

Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for Education

# United Kingdom Country Report 2010

Task Force for International Cooperation  
on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

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# United Kingdom

## Country Report on Holocaust Education in Task Force Member Countries

Date of revised submission: 15 December 2010

### PREAMBLE

#### Background to the report

The United Kingdom first submitted its Holocaust Education Country Report to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) in March 2006. At that point, the report reflected the best available information on teaching and learning about the Holocaust in UK universities and schools. However, in September 2009 an extensive empirical investigation of Holocaust education in England's state maintained secondary schools was published by the Institute of Education (IOE), University of London. The publication of the report – which drew upon survey responses from 2,108 teachers across England and interview accounts from 68 teachers visited at 24 different schools – offered an invaluable opportunity to build upon and, where appropriate, revise the UK's original submission. Consultations were held with representatives from each of the key Holocaust education organisations currently working in the UK (as detailed in Appendix 1) and additional research exercises were conducted as referred to throughout the report.

This revision is not intended as the final say on Holocaust education in the UK. On the contrary, we recognise that practice in our schools and universities, and the popular understandings and policy landscapes which frame practice, are constantly changing. As we write at the close of 2010, the Government's plans for education reform are a lot clearer after the recent publication of the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, but there still remains some uncertainty about the impact of the recent change in national government at Westminster. For example, the English National Curriculum will be reviewed. The Government intend to restore the National Curriculum to its original purpose - a core national entitlement organised around subject disciplines. The development of subject knowledge will be central to the revised curriculum, and details of the review will be announced in the near future. The Government have stated that they would certainly expect any future programme of study for history to continue to include Holocaust education. Our resubmission is intended therefore to reflect the UK delegation's commitment to critical reflection and reporting to the international community as an ongoing activity.

#### Frameworks for education in the UK

The United Kingdom is divided into four education departments, one for each of the four nations England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each of these countries sets its own educational agenda and Scotland also has its own examination system. Compulsory education begins with primary school when students are aged five in England and Wales, and either four or five (depending on month of birth) in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Secondary school begins when most students are 11 years old and continues on a compulsory basis until students are 16. Students are commonly entered for GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations before the end of compulsory schooling in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Standard Grade examinations in Scotland. They may then choose to continue to study for a variety of courses including Advanced Level GCE examinations (AS and A2 Level) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), or Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications in

Scotland. (Further detail on the structure of the school systems in each country is provided in Appendix 2).

As the table below illustrates, the majority of UK schools are in England.

	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland <sup>1</sup>	Wales
Primary	16,971	911	2,128	1,462
Secondary	3,127	233	374	223
Special	1,054	47	190	43
Independent	2,375	17	108	64

**Figure 1: Schools in the UK (2010)<sup>2</sup>**

As with the 2006 UK submission, our research knowledge base is currently much richer and more detailed for schools in England than for Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales. This is reflected in the focus of most of the answers given below. It also reflects the reality that, at present, the Holocaust is only a compulsory area of study within the curriculum mandated for England's schools. However, we hope that, in future years, greater attention can be given to the other three nations within the UK. It may even be appropriate to submit supplementary country-specific reports.

In addition, this report does not address the private school sector ('Independent Schools' in the table above). Here each school is allowed to set its own curriculum independent from national government direction. In practice, the majority of private schools reflect the National Curriculum, if only in that it helps structure teaching towards examinations. It is also significant to highlight the increasing number of 'Academy' schools in England. Academies are state-maintained but independently run institutions which do not have to adhere to the National Curriculum. In addition to the schools listed in Table 1 above, in 2010 there were 202 academies in England (compared to just 27 in 2006). The new coalition government have recently encouraged many more schools to apply for academy status. Again, this may have implication for the delivery and regulation of Holocaust education in the UK.

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<sup>1</sup> 2009 figures (2010 figures not currently available).

<sup>2</sup> Figures taken from: England - <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000925/sfr09-2010.pdf>;  
Northern Ireland - [http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch\\_pg/32-statistics\\_and\\_research\\_statistics\\_on\\_education\\_pg/32\\_statistics\\_and\\_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils\\_pg/32\\_statistics\\_and\\_research-northernirelandsummarydata\\_pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32-statistics_and_research_statistics_on_education_pg/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_statistics_and_research-northernirelandsummarydata_pg.htm);  
Scotland - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/301281/0093985.pdf>;  
Wales - <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2010/100526sdr782010en.pdf>

## FULL REPORT FOLLOWING THE QUESTION GUIDELINES:

### 1. What official directives from government ministries and/or local authorities regarding the teaching of the Holocaust exists in your country?

#### The history curriculum

The English National Curriculum was most recently revised in 2007. The Holocaust remains a statutory component of study within Key Stage 3 history<sup>3</sup>. The curriculum identifies five aspects of British history and two of European and world history which constitute the 'Range and Content' which must be covered by all students. In the context of European and world history, all students must be taught about,

the impact of significant political, social, cultural, religious, technological and/or economic developments and events on past European and world societies,

and,

the changing nature of conflict and cooperation between countries and peoples and its lasting impact on national, ethnic, racial, cultural or religious issues, including the nature and impact of the two world wars and the Holocaust, and the role of European and international institutions in resolving conflicts.

QCA 2007: 116, emphasis added.

The accompanying explanatory notes provide a little further detail and guidance,

This includes studying the causes and consequences of various conflicts, including the two world wars, the Holocaust and other genocides. Pupils should develop an understanding of the changing nature of conflict over time and attempts to resolve conflict and develop cooperation, including through international institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union. The selection of conflicts should take into account their significance in terms of scale, characteristic and unique features, and immediate and longer-term impact, including on civilians. This can be linked with the study in citizenship of the UK's interconnections with the world as a global community.

Ibid.

Unlike in most other European countries, students in England's schools do not need to continue their study of history beyond Key Stage 3, after the age of 14. However, they may choose to study the subject for a further two years as a GCSE examination. In recent years, approximately one third of students have chosen to do so. Smaller numbers of students continue their study to GCE Advanced level (AS and A2) in post-compulsory (post 16) education.

In England, three different examination boards produce specifications for each GCSE. In the case of history, each examination board then offers a choice of at least two different specifications which schools can choose between. At present, seven different English specifications for GCSE history are

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<sup>3</sup> Full details of the Key Stage (or equivalent) structures in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are included as Appendix 2. Key Stage 3 includes the first three years of secondary education (Years 7, 8 and 9, when students are aged between 11 and 14). As will be discussed later in this report, teachers have traditionally included a study of the Holocaust towards the end of Key Stage 3, late in Year 9 when students are deemed emotionally and intellectually mature enough. However, recent research suggests that increasing numbers of schools are under pressure to deliver the Key Stage 3 curriculum in just two rather than three years.

available. 'The Holocaust' or the 'Final Solution' is directly referred to within optional units of study in four of these. A further two make reference to, 'Racial persecution: the Jews and other alien groups, e.g. gypsies [sic]' (AQA, History B) and, 'the persecution of minorities [including] Nazi racial beliefs and policies, particularly with reference to the Jews' (Edexcel, History, A). The final specification is a pilot programme which offers considerable freedom to schools and teachers in terms of choosing content.

Four specifications for A Level history are currently offered by English examination boards and the Holocaust or 'Final Solution' is directly, and in most cases, extensively, referred to within optional units of study in each of these. Full details of the relevant references in each GCSE and A-Level specification are included in Appendix 3.

There is no explicit directive given to teach about the Holocaust within the Key Stage 3 history curriculum in either Wales or Northern Ireland, nor within its equivalent in the Scottish secondary system. Nor is 'the Holocaust' or 'Final Solution' explicitly referenced in the Welsh and Northern Irish GCSE and Scottish Standard Grade specifications currently available for study. However, as is detailed in Appendix 3, both the Welsh and Irish specifications do make clear reference to 'attitudes and policies towards the Jews' (WJEC A and B) within the optional study units 'Germany 1919-1945' (WJEC) and 'Germany 1918-1941' (CCEA). There is no equivalent reference in the Standard Grade specification for history currently available in Scotland.

