

**Religious Education in Japan for
Multiculturalism:
A Case Study of the United Kingdom**

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Outline

- 01 Introduction**
- 02 Multiculturalism in the UK**
- 03 Religious Education in the UK**
- 04 Religious Education in Japan**
- 05 Conclusion**

Introduction

Background

- Increasing number of immigrants and tourists from abroad
- Public negative attitudes toward foreigners

Subject

Proposing an ideal model of religious education in Japan

Purpose

- Analysis of the purposes and issues of RE in the UK
- Examination of how RE can be applied to Japanese Education

Methods

- Review of history of multiculturalism and RE in the UK
- Analysis of the questionnaire results on RE experiences
- Discussion on an ideal model of religious education in Japan

Multiculturalism in the UK

1945~

Increase in immigration
British Nationality Act 1948

1950~

Immigrants from the West Indies
1958 Riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill

1960~

Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962/1968 • **Immigration Act 1971**
Race Relations Act 1965/1968/1976

1980~

Riots from the late 1970s to the 1980s
British Nationality Act 1981
Public Order Act 1986

2000~

2001 Riots in the northern England
2005 London bombings
2006 Evolution of the extreme right parties

2015~

Refugee crisis
Terrorism in Europe
2016 Brexit

History of RE in the UK

- ✓ RE became compulsory
- ✓ Use of the agreed syllabus became compulsory

Education Act 1944



Elementary Education Act 1870

- ✓ Many schools had education about religion
- ✓ Cowper-Temple Clause
- ✓ Conscience Clause

Education Reform Act 1988

- ✓ Agreed syllabus reflects Christian traditions of the UK and includes other major religions
- ✓ SACRE became permanent bodies

Significance of RE

Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development

Learning about religions / moral awareness / social understanding

Personal development and well-being

Enjoying learning / exploring and understanding yourself / moral judgements

Community cohesion

Understanding of diversity and shared values / challenging racism

RE helps students not only learn about religions but also explore different perspectives and engage with ethical issues in relation to themselves and the world

Questionnaire Results about RE

Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, and non-religious worldviews are not often included in RE• Discussion on ethical issues• Fieldwork
Benefit	<p>◎ Understanding different cultures / developing of moral awareness / challenging racism / promoting supportive relationships between individuals</p> <p>△ Developing a sense of identity and belonging</p>
Uncomfortable Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sensitive topics such as euthanasia and abortion• Teaching from a biased perspective
Opinion	<p>90% of respondents agreed that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RE should be compulsory in secondary school• RE should include non-religious worldviews

Important Points of RE

Religious diversity

- Reflecting on religious diversity in the UK
 - Including non-religious worldviews

Practical learning

- Learning with local community through fieldwork and guest speakers
 - Discussion on ethical/philosophical issues
 - Exams

Risk of community division

- Preventing the conflicts within the classroom
 - Teaching from a fair perspective

Current Religious Education in Japan

- In Japan, education values religious tolerance and religious knowledge
- Religious education in public schools must not be based on any specific religion
(Article 15, Basic Act on Education)

Social Studies In Secondary school	Geography	Distribution of world religion, Religion and lifestyle
	History	Origins of religions, Reformation, Ainu · Ryukyu, religious conflicts
	Civics	Religion and contemporary culture, cultural/religious diversity
Philosophy In High School	Understanding different religions and beliefs, Ancient Japanese philosophy, Buddhism and Asian philosophy, Ethical issues in contemporary society	

Religious education in compulsory education is inadequate

Conclusion

What kind of religious education is needed in Japan?

**Practical Learning and
engaging with ethical issues**

Knowledge about religions

+

- Practical learning about religions through fieldwork etc.
- Improving religious tolerance and critical thinking skills through engaging with ethical issues

**Understanding the concept
and role of religion
as prior knowledge**

Understanding what religion is and why it is needed before learning different religions to avoid stereotypes

Conclusion

Considering how to deal with issues of terrorism and cults in schools

Schools need to support students facing religious issues such as believers of minority religions

Reflecting on religious views of Japanese people and Japanese religious traditions

Should take into account...

- **Many non-religious people**
- **Limited religious diversity**
- **How Japanese people view religion**
- **Religious traditions in Japan**

Introducing a new subject, “Religious Education” could be an effective approach for a multicultural society