

# Highlights of the Ofsted report



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News story

# Ofsted publishes research review on religious education

Ofsted has published the second in a series of reviews into different subjects across the curriculum. This review looks at religious education (RE).

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From: [Ofsted](#)

Published 12 May 2021

In the spring term of 2022, we will be publishing a report on the quality of RE curriculums taught in schools. We will gather the evidence for this through subject 'deep dives' during inspections under the EIF.



## **1. Teaching should be grounded in academic study**

Ofsted say what is taught and learned in RE should be “grounded in what is known about religion or non-religion from academic study”.

Schools should maintain “high expectations about scholarship” in the curriculum as this helps prevent pupils from developing misconceptions about religion and non-religion, they said.

There should also be a consideration of when pupils should relate content of the lesson to their own personal knowledge for example to challenge prior a:





## **2. Cover content 'collectively enough', rather than 'superficially'**

The curriculum should cover substantive content and concepts “collectively enough”, rather than simply covering “excessive amounts of content superficially”.

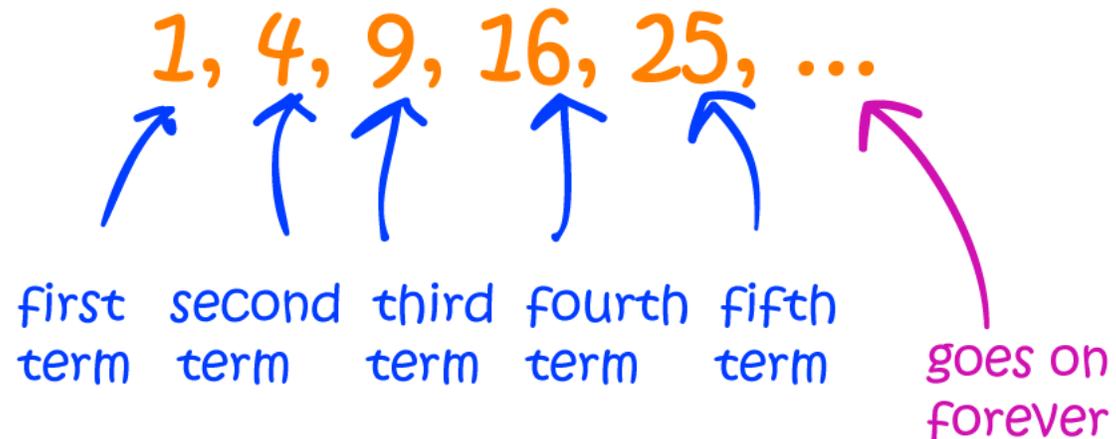
Ofsted say that the content covered should allow pupils to “grasp a bigger picture” of the place of religion and non- religion in the world. Representation of both religious and non religious traditions should be as “accurate as possible” so that pupils do not develop misconceptions.

### 3. Well-sequenced curriculum key for dealing with sensitive topics

The schools watchdog advises schools to have a well-sequenced curriculum that prepares pupils with the prior knowledge they need for subsequent topics. This includes content, concepts and vocabulary.

“The importance of this is very clear in the case of controversial and sensitive topics”, Ofsted states.

Sequence:





## 5. Assessments should not be “excessively onerous” on teachers

Ofsted states that leaders should ensure assessments are “not excessively onerous for teachers”. There should also be professional development opportunities for staff which allow them to reflect on how different assessments frame expectations and engagement. The research review found it is important the different types of assessment are used appropriately. For example, formative assessment can help identify gaps in knowledge but are less useful when judging how the curriculum as a whole has been learned and remembered.



## **6. Sufficient time must be allocated to RE**

In order to deliver an ambitious RE curriculum there must be sufficient time allocated to its teaching.

Ofsted warns problems can sometimes emerge when RE is “too weakly classified”. At secondary level this may be if RE is delivered through tutor times or in rotation with other subjects.

These approaches “limit the quality of RE” and mean there is not enough time for “teachers to deliver a curriculum of ambitious scope”.

Pupils also benefit when they are taught by subject -specialist RE teachers.



All Schools should review their existing curriculum and keep what they consider to be outstanding and strong RE.

