

Religious Education is outdated, unpopular and opens the door to proselytising.

There are many more subjects children and young people need to learn.

It's time to replace RE with something more appropriate for 21st century students.

It is important for children and young people to learn about different religions and beliefs. But we don't think our schools need a dedicated subject to do this – especially a subject as out-of-date and as irrelevant as Religious Education (RE).

Surveys consistently show RE is one of the least popular school subjects, an indication of its increasing irrelevance.

[58%](#) of British adults think religious studies is unimportant at secondary schools. And [a quarter](#) of England's secondary schools do not offer RE.

Unlike any other compulsory subject, RE is determined at a local level in England. In each local authority the agreed syllabus for RE is determined by committees representing the Church of England and other religion and belief groups, as well as the local authority and teacher's groups.

As a result, schools not only face a local lottery regarding what their RE syllabus will contain; they will have to teach a subject under significant control from religious interest groups. These groups are strongly motivated to ensure their religion is represented in an overwhelmingly positive light. The current arrangements mean the subject lacks objectivity.

Many faith schools don't even need to follow the locally agreed syllabus and can instead teach religion from their own exclusive viewpoint.

A new nationally-determined civics and citizenship subject could encompass teaching about religious and nonreligious worldviews and allow students to consider moral and ethical issues. Religion and belief could also be explored in other relevant areas of the curriculum.

In Wales, RE has recently been replaced with Religions, Values and Ethics (RVE). While we welcome this broader and more inclusive subject, problems remain regarding the influence of religious groups and exceptions allowing faith schools to teach confessional RE.

We need a reformed subject to ensure education about religion and belief is broad, balanced and proportionate.

We've created a series of resources – [Exploring Secularism](#) – for anyone wishing to explore issues of religion, belief, ethics, and worldviews in schools. The resources aim to provide teachers with the material they need to engage with secularism in an informed way.

As British society considers how to respond to greater religious diversity and growing irreligiosity, it is become increasingly important for children and young people to develop their understanding of the interaction between religion, society, and politics. The study of secularism explores this interaction, together with questions about how we balance freedom of, and from, religion with other rights.

Take action!

1. Write to your MP

Support our campaign to ensure every pupil has the same entitlement to high quality, non-partisan education about religious and non-religious worldviews.

Enter Postcode:

Find my MP

- [Other representatives](#)

We also have template letters to write to your Members of the Scottish or Welsh Parliaments or Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly.

2. Share your story

Tell us why you support this campaign, and how you are personally affected by the issue. You can also let us know if you would like assistance with a particular issue.

- [Share your story](#)

3. Join us

Become a member of the National Secular Society today! Together, we can separate religion and state for greater freedom and fairness.

- [Join us!](#)

Latest updates

[**NSS: Ofsted research shows RE is “a hopeless case”**](#)

Posted: Mon, 22 Apr 2024 08:28

Ofsted says subject "continues to wilt", with some schools teaching "little discernible RE".

[**Response unit needed to tackle blasphemy flashpoints, report says**](#)

Posted: Tue, 26 Mar 2024 10:27

Recommendations echo NSS calls for more support for schools facing religious intimidation and threats.

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- [Report: Understanding Christianity and the study of religion and worldviews](#)

2020 research supported by the NSS shows how the Church of England uses its dominant position within the RE community to advance its own theological approach to the subject.

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