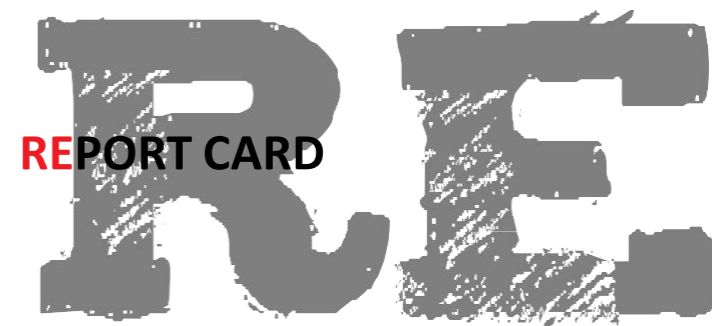
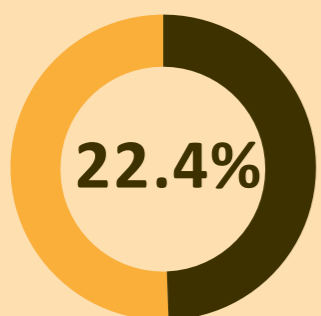


# A REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



**VALUE**  
OF THE QUALIFICATION

SINCE 2010 THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN ENGLAND ENTERING A FULL GCSE RS COURSE INCREASED BY **33%**



**INCREASE IN A-LEVEL ENTRIES FOR RS**

**SINCE 2004**

**MORE THAN GEOGRAPHY,**

**LAW AND HISTORY**<sup>2</sup>



The scope of religious education (RE) is vast. Through RE, pupils encounter ancient and living traditions that have shaped the world.



They explore foundational texts and the way that individuals and groups live in the world, as well as the values, beliefs and ideas that bind people together<sup>3</sup>  
OFSTED RE subject report 2024



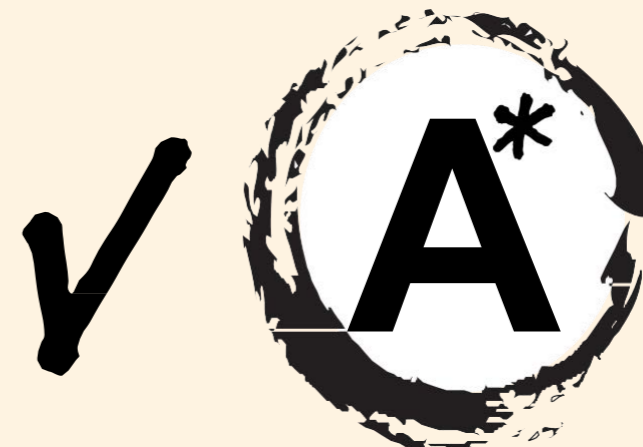
HIGHER ATTAINMENT **8 SCORES ON AVERAGE** IN SCHOOLS WITH HIGHER RATES OF ENTRY FOR GCSE RS

Disadvantaged pupils score 9 points on average than their peers when they are entered for GCSE RS. Non-disadvantaged, 5 points higher<sup>6</sup>



**95%** of teachers say that the subject is more or equally relevant than ten years ago

**ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS AND CHALLENGING, RE STUDENTS GO ON TO STUDY AT THE UK'S TOP UNIVERSITIES AND ENTER CAREERS IN LAW, MEDICINE, POLITICS AND JOURNALISM**<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/call-for-national-plan-as-religious-studies-gcse-entries-slip/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/?post-year=2023&post-location=>

<sup>3</sup> Deep and meaningful? The religious education subject report - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/how-satisfied-are-re-teachers/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/08/04/encourage-students-with-a-humanities-background-to-become-doctors/>

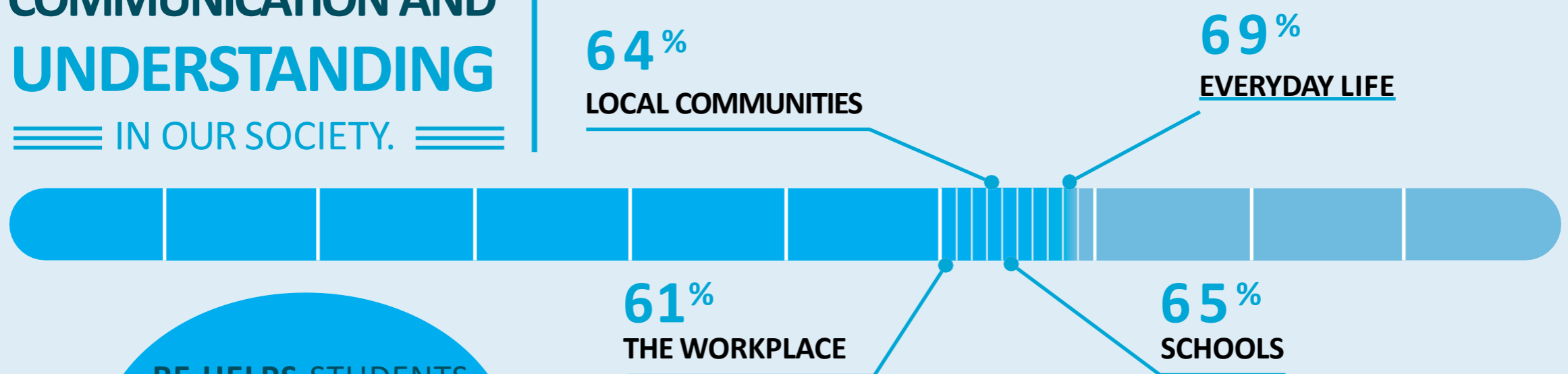
<sup>6</sup> [Written Answer to a question from Tan Dhesi MP - Department for Education: Religion: GCSE](#)

