

# REally?

## RE is important, REally? Why?

Religion impacts everyone, whether you are religious or not, because we are surrounded by its presence. Research shows that **84% of the world population** in 2010 identified as religious (Pew Research Center, 2012). As written on RE:Online (2018), it influences, "...individuals, culture, behaviour and national life," and is therefore integral to education.

Equally important to RE is the study of non-religious beliefs; especially as more people are identifying as non-religious (The Woolf Institute, 2015, p.6).



(Cap Limpede, 2018)

## What is the purpose of RE?

### Questions:

RE provides the opportunity for you to find your identity, explore, develop and express your beliefs. As well as learning about religion and beliefs, RE offers the chance to learn from them. It provokes challenging questions, such as the ultimate purpose of life and human nature, giving way for profound conversations and personal reflection. Right and wrong are explored through discussing various moral dilemmas, enabling you to consider and understand different views, while developing your own beliefs and sense of judgment. As stated on RE:Online (2018), some people may describe this purpose as helping you to develop, "...spiritually, morally and ethically".

### Skills:

Employers agree that RE is beneficial for you because it helps with diversity within the workplace by enabling you to exercise and develop your interpersonal skills, such as empathy (Dinham and Shaw, 2015a, p.3). Also, dialogue is an important part of RE, which improves communication skills. Hence, RE provides scope to develop, "skills for life," (RE:Online, 2018), which prepare you for future employment. Additionally, RE is cognitively beneficial as it is intellectually challenging due to its breadth and complexity. The Department for Education and Skills (2004, p.8) recognise that it also improves ways of learning by developing, "...independent and interdependent learning".

### Cohesion:

RE plays a key part in developing a peaceful society. As a multi-cultural and increasingly diverse society, RE is important because it enhances your ability to relate to and understand different religion and beliefs, and to respectfully express your views and disagree with others (Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2013, p.11). This subsequently helps to build harmonious relationships between individuals and cultures. It also contributes to the vision expressed by the Woolf Institute (2015, p.9), "...a society at ease with itself in which all individuals, groups and communities feel at home, and in whose flourishing all wish to take part".

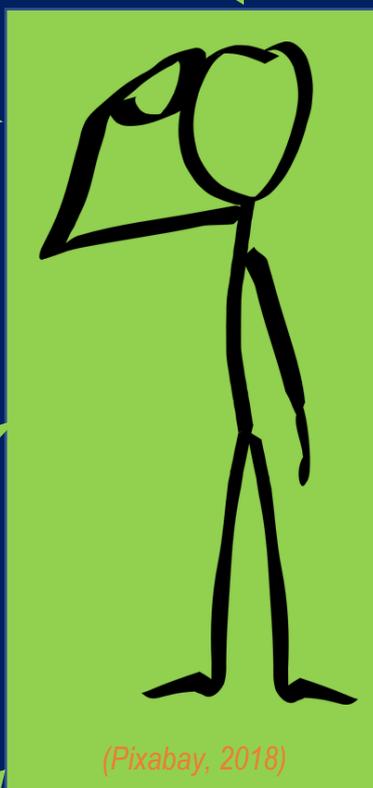
### Understanding:

Religions and beliefs have extensive breadth. Some argue that RE is worthy as a subject, "in its own right," (Dinham and Shaw, 2015a, p.2) and that it offers, "a rich and complex field of study," (RE:Online, 2018). The sheer diversity of religions and amount of religious people prove its relevance locally, nationally and globally, which suggests it is fundamental to education (Department for Education and Skills, 2004, p.8).

A pupil, aged fifteen, stated, "In my RE lessons I have learnt to become more broadminded, to accept other people's beliefs and faiths and to not let race or religion come in the way of what you see in an individual." (Department for Education and Skills, 2004, p.6).

Another student said, "If people are educated about different religions it's going to help people get along better because they can understand what people believe and why they believe it" (Dinham and Shaw, 2015b, p.8)

One teacher believed RE is valuable because, "It is important for students to understand why they are there and why they have their practices and beliefs, so they can respect it when they go out into the real world." (Dinham and Shaw, 2015b, p.13)



An employer stated, "...I think that whole notion of diversity in the workplace, respect and 'good working' that understanding and awareness of other religious faiths in such a diverse society as we are becoming is absolutely what every employee needs to be equipped with." (Dinham and Shaw, 2015b, p.24)

Another RE teacher claimed RE is, "...more to do with education for education's sake. It should be exciting to go out and engage with difference." (Dinham and Shaw, 2015b, p.13)

To conclude, RE cannot be overlooked as a subject of significant importance for the development of young people because:

- It encourages good citizenship.
- It equips young people for future endeavours; further study or employment.
- It offers the chance for young people to develop individually, socially and professionally.

*The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (2013, p.12) summarises, "Alongside the subject's contribution to pupils' mental, cognitive and linguistic development, RE offers distinctive opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development".*

## Bibliography

Cap Limpede, 2018. *Religii*. [Image online]. Available at: <<https://caplimpede.ro/crestinismul-va-fi-sufocat-islamul-va-fi-cea-mai-raspandita-religie-din-lume-vezi-cand/>>. [Accessed 10 June 2018].

Department for Education and Skills, 2004. *Religious education: The non-statutory national framework*. [pdf] Available at: <[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090608220227/http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/9817\\_re\\_national\\_framework\\_04.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090608220227/http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/9817_re_national_framework_04.pdf)> [Accessed 8 June 2018]

Dinham, A. and Shaw, M., 2015a. *REforREal: The Future of Teaching and Learning about Religion and Belief; Executive Summary*. [pdf] Available at: <<https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/documents-by-section/departments/research-centres-and-units/research-units/faiths-and-civil-society/REforREal-exec-summary.pdf>> [Accessed 7 June 2018]

Dinham, A. and Shaw, M., 2015b. *REforREal: The Future of Teaching and Learning about Religion and Belief*. [pdf] Available at: <<https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/documents-by-section/departments/research-centres-and-units/research-units/faiths-and-civil-society/REforREal-web-b.pdf>> [Accessed 15 June 2018]

Pew Research Center, 2012. *The Global Religious Landscape*. [Online] Available at: <<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>> [Accessed 8 June 2018].

Pixabay, 2018. Stickman Stick Figure Matchstick. [Image online]. Available at: <https://pixabay.com/en/stickman-stick-figure-matchstick-man-151357/> . [Accessed 10 June 2018].

Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2013. *A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England*. [Online] Available at: [http://resubjectreview.reconcil.org.uk/media/file/RE\\_Review\\_Summary.pdf](http://resubjectreview.reconcil.org.uk/media/file/RE_Review_Summary.pdf) [Accessed 9 June 2018].

RE:Online, 2018. *Why Teach RE?* [Online] Available at: <<http://www.reonline.org.uk/knowning/why-re/>> [Accessed 7 June 2018].

The Woolf Institute, 2015. *Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good*. Cambridge: The Woolf Institute. [pdf] Available at: <<https://corablivingwithdifference.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/living-with-difference-online.pdf>> [Accessed 7 June 2018].