



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Intent – What do we learn and why?

Religious Studies supports the development of students by helping them to explore how religious and other beliefs are expressed; engage with life's big questions; and reflect on moral values for life. As students learn to live in an increasingly pluralistic world, Religious Studies has a critical role to play in the curriculum in providing opportunities for students to consider the variety of religious beliefs found in the UK and elsewhere, become aware of different understandings of God, and examine other interpretations of life. It encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, including both the religious and non-religious response to human experience.

"Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do."

Potter Stewart

Religion has shaped and been shaped by historical events, something which continues today. Religious Studies gives students an important framework for understanding past and present events, actions and beliefs and their impact within the context of people's lives. It also promotes an understanding of religions as dynamic, internally diverse and evolving over time. Religious Education within a UK context offers students an opportunity to develop an understanding of how different religions have contributed to the society in which we live.

People today are faced with many concerns, many of which require an ethical response. Religious Education has an important contribution to make in encouraging students to engage critically with belief systems and principles of moral behaviour which can serve as a foundation for decisions. Religious Studies helps to equip students with the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values to support their life journey and enable them to participate in their communities and in the world as informed, respectful, responsible and caring members of society.

Implementation – How is the curriculum planned?

Students in years 7 and 8 will focus on the foundational beliefs and teachings of the major world religions. In year 7 they will study Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism, and in year 8 Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. Through the study of these religions students will develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. In year 9 we broaden the curriculum and explore key ideas from Philosophy and Ethics, including an in depth exploration of life after death before examining the lives for some key 20th Century religious figures (such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr). All of the Y9 studies are informed by the foundational knowledge and understanding from Y7 and Y8.

Students can study Religious Studies at GCSE following their options choices from the start of Year 10. Students at Chosen Hill will follow the OCR Religious Studies syllabus which takes an in-depth look at beliefs, teachings and practices of two major religions (Christianity and Judaism), thus building on the work done at KS3, along with an exploration of key themes from philosophy and ethics (primarily from a Christian perspective), including topics under the broad banner of Family Life, Existence of God, Peace and Conflict and Interfaith Dialogue. All these units are building on skills and topics introduced in Y9.

Students can go on to further study at A Level where we follow the OCR RS syllabus where we study Philosophy of Religion, Ethical Theory and Developments in Christian Theology. This further aims to enable students to develop positive



attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions and beliefs. Our aim is that they would also develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions and beliefs represented in the UK.

Assessment – How do we assess student understanding?

At Key Stage 3 in Religious Studies a range of formative, summative and diagnostic marking and feedback are used to assess students' level of knowledge, understanding and skill, with the assessment method being appropriate to the objective and topic area. In addition to the work in their books, students complete a range of formal assessments, with GCSE styles of assessment introduced in format, content and style at the earliest opportunity so students can gain some familiarity with the process. Diagnostic feedback is given at the earliest opportunity, with students 'going green' by noting and making improvements in light of the advice given. At all levels a tracking document is used to monitor the entire cohort, enabling early identification of any progress issues and rapid intervention to be put into place.

At GCSE and A Level students have regular assessments that are put together using real exam questions and mark schemes to give the best possible practice for the exam style assessment they will face at the end of the course. This also allows students to see an accurate current working grade and recognise their areas of strength and areas for improvement, altering their study habits and revision strategies accordingly. Mock exams take place in Years 10-13, usually in the main school hall to again replicate the exam experience as closely as possible. After every exam students receive a full lesson of diagnostic feedback using real exemplar answers and excerpts from mark schemes to show how marks will be applied for the various different styles of question.

Home Learning

Home learning is used in Religious Studies to support, consolidate and extend work covered in the classroom. It allows the promotion of independent learning skills as students apply skills to areas of personal interest, as well as encouraging research creativity and initiative. It will be set frequently and regularly, and will be appropriate to the topic and activities covered. In general, KS3 lessons will have the equivalent of 30 minutes a fortnight, GCSE lessons 1 hour a week, and A Level lessons 3 hours a week in addition to directed study tasks in school. All tasks will be set and monitored through Class Charts, and where possible will be clearly differentiated to provide meaningful and accessible activities for students.

