

Christianity is not just another 'worldview'

WAYS TO RESPOND:

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The draft syllabus is available here:
the.ci/renisyllabus26

- The syllabus must protect the theological and spiritual nature of RE, and ensure that beliefs about ultimate truth are not presented as mere lifestyle options.
- The current trend in RE to view religions as 'worldviews' undermines and misrepresents them. RE is the study of God, not trends in human belief.
- It must be clear that "respect" relates to the person; pupils cannot be expected to respect beliefs with which they fundamentally disagree.
- 'Respect' is not founded on diversity awareness, but on responding in love to the humanity of other people in keeping with Christian teaching that humans are made in God's image.
- Education should communicate new knowledge and thought, equipping pupils to become independent thinkers and not simply reflect what they already think.

TIPS FOR WHAT TO SAY

The first section requires some personal information.

Then there are four questions. You are required to choose one multiple-choice answer. You can also add your own comments.

② QUESTION: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE VISION STATEMENT CLEARLY CAPTURE THE PURPOSE, IDENTITY AND DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SUBJECT AREA?

We suggest selecting '**Ineffectively**'

You can also include two or three of the following points, but **in your own words**:

- Religious Education should be about religion. Non-religious perspectives on religion can be included without making them a dedicated topic of study.
- A religion is an organised system of belief and practice, lived out by its adherents individually and collectively in everyday life. Non-religious worldviews do not naturally fit into RE.
- Non-religious worldviews are not 'neutral'. Care should be taken to ensure they cannot be presented as if they are.
- The aim of RE is to learn about and from Christianity (and other religions), and particularly from "the Holy Scriptures", as required by statute. Although good RE teaching will also equip pupils to participate respectfully in a diverse society, this is not its purpose.

③ QUESTION: TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE ORGANISING CATEGORIES FOR CONTENT APPROPRIATELY REFLECT THE KEY DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING WITHIN THE SUBJECT?

We suggest selecting '**Adequately**'

You can also include two or three of the following points, but **in your own words**:

- The three categories of study provide a helpful framework. Of these categories, "Beliefs, teachings and sources" is foundational and must be taught systematically, not thematically.
- The emphasis on "developing an informed understanding" of religious beliefs is welcome.
- It is right that Christianity remains the core element of RE with which other religious beliefs and practices and non-religious worldviews are objectively contrasted and compared.
- The draft syllabus says: "beliefs are treated as dynamic, interpreted, critiqued and lived". However, pupils must also learn that for many people, the central beliefs of their faith and their adherence to them have remained consistent, sometimes for thousands of years, even as the world around them has changed.

② **QUESTION: HOW WELL DOES THE RE SYLLABUS COVER THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTENT THAT PUPILS SHOULD LEARN IN THIS SUBJECT? CONSIDER WHETHER THE SYLLABUS INCLUDES THE KNOWLEDGE, CONCEPTS, SKILLS AND DISCIPLINARY UNDERSTANDING THAT MATTER MOST.**

We suggest selecting **'Ineffectively'**

You can also include two or three of the following points, but **in your own words**:

- Christianity is referred to as the core element, but it must be established clearly that Christianity is to receive the large majority of curriculum time to ensure it does not become overwhelmed by other demands.
- At Foundation and Key Stage 1, an "awareness that some people hold non-religious worldviews" must not mean crowding out teaching time on religions with teaching about non-religious worldviews.
- At Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, the clarification that only one non-religious worldview should be taught is welcome. This will make it harder to expand to include any number of vastly differing personal perspectives.
- To comply with the law, the syllabus must have a clear emphasis on pupils studying Bible passages.

② **QUESTION: IS CONTENT APPROPRIATELY SEQUENCED ACROSS THE FOUNDATION STAGE, KEY STAGE 1, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3 AND KEY STAGE 4?**

We suggest selecting **'poorly sequenced'**

You can also include one or two of the following points, but **in your own words**:

- Christianity cannot be taught properly without starting with the life and teachings of Jesus and developing and progressing this study through the key stages.
- The Key Stage 2 requirement for pupils to properly recognise and understand differences in the practices within a religion is too advanced for this age, risking a simplistic and superficial understanding.
- The Key Stage 2 requirement for pupils to learn "how to critically explore the difference between factual knowledge and personal or religious beliefs" will be challenging at this age, and could also lead to a very simplistic and superficial understanding.

② **QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS REGARDING THE RE SYLLABUS?**

You can also include one or two of the following points, but **in your own words**:

- It is very concerning that the Key Stage 4 syllabus requires teaching how different worldviews "define the role of the family", rather than grounding it first and foremost in Christianity and religion.
- The wording "how different worldviews define the role of the family" could open the door for harmful and contentious 'sex-positive' ideology to be taught, contrary to the wishes of many parents.
- "[S]ocial challenges, racism, sectarianism, gender inequality, disability and poverty" are issues that need to be approached critically and objectively to ensure that they are not hijacked by activists to push contested views.
- Enabling pupils to practise and hone the skill of "respectful disagreement" is vital. However, again it must be clear that "respect" relates to the person; pupils cannot be expected to respect beliefs with which they fundamentally disagree.

STAGES OF LEARNING

Foundation: Ages 4-6

Key Stage 1: Ages 6-8

Key Stage 2: Ages 8-11

Key Stage 3: Ages 11-14

Key Stage 4: Ages 14-16