570 memoration. This can be effective only if begun early in their schooling,
571 and it cannot be done effectively without recognising the bi-directionality
572 that can and should exist between history and RE and between primary
573 and secondary schooling if Holocaust education is to be truly effective and
574 transformative.

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