At A Level, the WJEC (Welsh) history specification offers a unit of study 'Nazi Germany c. 1933-1945' which briefly mentions, 'Nazi social, religious and racial ideology and policy' while the CCEA (Irish) specification includes '[the] social impact of the Nazis: women and family; youth and education; anti-semitism [sic], euthanasia and genocide' within an 'Historical Investigations and Interpretations' option 'Germany 1918-1945'. Again, there is no equivalent reference made in either the Higher or Advanced Higher specifications currently available in Scotland.

## **Religious education**

In England, at present, religious education is a statutory requirement throughout compulsory schooling (i.e. until students are at least 16 years old). However, there is no comparable compulsory content for this study, although there is a non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education. Instead, the topics for inclusion are determined within a framework of locally agreed syllabi, responsibility for which lies with individual local authorities: local rather than national government direct the content of the curriculum. Nevertheless, in 2007, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority offered an exemplar programme of study which referenced the Holocaust as an example of a topic that could be used to 'explor[e] human experiences such as suffering' and 'raise questions about people's abiding sense of meaning in the face of pain and fear' within Key Stage 3 (QCA 2007: 269).

There are currently 152 separate Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (or SACREs) in England, each with responsibility for overseeing the curriculum used in their local authority's schools. In preparation for this report, all 152 SACRE's were invited to share the locally agreed syllabus currently in use in their schools. To date, 124 have been received and reviewed and approximately 60% make explicit reference to either 'the Holocaust' or 'Shoah'. Most commonly the Holocaust is referenced within units of work for Key Stage 3, often within studies of Judaism, through questions such as, 'How do Jews make sense of their relationship with G-d in the light of the Holocaust' (Bracknell Forest) and, 'responses to anti-Semitism [sic] through history' (Cumbria) or within cross-faith studies such as, 'What do religions say about human rights and responsibilities?' (Warrington), 'How and why have people suffered because of their religion?' (Redcar and Cleveland) and, 'Where do religious and cultural

prejudice and hatred come from? Is genocide the inevitable conclusion of such intolerance?’ (Cambridgeshire).

The Holocaust is also referenced in a smaller number of syllabuses for study at primary school level, in Key Stage 2. Most commonly, this is in relation to observance of Holocaust Memorial Day (see question 9 for further details). In some it is also referenced within Key Stage 4 and or 5.

There are currently six specifications produced by the English examination boards for GCSE Religious Studies and in four of these direct reference is made to the Holocaust. There are also currently three specifications for A level, each of which references the Holocaust, and in particular Holocaust and post-Holocaust theology (see Appendix 4 for further details).

The Holocaust is not directly referenced in either of the specifications for GCSE Religious Studies offered by the Welsh examination board, nor the Northern Irish GCSE or Scottish Standard Grade. Theology of the Holocaust is referenced in the current Welsh A-level specification but not in the Irish A-level, Scottish Higher or advanced Higher.

## **2. If the Holocaust is not a mandatory subject, what percentage of schools chooses to teach about the Holocaust?**

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to collect this information at a nation-wide level for Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish schools. However, there is anecdotal and small-scale research evidence to suggest that many schools in all three countries teach about the Holocaust. For example, in Scotland, during recent research conducted by the University of the West of Scotland and University of Strathclyde, 105 students from different schools across the country were surveyed: 26% indicated that they had learned about the Holocaust while at primary school and 70% indicated they had learned about the Holocaust during secondary school.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is marked across the UK and the annual national event has been held in all countries of the UK. Each country has also hosted the Anne Frank Exhibition, which works with local schools. Further information pertaining to Holocaust Memorial Day and the Anne Frank touring exhibition is provided below.

## **3. How is the Holocaust defined?**

There is no set, official definition for the Holocaust either within the UK or UK education system.

### **Institutional definitions**

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) – the UK’s national museum of conflict since 1914 – offers a regularly referred to definition of the Holocaust as follows:

Under the cover of the Second World War, for the sake of their New Order, the Nazis aimed to destroy all the Jews of Europe. For the first time in history, industrial methods were used for the mass extermination of a whole people. Six million people were murdered, including 1,500,000 children. This event is called the Holocaust.

The Nazis enslaved and murdered millions of other people as well. Gypsies, people with physical and mental disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, trade unionists, political opponents, prisoners of conscience, homosexuals, and others were killed in vast numbers.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) has also produced the following:

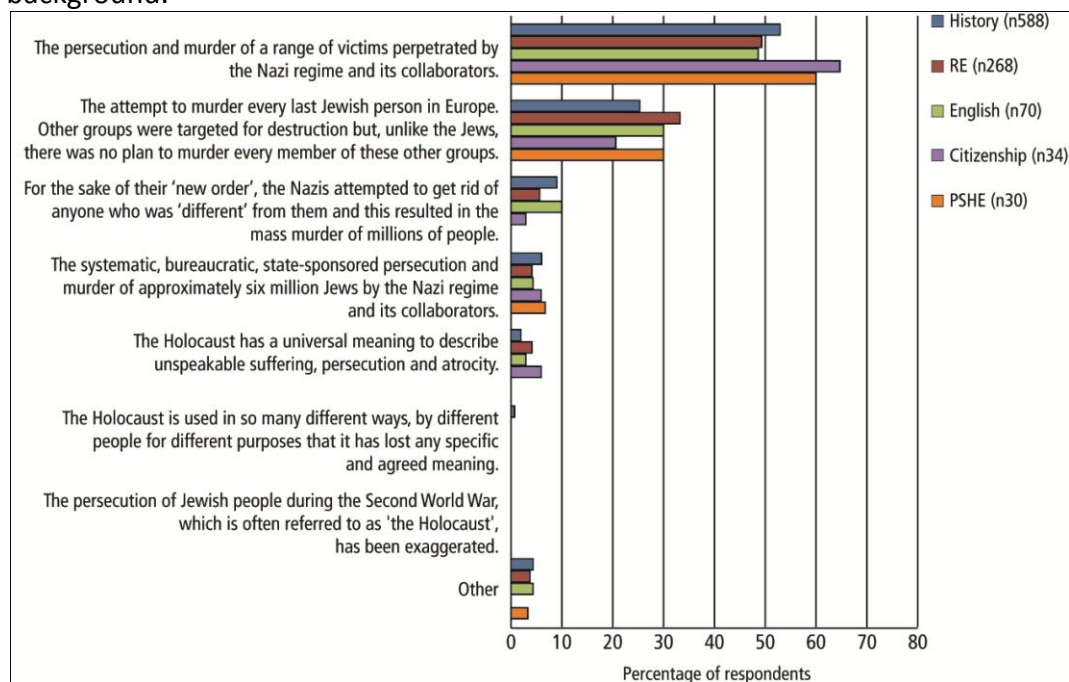
[The Holocaust was] the persecution and mass murder of Jewish people by the Nazis and their accomplices during the period 1933-45 and also the persecution and murder of other groups of people who were the victims of Nazi race policies-including Roma, Sinti, black people, the mentally and physically disabled, homosexuals and many of the Slavic peoples.

Object 1a, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

## Teachers' definitions

The definitions of the Holocaust that teachers use and work with were investigated within the Institute of Education's 2009 research. 1,976 secondary teachers responded to a survey question which invited them to choose from a list of seven statements the definition which most closely matched their own understanding of the Holocaust. 52.5 % of these teachers chose a definition which located the Holocaust within Nazi occupied Europe and which included recognition of a variety of different victim groups. 25% chose a definition which recognised that other groups were also targeted by the Nazis but which emphasised that the policy towards the Jews was substantively different as there was no intended plan for the total destruction of any other group. 8% chose a statement which more broadly referenced the Nazis' attempt to 'get rid of anyone who was "different"' while a further 8% chose a statement which only referred to the Nazi persecution and murder of European Jews. The broadest statements, which did not locate the Holocaust specifically within Nazi occupied Europe and either universalised its meaning or denied it any longer held any specific meaning at all, were chosen by only 2.5% and 0.6% of respondents respectively.

Figure 2 shows variation in the definitions chosen by teachers who took part in the survey by subject background.



