

NI HUMANISTS PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 7

After 2.(e) insert:

Religious education and assemblies

2A. Article 21 of The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 is amended as follows:

- (a) In Subsection (1) after “every such school” add “apart from an integrated school”
- (b) After Subsection (2), insert —
 - “(2A) In an integrated school, the school day shall include an assembly which is principally directed towards furthering the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils regardless of religion or belief.
 - (2B) Subject to subsection (2C) no acts of worship or other religious observance may be organised by or on behalf of an integrated school (whether or not forming part of the curriculum).
 - (2C) Staff or pupils of a school may arrange voluntary acts of worship on school premises, provided that—
 - (a) subject to paragraph (b), pupils are permitted to decide whether to attend any such acts of worship; and
 - (b) for pupils aged under 16, a parent or guardian may request that their child should not attend.
 - (2D) In an integrated school the religious education required by paragraph (1) —
 - (a) must reflect the principal religious and non-religious philosophical convictions represented in Northern Ireland; and
 - (b) must be taught in a manner that is objective, critical and pluralistic.
 - (2E) In subsection (2D) the reference to “philosophical convictions” is to philosophical convictions within the meaning of Article 2 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights.”
- (c) In Subsection (3), remove “(a) a controlled integrated school” and “(b) a grant-maintained integrated school”
- (d) After Subsection (3A), insert —
 - “(3B) In —
 - (a) a controlled integrated school; and
 - (b) a grant-maintained integrated school

Commented [1]: The overarching purpose of this amendment is to add a requirement for RE in integrated schools to be objective, critical, and pluralistic and to replace worship with inclusive assemblies.

NI HUMANISTS PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

compliance with the standards for religious education and assemblies set out in paragraphs (2A)-(2E) shall be the responsibility of the Board of Governors of the school and shall be subject to inspection by the Department.

2B. Article 102 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 is amended as follows:

- (a) At the start of Subsection (7) insert “Except where the school is an integrated school,”
- (b) After Subsection (7) insert —
“In an integrated school, the religious education required under Article 5(1)(a) of the 2006 Order must be subject to inspections under this article at a frequency of no less than every 5 years.”

2C. In Article 11(1) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 after “grant-aided schools” insert “(other than integrated schools)”

2D. After Article 11 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, insert —

“Core syllabus for religious education in integrated schools

11A. —(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the Department may by order specify a core syllabus for the teaching of religious education in integrated schools, that is to say a syllabus which —

- (a) sets out certain core matters, skills and processes which are to be included in the teaching of religious education to pupils in such schools, but does not prevent or restrict the inclusion of any other matter, skill or process in that teaching (provided it does not contravene Article 21 (2D) of the 1986 Order);
- (b) is such that the teaching of any of the matters, skills or processes set out in that syllabus would not contravene Article 21(2D) of the 1986 Order.

(2) The Department shall not specify a core syllabus under paragraph (1) unless a draft of that syllabus —

- (a) was prepared by a group of persons (“the drafting group”) appearing to the Department to be persons having an interest in the teaching of religious education in integrated schools that must include —
 - (i) persons to represent each of the principal religious and non-religious philosophical convictions that, in the opinion of the Department, will appropriately reflect the range of such convictions held in Northern Ireland;
 - (ii) persons to represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Department, ought to be represented;
 - (iii) persons to represent bodies that include in their objectives the provision of support and advice to the Department in its promotion of integrated education as

Commented [2]: This part of the amendment is intended to bring RE in integrated schools into the general inspection framework and stipulates that it should be regularly inspected (not just at the request of Boards of Governors).

Commented [3]: This part of the amendment introduces a core syllabus for RE in integrated schools that is critical, objective, and pluralistic and is drawn up by a group involving representatives from the principal religious and non-religious belief groups in Northern Ireland, alongside teacher representatives. It may also be worthwhile explicitly writing integrated education bodies into the law, however, we believe this involvement would be covered by 11A(2)(a)

NI HUMANISTS PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

recognised under Article 3 of the Integrated Education Act [202X].

- (b) was published, in accordance with directions given by the Department, together with a notice inviting representations to be made before a specified date not being less than four weeks from the date of publication;
 - (c) was revised, if necessary, by the drafting group, after considering all representations made in accordance with the notice mentioned in sub-paragraph (b); and
 - (d) was submitted to the Department by the drafting group together with—
 - (i) a report by that group on the nature of representations made in accordance with the notice mentioned in sub-paragraph (b) and on the extent to which, and the manner in which, account has been taken of those representations in the draft submitted to the Department; and
 - (ii) any other information which the Department may request.
- (3) Paragraphs (1) and (2) apply with appropriate modifications to amendments to, or a revision of, an existing core syllabus.
- (4) An order under paragraph (1) may, instead of containing the provisions to be made, refer to provisions in a document published as specified in the order and direct that those provisions are to have effect or, as the case may be, are to have effect as amended by the order.”