

For parents and carers. Religious Education: your questions answered

Parents may have questions about RE if work has been sent home. It is helpful to make sure you understand the subject's key aims: broad minded engagement with all of the biggest questions of life, and the different answers given by religions and worldviews.

In this page we want to address some common misconceptions about RE and explain why it is important. Many parents will enjoy engaging in your child's RE work with them: children and young people often love to talk and discuss those big questions.

What is RE?

RE explores big questions about life, to find out what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live. It helps pupils to make sense of religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living. It enables pupils to be equipped with understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.

RE is helpful because...

- These days, issues of religion and belief frequently top the news agenda and RE helps children and young people to make sense of them.
- RE encourages children and young people growing up in a diverse society to understand the varied views and opinions of people whose beliefs and values differ from their own, promoting not just tolerance but genuine understanding and respect for other people.
- RE provides space for young people to reflect on their own ideas and develop their thoughts about questions of meaning and ethics such as these: who am I? Why are we here? What will give us courage and love in life? Why are some people very committed to their religions, and others not at all?

By having access to good RE in schools, young people are equipped to handle issues in their own lives, preparing them for the workplace and adult life in modern, diverse Britain.

More information at: <http://www.rethinkre.org/why-is-re-important>

Common misconceptions

RE may have changed a lot since you were at school! These days the subject is open hearted and enables all children to learn about different religions and beliefs in the UK. RE is not about trying to convert children to one view or another.

Many children especially enjoy the ways RE enables them to discuss big questions and ideas and think for themselves about the question's humanity has always seen as important but mysterious.

If you thought that RE might indoctrinate children, then think again: because it explores lots of different views, RE is the opposite of indoctrination, open to all ideas and opinions, teaching children to be reasonable about beliefs. The subject does not seek to convert anyone. These lessons do not aim to make people 'more religious' in any way.

If you thought that RE might be a bit of a luxury in a crowded curriculum, then note that it is usually allowed about an hour a week on the school timetable, following government guidance. An hour a week for thinking deeply about big questions seems like a good idea.

Find out more in our myth-busting guide to RE! <https://youtu.be/WQXHmebHgU4>