**Figure 2: Survey respondents' understandings of the Holocaust by subject**



Follow-up interviews revealed that teachers' understandings of the Holocaust were influenced by a variety of factors including the assumed authority of sources such as textbooks or input from specialist Holocaust education organisations and, in particular, by a concern to make their teaching accessible to students and relevant to their everyday lives. For this reason, a number of teachers suggested they would try to employ an especially 'inclusive' understanding of the term. This is an interesting area where common teaching practice appears to diverge from historians' understandings and from the perspective broadly shared by Holocaust education specialists in the UK.

#### **4. Is the Holocaust taught as a subject in its own right, or as part of a broader topic? Explain the reasoning behind this decision.**

In England, the current National Curriculum does not stipulate the manner in which the Holocaust is approached at Key Stage 3. However the IOE's research suggests that most teachers deliver their teaching as a discrete unit of work, most commonly immediately following and building upon students' prior study of the Second World War. In a much smaller number of schools, alternative frameworks were offered exploring thematic links, for example in one unit of work, 'From Prejudice to Genocide', which began with a study of transatlantic slavery (another compulsory component of the current Key Stage 3 history curriculum) and ended with a study of the Holocaust. The rationale for how the subject is framed within students' study is left up to individual teachers and school history departments. Appendices 3 and 4 detail the variety of ways in which Holocaust is framed in examination specifications for GCSE and A level history and religious studies in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

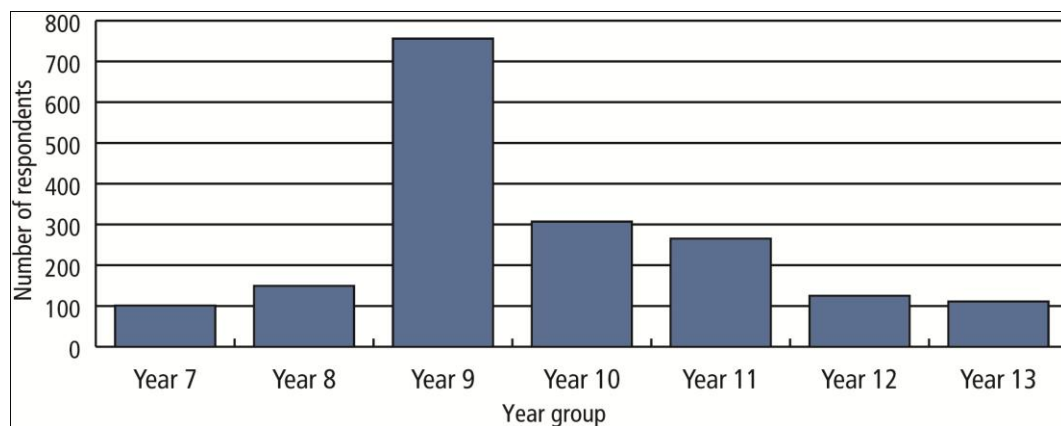
#### **5. At what age(s) do young people learn about the Holocaust in schools? Do students encounter the Holocaust in schools more than once?**

##### **Secondary schools**

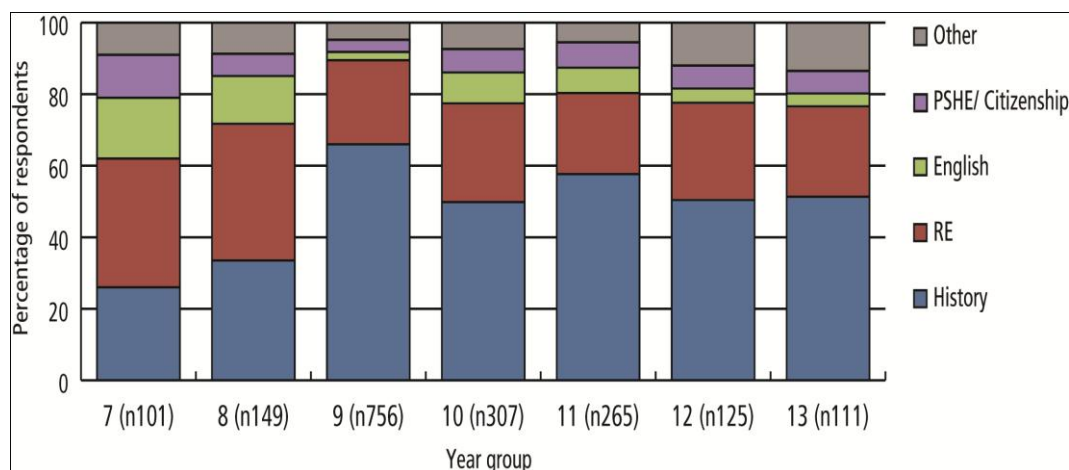
The IOE research suggests that, in English secondary schools, in addition to history and religious education the Holocaust is currently taught across a variety of subjects and with multiple year groups. It is therefore likely that many students will encounter the subject more than once within their school career.

Again, the National Curriculum does not specify at what point within Key Stage 3 history students must be taught about the Holocaust but traditionally, most teachers have chosen to deliver this material towards the end of the Key Stage, when pupils are in Year 9. Teachers explained that they felt the Holocaust was a topic which demanded maturity or suggested that they felt they needed time to develop trusting relationships with their students. Often teachers indicated that, in their schools, the content of Key Stage 3 history was taught chronologically and as a consequence, the Holocaust was most likely to be encountered in students' final compulsory term. In some schools however, history teachers explained that they had to teach the Holocaust to younger students because timetabling pressures meant they were expected to deliver the whole Key Stage 3 curriculum by the end of Year 8. These teachers often expressed regret and discomfort over this. This phenomenon, of 'squeezing' the compulsory history content into a two-year programme, reflects wider concerns over pressures on the position of history within the curriculum and may have significant impact for teaching about the Holocaust in the future.

The graphs below shows the survey responses of teachers from a variety of subject backgrounds when asked with which year group(s) they teach about the Holocaust. It is interesting to note that, in the first two years of secondary schooling, more teaching takes place in English and in religious education classes than in history. If a students' first introduction to the Holocaust in secondary school takes place before Year 9, it appears likely that this will happen outside of the history classroom.



**Figure 3: Year groups in which survey respondents principally teach about the Holocaust (n992)**



**Figure 4: Teaching about the Holocaust by principal subject and year group**

### Primary schools

In addition, some students begin to explore the Holocaust, or at least the Kindertransport, in year 6, Key Stage 2 (age 10-11), as part of a history study, 'Britain and the Second World War'. As question 1 has already suggested, some locally agreed syllabuses for religious education also refer to commemoration of the Holocaust within primary schools. This is reflected in the uptake of materials produced by organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust by primary schools across England, as well as Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

For Holocaust Memorial Day 2010, 263 Primary schools across all nations ordered free materials from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust; a further 638 Primary Schools have ordered and used HMDT materials in previous years. Primary activities for HMD vary a great deal between schools, where one

will carry out a lesson which uses HMDT materials as a guide, others will hold a full day workshop for all students and teachers.

Also in Key Stage 2, the English National Curriculum requires pupils to read different sources of written work, including diaries, and many schools choose to teach about the life of Anne Frank. The Anne Frank Trust UK delivers their education programmes (including exhibitions, workshops and education resources) for primary and secondary schools across the UK. The Trust's exhibition *Anne Frank: a History for Today* has been shown in many primary schools in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and year 6 students attend their exhibition *Anne Frank & You* in large numbers. Anne Frank and her writing are seen as an accessible starting point for this age group to start to explore the Holocaust.

*The Journey* exhibition at The Holocaust Centre (formerly Beth Shalom) is the UK's first and only permanent exhibition dedicated to teaching younger children about the Holocaust. Since opening in September 2008, approximately 9000 pupils have visited and learnt about the experiences of Jewish children who lived through the Holocaust and survived or who escaped from Nazi Germany before the war began. Through the use of survivor testimony, film, photographs and artefacts, *The Journey* provides a multi-sensory, immersive and interactive experience, aimed at engaging and enthusing younger learners in an exploration of this difficult area of history.

