

Where ignorant armies clash by night:  
A critical examination of the present and future  
politics of RE

Mark Chater

UCL Institute of Education

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# A critical examination of the present and future politics of RE

- The RE landscape
- The argument for change in RE
- RE in England: successes and next steps
- The politics of epistemology
- An RE Commission
- Stakeholdership

# How well do you know RE?

- RE: compulsory?
- Legal foundation?
- Stakeholders?
- Parents?
- Quality?
- RE Council?
- Clarke/Woodhead, Dinham/Shaw, Woolf?

# The argument for change (1)

- RE has many positive achievements in the UK
- Ofsted 2013: RE is poor in six out of ten schools, because of its confused purpose and outmoded legal status
- J. Conroy 2013: a study of RE teachers showed great good will but confusion of purpose and low status

# The argument for change (2)

- Charles Clarke, retired politician, and Linda Woodhead, professor of Sociology of religion, publish *A New Settlement: religion and belief in schools*, 2015: 'RE cannot go on as it is'.

# The argument for change (3)

- RE for Real, 2015: shows that pupils, parents and employers like RE and recommends that its status should be raised by making it a national curriculum subject
- Commission on religion and belief in public life, 2015: recommends that RE status should be raised by making it a national curriculum subject

# The politics of epistemology

- School reforms have created confusion about the legal requirements on RE
- ‘Local’ determination has created confusion about the purposes of RE
- The religious tide and the breath of the night wind
- The dangerous eddies: SMSC, values, Prevent



# A commission on RE

The REC Commission on RE's remit is:

- To consider the nature, purpose and scope of religious education.
- To identify barriers that currently limit the provision of high quality RE.
- To identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE.
- To ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at implementation.

# What will the commission do?

In considering the above 4 tasks, the REC has identified the following areas for the Commission to consider:

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- The quality of teaching and learning in RE
- The legal & structural arrangements
- The status of the subject
- Recruitment, ITT & CPD
- Who should be studying RE (i.e. age range, right to withdraw, etc.)
- Whether there should be a common entitlement to RE, and if so what the entitlement should be

# Stakeholdership

- The RE Council, with over 65 member organisations from all religion and belief communities and professional teachers of RE



