



Commission on
Religious Education

RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS: THE WAY FORWARD

A new vision for religious education in England
for students of all backgrounds and beliefs

SEPTEMBER 2018



The Commission for Religious Education is an independent body, set up to review the law and policies around RE, and to make wide-ranging recommendations for the future of high-quality RE for all pupils nationally.

WHY CHANGE?

The Commission is recommending the most significant changes for RE in 50 years. There are three important reasons why changes are necessary now:

1. The growing diversity of religions, beliefs and worldviews in society today is vastly different to when the current RE teaching framework was established half a century ago.
2. The variable quality of RE nationally means that there is no consistency to performance and outcomes.
3. The legal arrangements around RE are no longer fit for purpose as more schools become academies. Recent reports have shown that a quarter of secondary schools do not teach RE at all, despite them being legally obliged to do so.

“RE can play a big role in defeating religious extremism in society – as young people are being taught more about this and they can understand the difference between truths and lies in religion.”

Year 10 pupil,
Manchester

“RE’s purpose is to make you know what you want to say in the outside world more than in the classroom, to form moral and ethical beliefs that you use in daily life.”

Year 13 pupil,
London

A NEW NATIONAL PLAN FOR RE: RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS

The Commission's three-point plan is designed to retain high academic standards and prepare pupils for life in a world of great religion, belief and worldview diversity.

1. A new vision, exploring the role that religious and non-religious worldviews play in all human life. To reflect this new and broader emphasis, we propose that RE's name should be changed to Religion and Worldviews.
2. All pupils should have access to high quality teaching, whatever school they attend. A National Entitlement should apply to all schools, providing a common vision and framework for schools to develop their own approach that best reflects their pupils' and community's needs and achieves high academic standards for all.
3. A significant investment to ensure this new approach is properly supported: provision of highly-qualified and knowledgeable teachers, and a significant role for local communities to work with schools and define the best local approach to meet the National Entitlement.

“RE opened my mind about other religions, explored presumptions and prejudices. I have been more passionate since starting A-level – learning about origins of religion and how religion changes over the course of history, especially in recent times of social change.”

Year 12 pupil, Manchester

NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT, LOCAL DESIGN

Establishing a National Entitlement will ensure that every school in England shares the same new vision for RE but has the freedom to develop the different approaches that best match their character.

Our recommendations better reflect the diversity of different religious and non-religious worldviews in modern Britain. Whether a pupil is religious or not does not change how important it is that they learn about religion and worldviews. Given our changing society it is important that all pupils learn about these worldviews.

GROWING THE CONVERSATION

We're encouraging everyone with an interest in RE to join the conversation.

The Commission's report and recommendations is available at www.commissiononre.org, along with other materials and content explaining our role and our approach.

You'll also find letter templates for you to use with your MP, and to write to your local school's Head.

The quotes from secondary school children used in this leaflet have been taken from transcripts of oral evidence submitted to the Commission in Birmingham, London, Manchester and York.

“Studying RE helps understand the context of world events and what is right or wrong in the media and how to respond.”

Year 9 pupil,
York

“I think it would be interesting to learn more about smaller groups and cultures in society and how they perceive the world. It would not only give us more knowledge about the world we live in but also more allow us to open our minds further.”

Year 9 pupil,
Birmingham



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