## 6. How many hours are allocated to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in schools?

The National Curriculum does not stipulate how many hours should be spent teaching about the Holocaust. The IOE research revealed considerable variation, both within Key Stage 3 history and across all subjects and year groups as shown in the table below. Within Year 9 history, some teachers reported spending only one hour on the topic while others spent ten or more. Most commonly, Year 9 history teachers reported spending between 4 – 6 hours.

	Across all years	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
<b>Citizenship</b>								
No. of responses	60	7	7	14	13	14	3	2
Mean	5.3	3	3.6	5	5.3	5.2	10.3	15
Median	3	1	2	3	3	4	5	15
Range	1-25	1-10	1-10	1-20	1-25	1-25	1-25	5-25
<b>English</b>								
No. of responses	110	17	20	18	27	19	5	4
Mean	4.4	6	6.3	5.2	3.2	2.2	3.6	3
Median	3	4	3.5	2.5	2	2	4	2.5
Range	1-30	1-20	1-30	1-16	1-14	1-5	1-6	1-6
<b>History</b>								
No. of responses	999	26	50	497	153	153	63	57
Mean	7.8	2.9	5.5	7.2	7.6	6.4	10.8	17.6
Median	5	2	4	6	4	4	5	9
Range	1-80	1-12	1-20	1-40	1-76	1-76	1-70	1-80
<b>Religious studies</b>								
No. of responses	478	36	57	178	85	60	34	28
Mean	5.2	1.8	4.9	6.8	4.2	3.9	3.8	7.3
Median	4	2	4	6	3	3	3	4.5
Range	1-40	1-5	1-15	1-40	1-25	1-25	1-15	1-28
<b>PSHE</b>								
No. of responses	40	4	2	12	6	5	5	5
Mean	3.1	1.4	1.5	3.8	3.3	4	3	2.4
Median	2	1	1.5	3.5	2.5	1	3	2
Range	1-15	1-2	1-2	1-7	1-10	1-15	1-5	1-5

**Figure 5: Hours spent teaching about the Holocaust by subject and year group.**

**(Note that Year 7 is the year that children turn age 12, Year 8 the year they turn age 13, etc.)**

**7. In what areas of study (history, literature, sociology, theology) is the Holocaust taught? In each case, briefly outline the rationale for teaching the Holocaust in this particular subject area.**

1,193 teachers who completed the IOE survey had had prior experience of teaching about the Holocaust. 55% reported that they principally did so within history, 25% within religious education, 7% within English, 3% within citizenship and a further 3% within personal, social and health education or PSHE. Smaller numbers of teachers also reported that they taught about the Holocaust within other subjects including modern foreign languages, drama, geography, and philosophy.

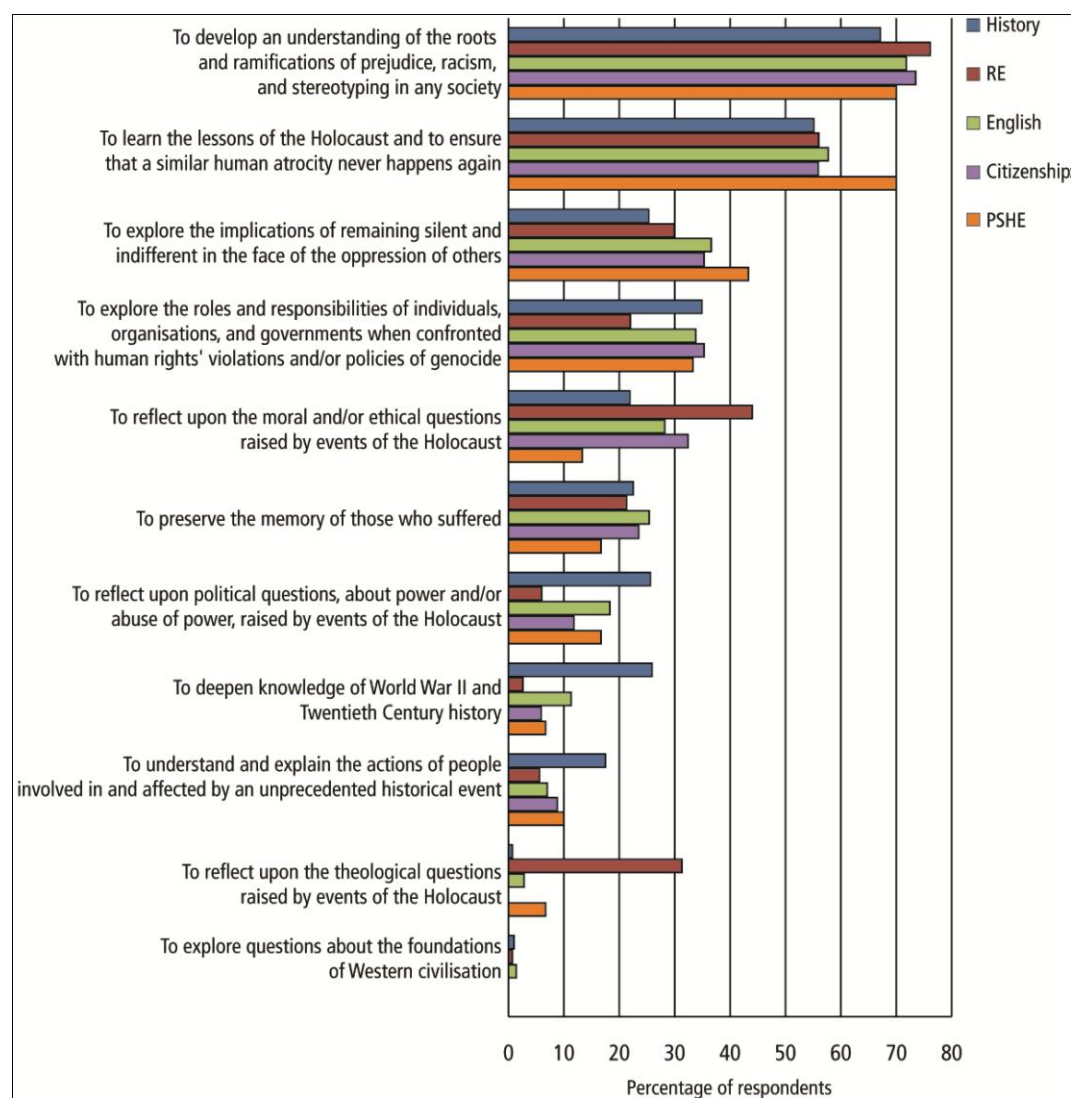
The details already provided in answer to question 1 and in Appendices 3 and 4 outline some of the rationales provided for including the Holocaust within the study of **history** and **religious education**.

In **English** lessons, the Holocaust may be approached through the study of memoirs and testimony, letters, diaries or other literary responses such as poetry. The IOE research and other anecdotal evidence suggest that works of fiction are also commonly used and the novel, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* was regularly cited by teachers as a popularly used text.

Teachers also reported that Holocaust Memorial Day often provides the focus for cross-curricular activities and colleagues from **art, drama, music** and/or **design and technology classes** might work with history and/or religious studies departments to explore issues of remembrance and commemoration or invite students to respond creatively to their study of the Holocaust. There are potential concerns regarding the use of creativity and creative pedagogies in relation to developing effective Holocaust education as there is considerable variation in existing practice, not all of which is sensitive to the complexity of the subject. Again, this is an area which would benefit from more detailed further research.

The previous government also drew explicit links between learning about the Holocaust and **citizenship education** emphasising the potential opportunity to pull out contemporary ‘lessons’ concerning social inclusion, community cohesion and multicultural diversity. This was stated clearly in the then Home Secretary’s Foreword to the Holocaust Memorial Day consultation paper written in 2002.

The IOE research did not directly ask teachers any questions concerning ‘rationales’ for teaching about the Holocaust. However, the survey did ask them to reflect upon their own specific teaching aims. Teachers were presented with a list of 13 suggestions and instructed to indicate the three that most closely matched the aims that they considered especially important. Interestingly, two aims, ‘to develop an understanding of the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping in any society’ and ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’ received overwhelming support, irrespective of the subject background of the teacher. Figure 6 shows the responses given by teachers from within the five principal subjects reported in the research, history, religious education, English, citizenship and PSHE.



