

## **Why study Religion and Worldviews?**

### **Audience focus: Subject Primary leads in schools (non-RE)**

Hello subject leads, and welcome to our school discussion about the subject of RE – Religious Education. Or, as is being debated and deliberated, Religion and Worldviews. This is a topic that will no doubt come up in our discussions further on. I am looking forward to us using these session opportunities as a way of connecting, sharing and collaborating on best practice across all of our subjects.

As always, I am happy to answer any queries or questions as the session continues today.

Though not glaringly obvious if you are a non RE specialist, RE can often be inconsistent in the classroom, for a number of reasons, including the fact that different types of schools follow different syllabuses and/or curricula. With that being said, I would hope for it not to be a huge deterrent as to how we approach the subject; as we look forward to good teaching, inspiring learning and using our context of Primary school as driving force for cross collaboration and forward planning. The National Curriculum plays a strong role in defining all of your subjects, whereas RE sits separately as part of the Basic Curriculum – it does not have that same consistency of definition. This is important for all subject leaders to note.

As with many of our subjects within Primary education, there is an expectation for us all to be jack of all trades: with a special emphasis on the subject area we have been asked to lead. One must be honest in admitting that we have our own biases for subjects, naturally, due to interest, past study and what we are most confident in. And yet, regardless of all of this, we still have to teach it whether we are enthusiasts or not.

And so, I begin by saying, that RE plays an important role in providing skills and knowledge that aid beyond the RE classroom, and why, collaboratively, we can gain so much more by working together, as well as understanding one another's subjects.

How do you remember your RE lessons at school? How did you *feel* in your RE lessons at school?

It is worth noting that RE is the study of religion and worldviews; it recognises that no-one is neutral and that each person has an ever-evolving worldview that shapes the way they live in the world. RE is often a subject that can look very different depending on who is delivering it, and the subject knowledge they have, and needs to be taught. A misconception is that religion and worldviews are fixed states that are taught as fact, facts are churned out to be delivered to students. Just as knowledge in other subjects is built upon year group to year group, so is that of RE. What we are not so good at is helping our students understand the diversity within worldviews, to help ensure that they do not come away with generalised or stereotypical views of different groups of people.

This is a subject that plays an important role in how students, as well as teachers, approach and see the world. RE allows for discussion and debate that may not always be available in other subjects. However, the discussions and debates are facilitated and enhanced by the knowledge accumulated within the RE lessons. Oracy and argument is only as good as the context you're in and the knowledge you are using. The amount of learning a student can hold throughout their KS1 and KS2 experience is rich: rich in experience, language and also reflection. Luckily for us, as we teach RE, we are able to draw on the rich diversity of knowledge in our community as well as country; whilst also making important links to other subjects in the curriculum as enhancers (and not to take

away from the actual subject). As is true with all of our subjects, our students are attending their lessons with their own wealth of knowledge and backgrounds, some similar to their peers, and in many other instances, very different.

As mentioned earlier, the subject is under debate for its actual title: to be RE or to be religion and worldviews, is the question. We all hold our own worldviews, and this is due to varying factors such as our background, faith or lack thereof, environment, languages and so on. As I mentioned earlier, these are all a focus study within the subject of RE, to support our students to understand that even though there are those who share the same religion or religious identity, such as "Muslim", it does not mean that their worldviews and outlooks on life are exactly the same

The subject of RE plays an important role in our curriculum as it gives our students an insight in the world around them: it helps broaden their horizons and challenges them to be more aware that not everyone sees and lives in the world in the way in which they do.

I look forward to having the opportunity to work with you all, as we develop and discuss the subject of RE together.