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Working together to strengthen the provision of religious education in schools, colleges and universities

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP
Deputy Prime Minister

19 October 2012

Dear Mr Clegg

Auschwitz Children

We were delighted to hear of your remarks about the importance of education following your visit to Auschwitz with the Holocaust Educational Trust. We agree, "Indifference and forgetfulness make hate, prejudice and genocide possible".

In addition to the importance of history, Auschwitz is also a vivid reminder of the importance of religious education in the curriculum. Ignorance and intolerance of diverse religion and belief contributed to genocide in the 1940's and contributes to prejudice and extremism still. If young people are to "be ambassadors against racism, hatred and prejudice in all its forms in their own communities" they need good RE in their schools. Sadly the Coalition government's apparent interest in the only core subjects of the curriculum, important though they are, is undermining both the provision and quality of RE in this country in an unprecedented way. Excluded from the EBacc and the National Curriculum Review, RE is being marginalised in our schools at the very time that high levels of religious literacy are needed more than ever before.

We trust that you and the Secretary of State for Education will realize, before it is too late, that indifference and forgetfulness of RE are endangering a subject, a true humanity, made statutory in 1944 largely because of the horrors of Auschwitz and the Gulags.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Keast".

John Keast
Chair