**Figure 6: Variation in teachers' aims by subject background**

## 8. (a) What historical, pedagogical and didactic training is provided to teachers of the Holocaust at either the university level or the professional development level in your country?

In England in 2010, 36 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes were run providing university based initial teacher education (ITE) in history. There were 37 PGCE programmes for religious education and 12 for citizenship. In preparation for this report, the course leaders responsible for each of the these programmes were contacted and asked to provide information on whether or not the Holocaust was included within trainee teachers' university based instruction, and if so, what form this took. They were also asked to consider whether their trainees were likely to gain experience in teaching about the Holocaust during their school-based practical placements.

Responses were received from 18 history tutors (representing 50% of all PGCE courses), 21 religious education tutors (57% of all courses) and 4 citizenship tutors (33%).

All 18 history course leaders indicated that their PGCE programmes included specific input on teaching about the Holocaust which was mandatory for all trainees and which comprised at least one half day of workshops and/or seminars but which more commonly involved one to two days' worth of activity or more. Many indicated that they invited specialist educators and/or survivors of the Holocaust to

address their trainees and/or arranged visits to institutions such as the Imperial War Museum or the Holocaust Centre (see question 10 below). In a very small number of cases, it appeared that the Holocaust was only included within a wider-focused session on teaching 'emotional and controversial' issues. Many more tutors described awarding the Holocaust significant attention providing their trainees with targeted support and teaching materials and even creating their own web-based resources.

Of the 21 responses received from religious education course leaders, 13 indicated that teaching about the Holocaust was a mandatory component of their PGCE programme. A similar provision, including workshops, invited speakers and external visits, was described as for the history PGCE courses above, although RE tutors were more likely to indicate that they approached the topic from the perspective of potential cross-curricular collaboration. Among the eight tutors who reported that the Holocaust was not a specific requirement of their PGCE courses, three indicated that it may arise in discussion with their trainees but was not intentionally planned for.

Three of the four citizenship course leaders included a mandatory session (workshop and/or visit) related to the Holocaust within their programme. In the fourth course the tutor indicated that brief reference to teaching about the Holocaust may be made in relation to the creation of the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights.

Across all 43 course leaders who provided information, 25 considered it likely that their trainees would gain experience in teaching about the Holocaust while on placement in schools. Three considered it unlikely, 10 suggested that such experience was possible but sporadic and five replied that they were unsure.

Although it was not possible here to report on *all* of the initial teacher training provision currently available in the UK, these responses are encouraging. For, among the teachers surveyed within the IOE research, some of whom received their initial training during the 1960s, only 20% remembered receiving specific input on teaching about the Holocaust.

The IOE created the UK's first Masters level module in Holocaust education when it accredited the Imperial War Museum's Fellowship programme for practising teachers. Though the Museum has presently put the Fellowship on hold, the IOE is launching another Masters level module for practising teachers, *The Holocaust in the Curriculum*. It is planned that up to 50 teachers will participate each year.

## **(b) How many teacher-training sessions are held each year, and how many teachers are involved?**

Holocaust education organisations such as the Anne Frank Trust UK, Facing History and Ourselves, the Holocaust Centre, the Holocaust Educational Trust, Imperial War Museum, the Institute of Education, and the Jewish Museums in London and Manchester currently offer a variety of support and professional development opportunities for teachers across the UK. Precise numbers are not available, and are hard to quantify as a 'teacher-training session' might range from a two hour workshop or a one day seminar, to a more sustained and continuing approach such as the IOE's five-stage Holocaust Education Development Programme (which takes place over several weeks, provides ongoing support for teachers, and the opportunity to continue to Masters level), or the Imperial War Museum's Fellowship in Holocaust education that lasts for 14 months, includes seminars in London and Jerusalem and study visits to Lithuania and Poland, and is also accredited by the IOE at Masters level. What is clear is that the great majority of teachers have so far not benefitted from any of these opportunities. The IOE

research reported in 2009 that very few teachers had taken part in any form of specialist training in Holocaust education, and 82.5% of those who teach about the Holocaust consider themselves to be self-taught.

**(c) What funding is available for training in the teaching of the Holocaust in your country?**

The Teacher Training Agency is responsible for overall teacher training: they do not specify any particular funds for teacher training on the Holocaust and there is no detailed information available on what training has taken place on the Holocaust. Individual schools and Local Authorities have training budgets which they can spend according to their own needs. Difficult decisions need to be taken by schools' Senior Management Teams regarding how they allocate these funds, and there is anecdotal evidence that many do not prioritise Holocaust education as it is not seen as having a direct impact on examination performance or a school's position in the published league tables, which rank schools according to examination success. Since the introduction of a 'rarely cover' policy in September 2009, teachers are rarely expected to cover the lessons of colleagues who are out of school; instead schools are expected to buy in supply teachers to take these lessons. The impact on school budgets appears to have had an effect on the number of teachers allowed by their Senior Management to attend professional development programmes.

A major source of funding that has been made available specifically for teacher development in Holocaust education in England's schools is the £1.5 million invested jointly over a three year period from 2008-11 by the Government and the Pears Foundation. This funding established the Holocaust Education Development Programme at the Institute of Education (IOE), University of London: the world's first national programme of professional development in Holocaust education designed in direct response to large-scale empirical research into the attitudes, practice, knowledge, experience and challenges of teachers and their classroom needs.

**9. Has your country instituted a national Holocaust Memorial Day? If so, in which ways is this day marked and commemorated? What difficulties have you encountered in establishing this day of remembrance in the national consciousness?**

In 2000 the then Prime Minister Tony Blair announced the establishment of a national Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) to be marked on the 27 January. The first HMD was commemorated in 2001. The Home Office ran HMD from 2001 to 2005 when an independent charitable trust was founded. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) has been responsible for organising the national event, as well as wider work to encourage others to mark HMD.

The Memorial Day is a time for the UK to highlight and reflect upon the dangers of discrimination and prejudice. It seeks to provide an opportunity to learn from the past. Whilst the Holocaust is central, those commemorating the day are encouraged to consider all of the victims of Nazi persecution and those who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and the ongoing atrocities in Darfur.

HMDT works in a number of ways, providing:

- free resources to HMD event organisers
- an annual theme which allows for a different focus each year for activities and reflection

- free workshops for event organisers
- free resources for educators of all ages and subjects
- a community outreach programme which produces tailored resources for a variety of organisations and communities (this has included libraries, prisons, trade unions, youth groups, local authorities and cinemas)
- a media programme which raises awareness of HMD through printed, broadcast and online media outlets
- an annual virtual candle on the HMD website ([www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk)) during January which provides individuals the opportunity to mark HMD
- social networking and blogs as a way to raise awareness of HMD

In addition, HMDT organises the UK's national commemoration. Traditionally held in a different location each year, this national event has been hosted by cities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and provides a spotlight for all of the events that take place each year on a local and regional level. The national event includes faith leaders, senior ministerial attendance, and a cohesive theme running through the event. Typically, the national event will secure high media coverage.

The HMDT allows those running specific events to record the event via the HMDT website. There has been an increase in the number of events being logged, as well as visitors to the website.

As with the establishment of any national day, HMD has not escaped its difficulties:

- HMD is not an opportunity to learn everything there is to know about the Holocaust. Rather than replicating the work that other, more appropriate organisations already do, HMDT seeks to promote the work of others whilst also sharing their key messages.
- When HMDT took over the running of HMD, there was a lot of confusion over who held responsibility for the delivery of HMD.
- Some members of the public perceive that HMD is a 'Jewish event'; that it only commemorates the Holocaust; and do not see it as relevant to their own lives or to the UK today.
- 'Memorial fatigue' – there are a lot of remembrance events in the UK, and there can be challenges in sustaining some people's commitment to an annual day of commemoration.

It should also be mentioned that a number of other NGOs working in the field of Holocaust education, research and remembrance are often involved in marking Holocaust Memorial Day through events and other activities.