# RE IN SOCIETY

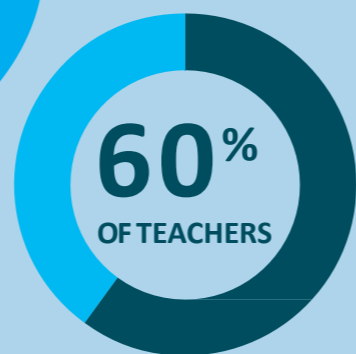
**64%** of the **UK adult population** think an education in **religion and worldviews** (or RE) is an important part of the **school curriculum**.<sup>6</sup>

**HIGH-QUALITY RE** IS THE BACKBONE OF **COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING** IN OUR SOCIETY.

AROUND **TWO-THIRDS** OF **UK ADULTS** SAY IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS IN:



RE HELPS STUDENTS UNDERSTAND AND DEBATE THE BIGGEST ISSUES OF THE DAY<sup>7</sup>

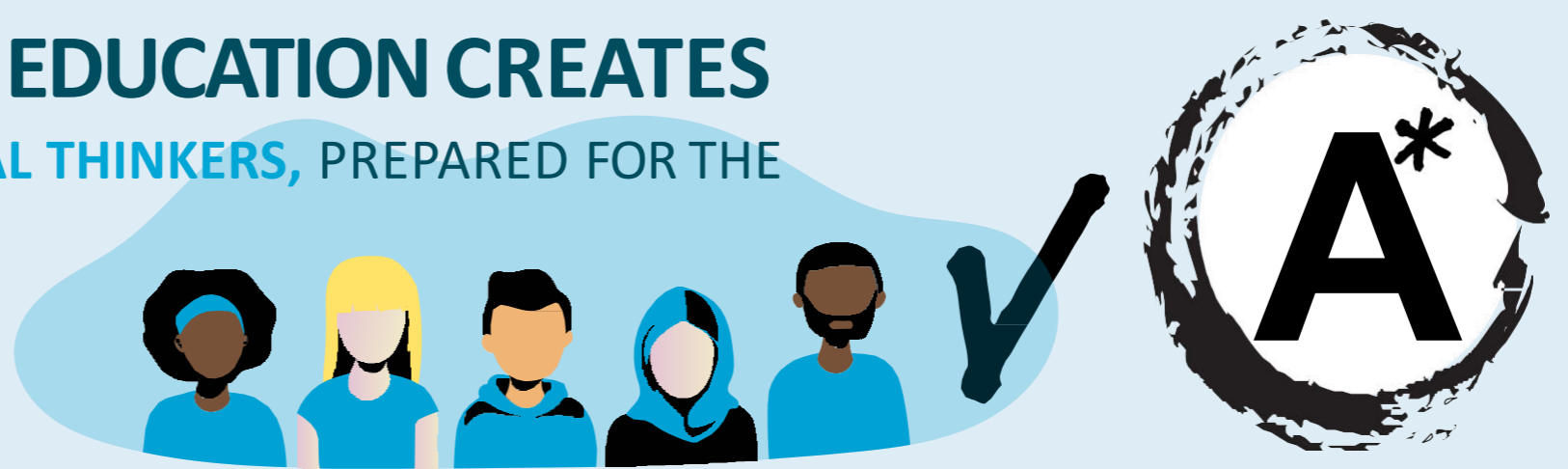


DRAW INSPIRATION FROM DISCUSSING TOPICS IN THE NEWS

The public also recognises RE's positive impact on society. In a 2021 survey a majority believed RE can:

- 69%** Help young people gain a better understanding of their own beliefs
- 71%** Foster mutual understanding of different beliefs among young people
- 65%** Provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about other people

**GOOD RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREATES INDEPENDENT AND CRITICAL THINKERS, PREPARED FOR THE DIVERSITY OF BELIEF IN MODERN BRITAIN AND THE WIDER WORLD.**



<sup>6</sup> Religion & Worldview survey by Savanta on behalf of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, June 2021

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/how-satisfied-are-re-teachers/>

# SCHOOL PERFORMANCE


 Time spent on the subject is **improving in some areas:**

**OVER 95%** of primary teachers report time spent on teaching RE has increased or stayed the same

**46%** of academies without a religious character have reported an increase in time to teach RE <sup>8</sup>



The **2021 Ofsted Research Review** identified barriers to high-quality RE teaching in schools including:

**Insufficient time** to teach an ambitious RE curriculum 

A lack of a **'scholarly approach'**

**Insufficient professional development** for teachers of RE

Some teachers embedding **unhelpful misconceptions**



**Gaps in teacher subject knowledge**



However, **too many schools are breaking the law** by not teaching RE

**45.6%** of schools offer less than 3% of curriculum time for RE<sup>9</sup>



**Just under 1 in 5** secondary schools still report **zero hours** of RE provision in Year 11<sup>10</sup>

RE also continues to be neglected on the school timetable in favour of EBacc subjects: **On average 5 hours** of RE are allocated to each 'teacher of RE' at **Key Stage 3** as opposed to **7 for history** <sup>11</sup>



**SCHOOLS MUST DO MORE TO ENSURE THEY PROVIDE THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF HIGH-QUALITY RE PROVISION FOR ALL STUDENTS ACROSS YEAR GROUPS**



<sup>8</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/over-95-of-primary-teachers-report-time-spent-on-teaching-re-has-increased-or-stayed-the-same/>

<sup>9</sup> [Do we need a new focus on a curriculum for community cohesion? \(natre.org.uk\)](https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/do-we-need-a-new-focus-on-a-curriculum-for-community-cohesion/)

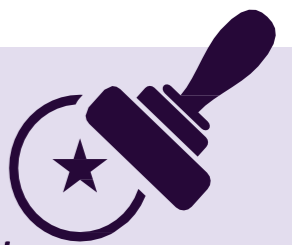
<sup>10</sup> [Do we need a new focus on a curriculum for community cohesion? \(natre.org.uk\)](https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/do-we-need-a-new-focus-on-a-curriculum-for-community-cohesion/)

<sup>11</sup> [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/288/theology-religious-studies.pdf](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/288/theology-religious-studies.pdf)



# GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

“ THE GOVERNMENT FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT RE IS IMPORTANT. GOOD QUALITY RE IS ESSENTIAL IN DEVELOPING CHILDREN’S KNOWLEDGE OF BRITISH VALUES AND TRADITIONS, AND THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES. RE IS A VITAL PART OF FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING AMONG DIFFERENT FAITHS AND BELIEFS...”



MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCHOOL STANDARDS, ROBIN WALKER



YET DESPITE THIS...

**£0 SPENT ON RE PROJECTS BETWEEN 2016-2021**

AT A TIME WHEN:

ENGLISH:  
**£28.5 MILLION**

MUSIC:  
**£387 MILLION**

MATHS:  
**£154 MILLION**

SCIENCE:  
**£56 MILLION**

AMIDST A DECADE LONG CRISIS IN

ATTRACTING NEW TALENT:

There was no training bursary for RE for four years despite RE teacher recruitment targets not being met for eleven of the previous twelve years. The bursary for 2024/5 was just £10,000 when it is more than twice as much for other subjects



AND A LACK OF RE SPECIALISM IN SCHOOLS:

51% of lessons of RE in secondary schools is taught by teachers who mainly teach another subject. Compared to 13% of English teachers).<sup>12</sup>



AND A 43% FALL IN the number of pupils leaving schools with a qualification in RS since 2010

# WORDS NEED TO BE BACKED UP WITH ACTION



<sup>12</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/natre-calls-for-the-dfe-to-read-its-own-data-and-reinstate-bursaries-for-trainee-teachers-of-re/><sup>13</sup>

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/GCSE%20results%20media%20release%20FINAL%202012-08-21.pdf>

# THE FUTURE OF RE



WE WANT A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION  
IN RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS  
FOR ALL PUPILS IN ALL SCHOOLS,  
TAUGHT BY WELL-QUALIFIED AND  
TRAINED TEACHERS

## WE CAN ACHIEVE THIS BY:

1

GOVERNMENT ADOPTING  
A NATIONAL PLAN FOR RE  
and endorsing the RE  
Council's National  
Content Standard for RE  
in England



2

INCREASING THE VALUE OF TEACHER  
TRAINING BURSARY FOR RE AND  
RESTORING SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE  
ENHANCEMENT GRANTS



3

OFSTED WORKING WITH THOSE  
SCHOOLS NOT CURRENTLY  
PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY RE, TO ENCOURAGE  
THEM TO FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN  
THE SUBJECT REPORT: Deep and Meaningful TO  
RAISE STANDARDS:

4

GOVERNMENT RECOGNISING PUBLIC,  
PARENT AND PUPIL SUPPORT  
FOR THE SUBJECT BY PROPERLY  
FUNDING IT IN LINE WITH THE  
REST OF THE CURRICULUM

*I've really enjoyed the last two years studying RE, for not only the deeper understanding of life it intends, but the analytical mind it encourages.*

NAT, YEAR 9

## WHAT PUPILS SAY:



*RE is the one time in school where you can talk, listen and try to make sense of people, events and beliefs in the world.*

SHREYA, YEAR 10

## THE FINAL WORD:

In neglecting religious education, we leave a gaping hole in our school curriculum. It leaves young people unprepared for the ethical, moral and **religious debates that influence life in modern Britain** and the wider world. Put simply, we miss an opportunity to positively enhance our children's and our society's future.

SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY FORMER MP and FATHER OF THE HOUSE

