

<https://www.tes.com/news/ofsted-six-ways-improve-re-teaching>

Here are the main findings Ofsted has identified [in its review of research](#) into RE teaching:

1. 'Ambitious' RE needs adequate curriculum time

The review found that adequate curriculum time should be given to RE, so that leaders can deliver an ambitious curriculum.

It says that most locally agreed syllabuses recommend spending the equivalent of approximately 60 minutes a week on RE at key stage 1 and about 75 minutes a week at key stage 2.

The review highlights the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education's (NATRE) view that a significant number of schools give insufficient curriculum time, according to its regular primary school surveys.

For NATRE, insufficient time is considered to be fewer than 45 minutes of teaching time a week. Its surveys have suggested that a quarter of primary schools were in this category last year.

2. 'Sensitive' topics need proper sequencing

Ofsted has said it is important that schools have a well-sequenced RE curriculum that gives pupils the knowledge they need to be able to understand new topics.

It adds: "The importance of this is very clear in the case of controversial and sensitive topics.

"Leaders and teachers might identify the necessary background knowledge that pupils need to learn for a topic and make sure that the curriculum is ordered to accommodate this."

3. Avoid 'superficial' coverage

Ofsted has warned against covering excessive amounts of material superficially.

Its review says schools should cover the "substantive content and concepts collectively or 'collectively enough'."

It adds that the content of lessons should be sufficient for pupils to grasp a bigger picture about the place of religion and non-religion in the world.

4. Prevent misconceptions about religion

Ofsted says that what is taught and learned in RE should be grounded in what is known about religion and non-religion from academic study.

It says that this helps teachers to prevent pupils from developing misconceptions about religion and non-religion.

5. Specialist teachers and training is needed

Another area highlighted in the Ofsted review is the need for sufficient training and professional development in order for teachers to have appropriate subject professional knowledge in RE

The report says having subject-specialist RE teachers can also contribute to high-quality provision. Ofsted says school and subject leaders have to make decisions about how specialist staff are distributed across a timetabled curriculum.

It adds: "Following this decision process, pupils in RE classes are often the ones deprived of a main or specialist teacher."

6. Pupils need knowledge, not 'mere facts'

The review refers to three different types of subject-specific knowledge that pupils learn in RE. It says each of these is powerful and should not be confused with "mere facts".

- The first is "substantive" knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions.
- The second type is "ways of knowing", where pupils learn "how to know" about religion and non-religion.
- The third type is "personal knowledge", where pupils build an "awareness of their own presuppositions and values about what they study".