## **10. Has your country established a national Holocaust memorial and/or museum? What numbers of students visit this memorial/museum each year?**

There are a number of official Holocaust-related memorials in the UK. These include the Holocaust Memorial in Hyde Park, erected in 1983. Created by Richard Seifert, it consists of two boulders set in raked gravel and surrounded by silver birch trees. The inscription reads: 'For these I weep. Streams of tears flow from my eyes because of the destruction of my people'. Others include a memorial at Liverpool Street Station in memory of the 10,000 children who arrived in the UK as part of the Kindertransport. In the Foreign and Commonwealth Office there is a memorial to Frank Foley, a British diplomat, who aided Jewish people in Germany.

In June 2000, HM Queen Elizabeth II opened the permanent *Holocaust Exhibition* at the Imperial War



Museum, the UK's national museum of twentieth-century conflict. In 1998, a Holocaust Education Coordinator had been appointed to prepare for the large number of school visits that were anticipated. Approximately 25,000 school students visit the exhibition each year. The majority of groups who visit attend an orientation and feedback session with Holocaust educators to ensure that students are fully supported when viewing the exhibition. Since the IWM's Holocaust education programme began, over 7,000 teaching sessions have been run involving more than 200,000 students and their teachers. Thousands more university students and students from overseas also visit each year. In just ten years the exhibition has been viewed by almost 3 million visitors.

The Imperial War Museum (which, as a national museum, receives government funding) has also created a permanent exhibition called *Crimes Against Humanity*, which examines the themes of genocide and ethnic violence in the twentieth century. This exhibition explores some of the common features shared by atrocities in Armenia, Nazi-occupied Europe, Cambodia, East Timor, Bosnia, Rwanda and elsewhere, and the distinctive histories of each.

The Holocaust Centre – a private memorial museum – opened in 1995 and is the UK's first centre dedicated to the remembrance of victims of the Holocaust. The Centre also serves as an educational resource with the aim of teaching future generations about the causes and consequences of genocide. Approximately 22,000 students and teachers visit the Holocaust Centre each year.

The Holocaust Centre promotes an understanding of the roots of discrimination and prejudice and the development of ethical values. It uses the history of genocide as a model of how society can break down and emphasises how current and future generations must carefully examine and learn from these tragedies. The Centre promotes a respect for human rights, equal opportunities and good citizenship, and received full accredited museum status in July 2010.

In March 2010, the Jewish Museum London reopened following a £10million investment and major refurbishment that has tripled the exhibition space at their Camden site. The new space includes a permanent Holocaust Gallery focusing on the story of Leon Greenman, an Englishman deported from the Netherlands to Auschwitz-Birkenau with his wife and their young son. The museum has been active in Holocaust education for many years and has curated travelling exhibitions on related aspects of this history, including *Kindertransport*, *Rescuers*, *The Boys* and *Janusz Korczak* to name a few.

**11. Please estimate the percentage of students in your country who visit authentic sites, and list three primary sources of funding available in your country for visits to authentic sites.**

The case for the UK is different to the majority of European countries in that there are no authentic sites relating to the Holocaust in the UK. The UK mainland was not occupied and continued fighting against Nazi Germany throughout the Second World War. There was a labour camp at Alderney on the occupied Channel Islands. However, this has not been developed to a sufficient level for students to visit. Any students or teachers wishing to visit a site must travel to another country.

Within the IOE research, 20% of the teachers surveyed suggested they were likely to incorporate visits to a memorial site, research centre or museum outside of the UK within their teaching of the Holocaust. There are a variety of private companies which help to arrange group visits for school students and their teachers, most commonly to Poland (to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau), Berlin (including excursions to the House of the Wannsee Conference, Sachsenhausen concentration camp, and Berlin's Holocaust Memorial and Jewish Museum) and Amsterdam (to visit the Anne Frank House). The largest of these companies, NST, organises on average 100 trips each year to Poland with approximately 25-35 students

per trip, 150 trips to Berlin, with approximately 20-30 students, and between 15-20 trips to Amsterdam with approximately 25-35 students. These trips can be specifically tailored to meet individual needs and could incorporate visits to more than one destination, and so the figures given above are for illustrative purposes only.

In addition, the Holocaust Educational Trust began taking students on a one day visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of their four-part *Lessons from Auschwitz* (LFA) programme in 1999. Since 2005 they have received Government funding, initially from the Treasury, and covering all of the UK. In 2008 the Education Department at Westminster and the Scottish Government continued this funding for visits from England and Scotland and in 2009 the Welsh Assembly allocated funding to continue the project in Wales. In the eleven years since the LFA programme began, over 12,000 students over the age of 16 have taken part.

## **12. What are the three major textbooks used in teaching the Holocaust in your country? How many pages do your school textbooks allocate to the Holocaust, and on which aspects do they focus?**

None of the Education departments in the UK recommend or publish general teaching texts. Teachers are free to choose text books from a range of publishers. The choice of resource used to teach any subject is left to the teacher and the school.

The three most commonly reported textbooks used by teachers within the IOE's research were *Modern Minds: The Twentieth Century World* (part of Longman publisher's 'Think Through History Series' (Byrom et al, 1999), *This is History: The Holocaust*, a Hodder and Schools History Project publication (Culpin and Moore, 2003) and *The Holocaust: Hodder History Investigations* (DeMarco, 2001). However, it is important to note that there are a vast variety of history textbooks produced by a number of publishers either covering the twentieth century or more specifically focussing on the Holocaust and these three texts were named by only very small numbers of teachers.

The IOE research also suggested that, rather than textbooks, teachers were more likely to make use of documentary and feature films, or resources developed from their own reading when teaching about the Holocaust. While 67% of those surveyed said they would always, or were likely to, use textbooks in their teaching, 76% said they would use feature films and 81% documentaries. The most commonly referred to feature films were *Schindler's List*, *The Pianist* and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and the most commonly referred to documentaries were *Genocide*, an episode from the 1973 *World at War* Thames Television series, and, from 1997, *The Nazis – A Warning from History: The Road to Treblinka* (BBC). 43% said they were likely to use museum resource packs, such as the IWM's *Reflections* (Salmons, 2000) or those of the Holocaust Centre, and 48% resources produced by 'Holocaust education organisations', such as *Recollections* produced by the Holocaust Educational Trust. The resources produced by Holocaust education organisations in the UK commonly prioritise interactive and multi-media learning, rather than reliance on text-based accounts.

Where teachers talked about the value of written text they particularly stressed the value of first person, eyewitness accounts and personal stories. Indeed, the importance of the survivors' voice was recognised by significant numbers of teachers and one quarter said they were likely to invite a Holocaust survivor to talk to students. The value of hearing survivor stories was regularly emphasised within both the IOE survey and in-depth interviews. In this, schools greatly benefit from the survivor speaker networks run by the London Jewish Cultural Centre and by the Holocaust Educational Trust, which facilitate survivor visits to the school classroom.

### 13. What strategies of differentiation are typically used to make the study of the Holocaust accessible to students of different ages and with different learning needs?

The National Curriculum in England includes skills and levels of ability as an intrinsic part of teaching; it is not possible therefore to answer the question directly.

Differentiation may be achieved both by outcome – where tasks are open ended and may be completed to varying degrees of sophistication – and by input, where different tasks are given to different students or a task common to all is broken down into smaller component parts to make it more accessible to young people of differing abilities and with different learning needs.

Specialist support is sometimes provided for students identified with particular learning needs, and this may vary from a specialist department within the school which gives advice and help to subject staff, or to providing additional staff supporting individual learners within the mainstream classroom, to providing education in specialist schools whose staff are experts in meeting particular learning needs.

Textbooks published by independent publishers are written with a specific Key Stage and age in mind. The information is then assessed by the teachers for suitability for their own classes. Many teachers are extremely creative in their use of resources and develop varied learning activities targeted at the particular needs of their individual students. Making learning ‘accessible’ to individual students was a regularly emphasised priority in the accounts given by many teachers who took part in the IOE research.

