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KIM LEADBEATER, MP FOR BATLEY AND SPEN ASKED THE FOLLOWING PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION ON RE

NATRE were very pleased to see that after their joint meeting with Kim Leadbeater MP, with the REC and RE Today she asked a series of questions of the DfE.



The new Minister for School Standards; Robin Walker MP, gave an extremely fulsome and positive reply. We will continue to press for a meeting with him. Good to see he is clear on the value of RE and it will be interesting to teachers to note the change in focus from the current DfE Ministerial Team in relation to the value of our subject.

Question from Kim Leadbeater, MP for Batley and Spen

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the societal value for young people of religious education; and if he will make a statement.

Answered by Robin Walker, MP for Worcester and Minister of State for School Standards, on 9 November 2021

The government firmly believes that religious education (RE) is important. Good quality RE is essential in developing children's knowledge of British values and traditions, and those of other countries. RE is a vital part of fostering understanding among different faiths and beliefs, which is why it is a compulsory subject for all state-funded schools up to the age of 18.

Department officials engage regularly with key RE stakeholders, including the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education as the main subject association for RE in England.

When teaching RE, schools should consider how their curriculum can develop social skills and empathy, as well as equip children and young people with the skills for living and working in a diverse society. For older pupils, RE should also focus on developing skills that are useful in a wide range of careers and adult life, and in particular the skills of critical enquiry, creative problem-solving and communication in a variety of media.

In school life, RE can develop and nuance the skills required for other parts of the school curriculum such as history, citizenship, and personal, social, health and economic education.

RE is an important subject, developing an individual's knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society, as well as serving to inform their own values and behaviour. RE can also contribute to pupils' personal development and well-being by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society. It is an important contributor to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, which schools are required to facilitate as per the Education Act 2002.

Studying RE can also serve to improve community cohesion, providing a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.