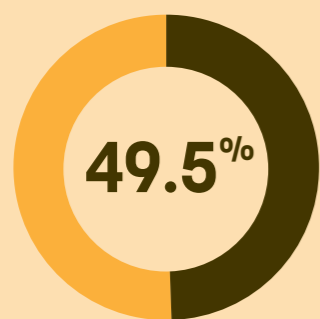


# A REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



**VALUE**  
OF THE QUALIFICATION

IN THE LAST DECADE THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN ENGLAND ENTERING A FULL GCSE RS COURSE INCREASED BY **29.7%**



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

**SINCE 2003 BEATING GEOGRAPHY, LAW AND HISTORY**



*RE IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ENABLES PUPILS TO TAKE THEIR PLACE WITHIN A DIVERSE MULTI-RELIGIOUS AND MULTI-SECULAR SOCIETY. AT ITS BEST, IT IS INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGING AND PERSONALLY ENRICHING.*



OFSTED RE RESEARCH REVIEW MAY 2021



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



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

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/news07-20-2/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education#conclusion>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/does-studying-rs-gcse-improve-your-overall-academic-attainment/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/how-satisfied-are-re-teachers/>

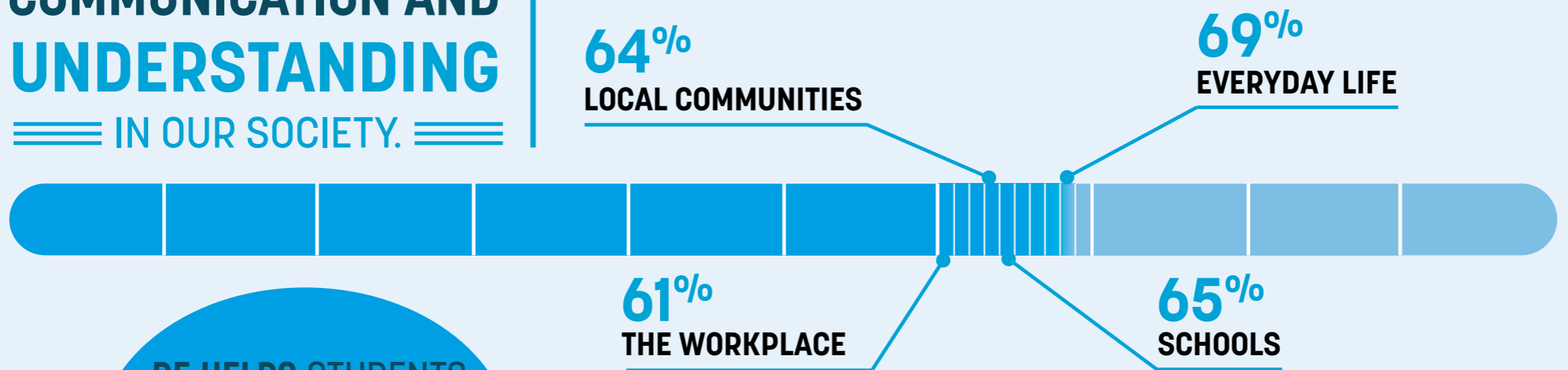
<sup>6</sup> <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/08/04/encourage-students-with-a-humanities-background-to-become-doctors/>

# RE IN SOCIETY

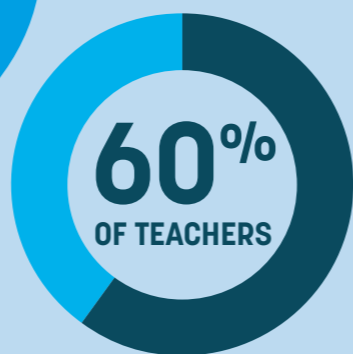
**64%** of the **UK adult population** think an education in **religion and worldviews** (or RE) is an important part of the **school curriculum**.<sup>7</sup>

**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>8</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>7</sup> Religion & Worldview survey by Savanta on behalf of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, June 2021

<sup>8</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>9</sup>



The 2021 Ofsted Research Review identified barriers to high-quality RE teaching in schools including:<sup>10</sup>

**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

**34%** of academies report no timetabled RE<sup>11</sup>



**Around 500** secondary schools still report **zero hours** of RE provision in Year 11<sup>12</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>13</sup>



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



<sup>9</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>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

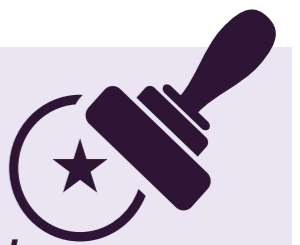
<sup>12</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NSS%202021%20Infographic.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/288/theology-religious-studies.pdf](http://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:<sup>14</sup>

**ENGLISH:  
£28.5  
MILLION**

**MUSIC:  
£387  
MILLION**

**MATHS:  
£154  
MILLION**

**SCIENCE:  
£56  
MILLION**

**AMIDST A DECADE LONG CRISIS IN ATTRACTING NEW TALENT:**

The 2021-22 teacher training bursary for RE was scrapped despite RE teacher recruitment targets not being met for nine of the last ten years.<sup>15</sup>



**AND A LACK OF RE SPECIALISM IN SCHOOLS:**

25% of RE lessons are taught by teachers with no post A-level qualification in the subject. Three times as many as history (8%).<sup>16</sup>



**AND A FALL IN GCSE ENTRIES**

Progress made in GCSE entries since 2010 is starting to unravel. Between 2016 and 2021 entries for the full course fell by almost 20%.<sup>17</sup>

# WORDS NEED TO BE BACKED UP WITH ACTION



<sup>14</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NATRE%20News/REPU%20March%20Roundtable%20Report.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NATRE%20News/REPU%20March%20Roundtable%20Report.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> DfE School workforce census (NATRE Freedom of Information request 2019)

<sup>17</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

REINSTATING THE  
TEACHER TRAINING  
BURSARY FOR RE



2

SCHOOLS ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY  
PROVISION BY ADOPTING THE  
VISION FOR RE SET OUT IN THE 2018  
*CoRE REPORT RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS:*  
*THE WAY FORWARD*

3

OFSTED WORKING WITH THOSE  
SCHOOLS NOT CURRENTLY  
TEACHING SUFFICIENT RE  
TO ENSURE THEY COMPLY  
WITH THE LAW

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 MP, FATHER OF THE HOUSE

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