In previous years, the National Curriculum content requirements were accompanied by a suggested scheme of work devised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority. (The Government has announced that the QCDA will be abolished in the near future). The scheme of work devised for the Holocaust suggested three benchmarks of understanding for different student groups:

#### **At the end of this unit:**

**most pupils will:** show knowledge of how and why the Holocaust happened including the chronology of the Holocaust and the way the persecution of Jewish people developed over time; describe some of the ideas and attitudes underpinning the Nazi persecution of the Jews and other groups; make critical and thoughtful use of a range of sources of information about the Holocaust, including ICT; select, organise and use relevant information in structured explanations of the Holocaust

**some pupils will not have made so much progress and will:** demonstrate knowledge of some aspects of the Holocaust; describe some of the key events and developments; identify links between contemporary beliefs and the Holocaust; recount stories of individuals who were Holocaust victims; select and combine information when describing the Holocaust

**some pupils will have progressed further and will:** demonstrate detailed knowledge of the causes and course of the Holocaust; analyse relationships between the Holocaust and other features of the period; analyse different stages of the Holocaust including initial Nazi persecution, ghetto life and the Final Solution; make critical use of a range of sources to reach substantiated conclusions about the Holocaust; use a wide range of technical vocabulary in their knowledge and understanding

(QCA 2000: 1)

The teaching and learning resources produced by Holocaust education organisations also commonly provide differentiated materials suitable for different ages, different abilities and emphasising different aspects of the Holocaust. For example, the Imperial War Museum has produced five carefully tailored audio guides to support the different learning needs of students visiting their Holocaust Exhibition: for

Year 9, GCSE, and A Level students, for visually impaired students, and for students with mild learning difficulties.

#### **14. How far and in what ways is your country's own national history integrated into the teaching of the Holocaust?**

For most teachers and policy makers it appears that the primary concern is that pupils know what the Holocaust was, how, where and by whom it was carried out and who the victims were. Often there is also an emphasis on understanding the moral lessons for today. In recent years, with the establishment of Holocaust Memorial Day and through the work of a number of NGOs, attention has been made to the UK's relationship with the Holocaust. However the UK's historical position in the Second World War does mean that the relationship is not always as obvious as it is for other countries and this has resulted in this area requiring more work.

The question of how far the UK's national history is integrated into the teaching of the Holocaust was not a major focus of enquiry for the IOE nor any other existing research. The most relevant data collected by the IOE presented survey respondents with a list of 35 possible topics and asked them to indicate how likely they would be to include each within their teaching about the Holocaust. Only one, 'The reaction of countries around the world to Jewish refugees' offered the potential for teachers to incorporate discussion of the UK's relationship to this history. This topic was ranked as the 23<sup>rd</sup> most likely to be included, chosen by just over 40% of teachers (compared to 88% for the most popular topics and 12% for the least).

A further set of questions in the IOE research survey attempted to explore teachers' substantive knowledge of the Holocaust, and included a question about the British Government's policy toward Europe's Jews during the Second World War. This revealed that very few teachers thought that Britain declared war in 1939 to 'free Jewish people from Nazi oppression' – evidence that this particular national myth has little currency in the classroom today. Similarly, very few took the view that the British Government 'were at best indifferent to the suffering of the Jewish people and gave no consideration of how to stop the killing'. While significant numbers of teachers appear to underestimate the extent of knowledge that the British Government had about the Nazi genocide of European Jewry, still the largest number of teachers did recognise that despite having early and accurate knowledge, still no rescue plan was developed beyond winning the war as quickly as possible, and no resources were committed to trying to save the Jewish people.

#### **15. What are the three major obstacles to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in your country?**

41% of all teachers who completed the IOE survey and had experience of teaching about the Holocaust said that they agreed or strongly agreed that it was 'very difficult' to do so effectively (only 36.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed). In this extended section of the report we consider it appropriate to highlight some of the reasons for this difficulty as identified by teachers themselves. We also think it necessary to share the perspectives offered by specialist Holocaust educators working in the UK. Furthermore, we consider it important to identify some of the ways in which the UK is currently working – and will continue to work – to address challenges such as these.

## Teachers' perspectives

### Prioritising content within limited curriculum time

The single most commonly reported challenge among teachers interviewed for the IOE research was limited curriculum time. Among history teachers in particular, many suggested that this was not necessarily a problem peculiar to teaching about the Holocaust but reflected wider pressures upon their subject within individual schools' timetables and national policy frameworks. As has already been reported, in some schools this resulted in Key Stage 3 history being truncated from a three-year into a two-year course with little or no compulsory history being taught beyond Year 8 (when pupils are aged 12-13). The Holocaust was characterised by many teachers as a particularly complex subject area in which considerable care and attention was required to help students work with and process 'difficult information': 42% of teachers surveyed agreed that 'devoting insufficient time to teaching about the Holocaust can do more harm than good with respect to what students learn'. The Department for Education's (DfE) White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, set out plans to reform school performance tables so that they set out high expectations for every pupil to have a broad education. The DfE has also included history within the English Baccalaureate, with a view to increasing the number of pupils who have access to subjects such as history. The Government's review of the National Curriculum will aim to introduce a slimmed down National Curriculum which will focus on core knowledge. The new curriculum will allow schools more freedom and time to build on that core entitlement. All these measures could mean more curriculum time for teaching and learning about the Holocaust in secondary schools.

Teachers suggested that it was difficult to know how much time individual groups and students might need to come to terms with what they were learning about and emphasised the importance of flexibility in the structure of lessons as much as the total availability of classroom time. Teachers were also concerned that their students should reach the end of their work on the Holocaust with an appropriate depth and breadth of understanding but were not always confident in how best to achieve this: teachers did not want students to leave their classroom thinking that the Holocaust was a story of 'evil Nazis' and 'helpless Jewish victims' but did want to be able to provide some coherence to their units of work. They recognised that in an average of just five or six Key Stage 3 lessons they could only ever hope to present a partial account. Some teachers suggested it would be helpful to have clearer guidance (for example, within the National Curriculum documentation) on precisely what should be covered and in what manner. Others, however, saw the absence of detailed statutory instruction as an opportunity and enjoyed the pedagogical freedom this allowed.

### Diversity and prejudice

The UK delegation and NGOs are sensitive to the fact that there is a persistent and widely shared myth that one of the most significant threats to teaching about the Holocaust in this country is resistance from students from specific national/religious backgrounds. In 2007, the Historical Association conducted research with teachers to produce the *Teaching Emotive and Controversial History* (TEACH) report. The words of a small number of teachers at just two of the schools visited by researchers were picked up when the report was published and were misreported to suggest that the Holocaust was not being taught in English secondary schools because of teachers' concerns over the response of Muslim pupils.<sup>4</sup> The data gathered through both the IOE survey and follow-up interviews certainly does not

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<sup>4</sup> The teachers in question were talking about choices they made in terms of topics to include in GCSE (post-compulsory) history but their words were misleadingly interpreted by some to suggest that the position of the Holocaust on the compulsory Key Stage 3 curriculum was under threat.

reflect this. Indeed, a number of teachers in both the survey and interview made an explicit point to reject such an idea. And, while some teachers did report that the culturally framed expectations, beliefs and/or perspectives of students would be a consideration in their teaching, none suggested that they had even considered not teaching about the Holocaust as a consequence. A small number of teachers in both the survey and interview suggested that they thought antisemitism and/or Holocaust denial 'might be a potential issue' among certain groups of students, but very few reported having any direct experience of this. Where teachers were asked directly whether or not the cultural background of their students made a difference to their teaching, the most commonly given answer was that the presence of German and/or Polish heritage students had, on occasion, been difficult for teachers to negotiate.

Far more commonly than 'cultural diversity', 'cultural homogeneity' was framed as a challenge by teachers in interview. In this respect, students' lack of exposure to cultural difference was seen to lead to problematic (mis)understandings, perspectives and/or prejudice among some 'ethnic majority' (i.e. 'white British') students. Again, the importance of having sufficient time to be able to meaningfully explore and potentially challenge students' misunderstandings was emphasised. Some teachers spoke of hoping that difficult issues and/or expressions of racism did not arise as they were unsure how best to deal with them. Indeed, in some schools, teachers themselves suggested that this was an area in which they would benefit from clearer guidance and support. Again, the anxieties expressed were not unique to teaching about the Holocaust, but teachers did suggest that they were especially likely to arise in this context.

