

National Standards for Religious Education

This is a document that is being worked on by the RE Council of Britain and various of its member groups. The first edition came out in July 2023 and the final report is due around May 2024.

It is a document for curriculum designers and SACREs when making a new syllabus. It is endeavouring to bring the standard of RE up across the country. Each SACRE in each local authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and there is currently no National curriculum for RE. As a result, the quality of different syllabuses is different depending on where you are. Some of the RE syllabuses only give details of a list of key points for each faith or world view which must be taught. Others give much more help in the form of units of work, suggested resources and where to find them, and suggested ways of assessing.

Since OFSTED removed to need to have assessment levels schools have been trying to organise their own assessment criteria and activities. Some syllabuses help with this by giving guideline.

The National Standard document hopes to improve the situation by giving a standard which pupils would be expected to meet at the end of each key stage.

It also calls for the Government to have a refreshed vision for the subject, based on a religion and worldviews approach. So, through careful selection of knowledge for the curriculum, the subject will explore the nature of religion and worldviews, and the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews play in all human life. There are currently many laws around the teaching of religious education but no powers for these to be enacted properly. It is also hoped that 'to support the above two recommendations, a sustained programme of investment in teacher education, linked to the early career framework and ongoing professional development is required. For this reason, it is proposed: a. that the proportion of lessons of secondary RE/education in religion and worldviews taught by people who are trained to teach the subject is increased by reintroducing bursaries and other measures to recruit trainees b. that those training as primary teachers have sufficient RE/education in religion and worldviews specific training to feel confident in the classroom c. that financial investment is made in regional RE/education in religion and worldviews hubs to extend opportunities for schools and teachers to draw upon relevant expertise in their region including through local communities of religion or belief.'

For further information the link to the 2023 document is

[National content standard for Religious education IN England \(religioueducationcouncil.org.uk\)](https://religioueducationcouncil.org.uk)

See the next page for frequently asked questions on this document.

FAQs

National Content Standard for Religious Education in England

For too many years, the level and quality of provision for RE around England has been reported as inconsistent at best. This means 1000s of pupils in our schools are denied their entitlement, established in law, to high-quality religious education.

The NCS provides clarification about excellence of approach to RE and exemplifies how schools and academies can fulfil current legal and contractual requirements effectively.

Why?

[Read the NCS here](#)

One major barrier to improving this situation is the lack of an agreement about what is meant by 'a high-quality religious education'. Unlike a subject included in the National Curriculum, RE has no national programme of study document to act as a benchmark.

The NCS aims to embed a common standard for RE in all types of state funded school in England to meet the REC's vision for all pupils in all schools to receive high quality provision for the subject..

Aims?

Frequently asked questions



Religious Education Council
of England and Wales

The REC hopes that by establishing the NCS as a benchmark, the document will support a range of stakeholders in RE including:

- SACREs and Academy Trusts
- Initial Teacher Trainers and providers of CPD
- Those making judgements about what constitutes a high-quality curriculum for RE
- Resource providers including Oak National Academy and publishers

Who?

[Read a blog about the NCS here](#)

The NCS was developed around extracts from a [draft resource](#) for syllabus writers. This resource has been the focus of extensive consultation and scrutiny for the last 12 months and is due to be published in its final form in Spring 2024 alongside [three exemplar curriculums](#). It draws upon relevant publications including the [Ofsted Research Review \(2021\)](#).

Origins?

Indicative

The NCS uses the familiar style of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Unlike the National Curriculum Programmes of study however, it does not prescribe content but instead provides an exemplar for the sort of **breadth, depth and ambition** in a high-quality RE curriculum.

It does not recommend a particular approach to the subject.

What RE is

The exemplar content should be read within the context of the legal framework including the primary legislation cited for different types of school, and case law which together set an expectation that pupils will develop **knowledge and understanding of the matters of central importance** for the religious and non-religious worldviews studied.

...What it is not

The standard **builds on the legal framework** in its assumption that the content of a curriculum in this subject will be **age appropriate** and **focus on religious and non-religious worldviews** rather than on content which is the focus of a **different curriculum subject**.

Criteria for selecting content

- Legal Framework
- Intention
- Inclusive Principle
- Contextual Factors
- 'Collectively enough' principle
- Coherency

For all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in religion and worldviews, the subject **must be given adequate time and resources** commensurate with its place as a core component of the basic curriculum.