

ISRSA statement on 'Religion and Worldviews' proposal

I'm writing on behalf of the ISRSA in response to demands that our report '[Religion and Worldviews \(Weltanschauung\)](#)' be withdrawn.

The ISRSA is an independent body and the report was produced by representatives of our organisation. It was written in good faith and represents a particular contribution to the current public debate. We are delighted that our report has prompted wider participation and discussion, and we therefore do not intend to withdraw it as some people have requested. We care what happens to our subject, and in fact healthy difference leads to sharper thinking.

We sympathise with the aims of the CoRE report to cultivate, 'openness, respect for others, objectivity, scholarly accuracy, and critical enquiry' and understand that Religious Studies needs to be wide ranging and critical. We agree that RS needs to be, 'objective, critical and pluralistic,' and that non-religious perspectives and philosophical convictions are an essential part of the RS curriculum. This is already widely achieved, and in fact is required by GCSE and A level specifications. We therefore remain unconvinced about the need for a 'new approach' or 'significant reframing' or a 'reimagining' of RS.

Our essential contention is that the notion of 'worldview' is vague, open to a number of interpretations, and above all undermines the essence of *religious* education. It is our considered view that the inclusion of 'worldviews' will be misleading and divert the subject from the job of expanding *religious* literacy and deep philosophical inquiry. We suggest 'Theology Philosophy and Religion' would give greater clarity than 'Religion and Worldviews' and we look forward to discussing this further.

An essential element of all good education is about helping students to think reflectively and critically about the views they hold as well as the beliefs and practices of others. ISRSA has a deep commitment to facilitating high quality academic RS which entails precisely this, and it is our ambition to continue to foster the pedagogical virtues which the CoRE report promotes, but without the inclusion of 'worldviews'.

All teachers of Theology, Philosophy and Religion are welcome to join the ISRSA. If you are worried about the impact of the worldviews proposal please [contact us](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Julie Arliss'.

Julie Arliss
Chair of ISRSA
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