A related challenge identified both explicitly and indirectly by a number of teachers, was uncertainty over how to respond to students' misunderstandings – or lack of understanding – about the nature of 'Jewishness' without offering answers that risked reinforcing simplistic stereotypes. Teachers also described feeling particularly ill-equipped to deal with students' questions such as: 'how did [the Nazis] know they were Jewish?', 'why did Hitler hate the Jews?', or 'why did people admit they were Jewish?' Professional development opportunities that update teachers' own substantive knowledge and help them to address students' misconceptions and misunderstandings could prove valuable here.

#### Relationships between teachers and students: dealing with emotional responses and limits to understanding

A number of the teachers interviewed in the IOE research positioned themselves as uncertain – and regularly 'troubled' – learners in relation to the Holocaust. Some suggested that the Holocaust remained an episode in history that they struggled to understand or described teaching about the Holocaust in terms of their own continuing 'sadness', 'horror' and even 'dread'. While each of these teachers maintained that they believed the Holocaust was a very important part of their teaching, for them it would always involve emotional discomfort and pain. One claimed that the biggest challenge she faced was not crying in front of her students when delivering lessons and suggested that, over the years, she had found herself becoming increasingly uncomfortable when witnessing their apparent 'enjoyment' in their study.

A number of teachers interviewed expressed similar anger, frustration or disappointment at what were, from their perspectives, 'inappropriate' student responses. Some worried that their students were becoming 'anaesthetised' to violence – through film and video games, for example – and saw it as a challenge to 'shock' these students into feeling sufficiently 'moved'. Others worried that their teaching could 'traumatise' their students or make them too upset. Teaching about the Holocaust appeared to cause teachers to consider their pastoral relationships with students in ways that some had not necessarily experienced before. As one teacher suggested, when teaching about the Holocaust, 'you go into mother mode'.

Student-teacher relationships could also be influenced by the philosophical and/or intellectual challenges of teaching about the Holocaust. For many of those teachers interviewed, a fundamental challenge was the enormity and difficulty of what they were asking students to comprehend and insecurity that they were unable to provide their students with any concrete answers to complex questions and issues raised. However, many teachers' also saw this as an opportunity. One teacher suggested that the real problems arose when teachers had too clear or rigid an idea of what they wanted their students to take from their learning. From her perspective, the challenge was to give students sufficient space and responsibility 'to think it through for themselves'.

## **Perspectives of Holocaust education specialists and NGOs**

Those working in the field of Holocaust education recognise many of the challenges identified by teachers in schools. However, during a consultation meeting held in preparation for this report, a number of additional obstacles or challenges were raised:

### Making the case for 'relevance' given pressures on curriculum time and resourcing constraints

Like teachers, Holocaust educators recognise and are concerned about the mounting pressures placed upon – and uncertainty over the position of – humanities subjects, and in particular history, within the school curriculum. They also appreciate the constraints upon financial and other resources given the current national and international economic climate. In this context, the challenge for all those working in the field is to convince both teachers and policy makers of the continued importance of students learning about the Holocaust. There is particular pressure to articulate the contemporary 'relevance' of a study of the Holocaust. However, great care needs to be taken here in order that this does not happen at the expense of an accurate and detailed understanding of historical events. For example, as already highlighted in response to Question 3, a number of teachers appear reluctant to focus 'too much' on Jewish victims and attempt to secure 'relevance' to their students by emphasising the experience of a variety of victim groups and ignoring, or at least undermining, the specificity of the Nazis' targeting of European Jews. While it is essential that the experiences of all victim groups of Nazi crimes are recognised and examined, there are dangers in attempting to help students understand the Holocaust through simplistic notions of 'inclusivity' that may blur important differences between these distinct persecutions, mass atrocities and genocides.

There is also a challenge and an opportunity here to explore the 'relevance' to our students in broader terms, for example through examining further the historical role of the UK during the Holocaust; reflecting upon what the Holocaust can teach us about how people become complicit in genocide, or about how victims of persecution and 'onlookers' respond to unfolding genocides; considering the significance of the Holocaust in the creation of contemporary human rights frameworks and/or how an understanding of the Holocaust may help us to examine other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity, and efforts at genocide prevention. But in order to take any of these perspectives, first a clear historical understanding of the Holocaust is deemed essential.

### Supporting teachers' professional development

Holocaust educators also recognise that time is a significant constraint in terms of teachers' own professional development and learning, as well as that of their students. While the IOE research reported that some teachers demonstrate very detailed specialist subject knowledge and clear understanding, it also suggested that, for others, their knowledge of the Holocaust appears to be drawn largely from popular rather than academic discourse and a number of misconceptions are commonly held. The challenge here is to encourage continued dialogue between practising teachers and the academy and to create and support more opportunities for teachers' professional reflection and

development. It was to fulfil this vital role that the IOE's national programme of teacher professional development was established, uniquely bringing research and scholarship into the classroom. As noted above, a number of other NGOs are also providing valuable CPD opportunities for teachers.

### Survivor speakers

Finally, Holocaust educators emphasised the centrally important role currently played by survivors and firsthand witnesses of the Holocaust, many of whom are very actively engaged in educational activities, for example, speaking at schools and at teacher training events. Teachers whose students have had the opportunity to hear from a survivor of the Holocaust attest to the incomparable impact and resonance of the experience. Given the reality that there are now fewer and fewer first-hand witnesses able to speak in schools, a critical and immediate challenge is to consider how best to ensure that the voice of the survivors continues to play a central role in educating about the Holocaust, for example through the sensitive and appropriate use of recorded interviews.

## **Addressing the challenges**

Those working in the field of Holocaust education in the UK are committed to working towards addressing all of the challenges identified above. In particular, two important dimensions of current 'good practice' are emphasised below.

### Encouraging better cross-curricular coordination and clarification of teaching aims

Given that so many teachers believe their curriculum time is restrictive, it is instructive to consider how teachers might build upon students' learning across different subject areas and/or over successive years. During interview, a number of those history teachers who worked with GCSE and/or A level students emphasised the importance of being able to return to the Holocaust in post-compulsory years in order to examine the subject in greater complexity and depth (of course, only a selection of students – those who choose to study GCSE and/or A level in schools who follow relevant examination board specifications – are given this opportunity). However, few teachers demonstrated in any significant detail how they might build on students' prior learning about the Holocaust in curriculum subjects other than their own. Many did not even appear to be aware of what sort of teaching was taking place elsewhere in their schools or by whom.

In order to make the most of *all* available curriculum opportunities and to avoid unnecessary repetition and the risk of 'Holocaust fatigue', whereby students perceived that they have already 'done' the Holocaust and have learned all there is to learn, schools and teachers should be supported to coordinate and collaborate across departments. This could be a focus of initial teacher training and professional development activities. Likewise, teachers could be better supported in clarifying their own, subject specific rationales and aims for teaching about the Holocaust. This would help to address the challenge of determining relevant and necessary content to cover even within limited curriculum time. Each of these issues will be explored in depth in the government- and Pears Foundation-funded Masters module *The Holocaust in the Curriculum*, which will be offered by the IOE, University of London, and available to teachers from spring 2011.

### Coordination and collaboration across the Holocaust education sector

In light of the current climate of uncertainty and limited funding resources available across the whole education sector it seems especially important that those working in the field of Holocaust education work collaboratively and in a coordinated fashion, pooling resources and recognising each others' specific areas of expertise. The consultation process involved in the creation of this revised submission



demonstrated the effectiveness of such an approach and identified the potential value of future collaboration. It is hoped that the relatively recently established Holocaust Education Development Programme at the Institute of Education (IOE) can build upon this experience by continuing to provide a centralised, shared resource base and, where appropriate, perform a coordinating role.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: UK Holocaust organisations who participated in the consultation process

Appendix 2: Structure of school systems (England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland)

Appendix 3: Details from public examination specifications at 2010 (History)

Appendix 4: Details from public examination specifications at 2010 (Religious Studies)

For Appendices, please see accompanying documents.