

Link to the Government's report: [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report](#)

Summary of the Report on Religious Education (RE) in England

1. Current Status of RE

- RE is a **compulsory basic curriculum subject** for ages 5–18 in England, though not part of the national curriculum.
- GCSE Religious Studies participation has risen from **28% (2009/10)** to **31% (2024/25)**.
- **70%** of state-funded schools entered pupils for GCSE RS in 2024/25.
- A Level RS entries remain small (around **2%** of all entries).
- RE has been compulsory since **1944**, originally as Christian-focused “religious instruction,” broadened in 1988 to include major world religions.

2. Why RE Matters

Stakeholders overwhelmingly agree that RE:

- Supports **intellectual, moral, social, cultural, and spiritual development**.
- Helps pupils understand **diverse beliefs**, including non-religious worldviews like Humanism.
- Builds **mutual understanding**, community cohesion, and cultural literacy (especially regarding Christianity's influence on British history and culture).
- Prepares young people for a world where religion and belief shape local and global events.

3. Problems With the Current System

Fragmented and inconsistent provision

- RE content is **locally determined** by Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) and overseen by SACREs.
- Many SACREs lack funding and capacity, leading to:
 - Outdated syllabi
 - Uneven quality
 - Reliance on volunteers
 - “Tokenistic” RE in some schools

Legislation is outdated

- The legal framework has barely changed since **1944**, despite:
 - Academisation
 - A school-led system

- Increasing diversity of worldviews

No national standard

- Because RE is not on the national curriculum, there is **no national benchmark** for quality.
- Ofsted reports that RE quality varies widely and is often **not good enough**.

4. Recent Sector Efforts

- The Religious Education Council (REC) published a **National Content Standard for RE (2023)**, widely welcomed as a strong foundation for reform.

5. The Review's Conclusions

- RE is important but its **status does not reflect its value**.
- To ensure quality and consistency, RE should eventually be moved onto the **national curriculum**.
- However, due to complexity and sensitivity (especially for faith schools), this must be done **gradually**.

6. Recommendations in the Report

A. Add RE to the national curriculum (long-term goal)

But only after sector consensus and legislative changes.

B. Stage 1: Create a sector-led task and finish group

- Representatives from faith groups, secular groups, teachers, and education experts.
- Chaired by an independent expert (recommended: **Dr Vanessa Ogden CBE**).
- Purpose:
 - Build on the REC's 2023 National Content Standard.
 - Develop a **draft national RE curriculum**.
 - Consult widely with schools, communities, and RE organisations.
- Meanwhile, the DfE should:
 - Review the **legislative framework** for RE.
 - Consider the future role of SACREs.
 - Review and update **non-statutory RE guidance** (last updated in 2010).
 - Consider removing the requirement for RE in **school sixth forms**.

C. Stage 2: Government consultation

If consensus is reached:

- DfE should formally consult on:
 - The draft RE curriculum.
 - Legislative changes needed to implement it.

- Repealing the requirement for RE in school sixth forms.

7. RE for Ages 16–18

- Currently compulsory only in **school sixth forms**, not in colleges.
- The Review argues this is inconsistent with the 16–19 focus on **student choice**.
- Recommends **removing the statutory requirement**.
- Schools may still offer RE voluntarily; students can take **Level 3 qualifications** if they wish.

In Short

The report argues that RE is vital but currently inconsistent and under-supported. It proposes a **phased reform** to eventually place RE on the national curriculum, starting with a sector-led group to draft a unified curriculum and followed by government consultation and legislative change. It also recommends ending compulsory RE for 16–18-year-olds.