

Curriculum Intent - Religious Studies

Curriculum Priorities

The religious Studies curriculum is reflective of the pupils that we have in our care and of our diverse local community.

Our intent is to equip learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to positively participate in society and interact with people of all and no faith with respect and dignity. Learners will explore and evaluate religious and non-religious beliefs and how they impact the choices made by individuals through the study of the philosophy of religion, religious texts, spirituality and ethics. Learners will also be given the opportunity to reflect upon and articulate their personal beliefs, values and viewpoints in a respectful manner.

Knowledge

By the end of KS4, we aim for pupils to:

- develop an appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities, and societies.
- develop knowledge and understanding of two religions, enabling them to understand and articulate their own and others' beliefs, values, and commitments
- develop analytical and critical thinking skills to enable them to present a wide range of well-informed and reasonable arguments, aiding in progression to AS and A level study

Skills

The skills we aim to develop are:



Literacy
& Numeracy



Communication



Problem Solving



Metacognition



Leadership



Collaboration



Digital Literacy

For example:

Literacy & Numeracy: RS is an essay-based subject and therefore there are ample opportunities to boost pupil literacy. Primary religious texts such as the Quran and the Bible are frequently used and interpreted to engage with exam questions that require a 'source of wisdom and authority.'

Literacy is a key focus of every lesson, but it is particularly developed when pupils write '5' and '12' mark questions which require extended responses and special attention to SPAG. Numeracy is also developed when pupils view and interpret statistical data that relate to 21st century British attitudes to marriage, divorce and religious affiliation.

Communication: Peer/class discussions are an integral part of the RS lessons. Pupils are constantly given time to identify their views on a topic, discuss their viewpoints with their

peers, before having to share with the class. This is often revisited at the end of the lesson and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their views from the start of the lesson.

Problem Solving: Pupils are often presented with dilemmas faced by religious people when there is an apparent clash between faith and Science, or faith and everyday life.

Examples of this include when Muslim surgeons may have to miss prayers to perform operations or religious Scientists who agree with the Big Bang theory but also believe God to be the creator.

Collaboration: Pupils work together to analyse religious practices and debate the pros and cons of following religious laws which may seem outdated. This collaboration allows pupils to explore religious traditions which they may not necessarily follow and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

Pupils develop this skill in the crime and punishment unit when they have to discuss suitable punishments for certain crimes and then discuss whether or not the religiously prescribed punishments are too harsh or lenient.

Metacognition: The course challenges them to think about their own beliefs and values and raises awareness of challenging stereotypical ways of thinking about people and religious and non-religious beliefs and practices.

Pupils develop this skill by reflecting upon and analysing the reasons and evidence for their beliefs.

Digital Literacy: Pupils use online platforms such as Seneca and YouTube to revise and complete online quizzes such as Microsoft Forms Quizzes to show their understanding of units and topics.

Qualities

The qualities we aim to develop are:



How the RS curriculum contributes to developing this skill area:

- **Respect:** Discussions are guided with sentence starters which encourage pupils to use respectful language such as 'I disagree with this view because ...' and 'this seems unconvincing because ...'. This allows for a controlled environment in which pupils appraise viewpoints based on the evidence and argument offered rather than emotions and stereotypes.
- **Kindness:** Pupils are taught to consider their own moral compass regardless of their belief system. The ethical units of the course such as abortion and euthanasia are viewed from different perspectives and pupils are expected to justify what the most loving action would be.

- **Tolerance:** The RS curriculum includes many controversial issues both current and previous. These lessons develop pupil curiosity by engaging with scholars/individuals from both sides of the arguments and with human rights organisation such as Amnesty international.
- Pupils are often asked 'why would someone disagree with you' to deepen their understanding of a topic and promote tolerance.
- **Resilience:** Pupils study Martin Luther King, Malala Yousafzai and others in the 'inspirational people of faith' unit. These lessons inspire pupils to be strong and resilient in the face of difficulties and inequalities.
- **Creativity:** The 'spirited arts' unit focusses on exploring spirituality in artwork. Pupils are expected to make a piece of artwork by the end of the unit on a title of their choosing.
- **Positivity:** Pupils study the lives of religious figures such as Jesus, Guru Nanak and the Prophet Muhammad. Pupils are tasked to explain where the following people gained their strength from and then consider their own source of positivity.
- Pupils also learn about charities and organisations that challenge inequalities worldwide and how they can aid in social reform.
- **Integrity:** In the ethics unit, pupils view the importance of integrity and learn what it means to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss previous misconceptions about religions and religious practices and where such misconceptions stem from.
- **Aspiration:** Pupils are taught to explore and be the best they can be. The RS curriculum lends itself to opportunities for guest speakers and careers that stem from this subject. Interchangeable and valuable skills such as problem solving, expression and communication, empathy and evaluation are at the forefront of the curriculum.
- **Empathy:** Pupils learn about crime and punishment, human rights, inequalities and poverty in RS. Pupils are asked to record their views on these social issues and how they would respond in such situations. Pupils also learn how to be a part of the solution through lessons on 'Jihad' and other religious practices

Curriculum Principles

Sequencing, Learning and Assessment

Our curriculum has been structured to consider the cognitive science of how we learn. Key knowledge is covered sequentially and deliberately revisited and built upon. Spaced practice and retrieval are a feature of the curriculum structure.

This is further reinforced by:

- **Learning Challenge:** a purely formative assessment to help evaluate, and then reshape learning and address misconceptions at the end of each unit.
- **Learning Consolidation:** a summative assessment, taken at a planned interval from the end of the unit, to help evaluate retention of learning in the long-term memory.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is developed throughout the curriculum with deliberate opportunities for all pupils (but especially disadvantaged pupils) to experience aspects of the taught curriculum through trips, events and activities and broaden their horizons.

For example:

Careers and employability: Pupils review the skills/knowledge they have gained at the end of each unit and apply them to a career that requires those skills and or knowledge. For example, pupils may learn about the role and responsibility of a hospice worker after a unit on Euthanasia.

Community cohesion and trips: Pupils are given the opportunity to access religious places of worship. This is done on a local level for pupils to appreciate the diverse community they live/study in and promote social cohesion.

Outreach: Pupils run a fundraiser to support a cause they feel passionate about.

Religious festival assembly: Religious pupils create a video collage of what a religious festival mean to them and how it is celebrated in their households/cultures.

Guest speakers: External speakers are invited to present to our pupils. Religious representatives will develop pupil understanding of religious belief and practices. Religious professionals will also be invited to explain the modern-day issues they may face as a practicing professional and possible solutions.

Equality

We want our curriculum to reflect what it means to be a young, British woman today; for our pupils to know about the struggle and sacrifice that has led to the freedom and opportunity they have. We want them to know about their heritage and culture, and that of others in our community, enabling them to celebrate it and contribute to the progress of democracy as global citizens. We therefore regularly review and consult on the equality of our curriculum.

For example:

Religious Education naturally lends itself to a curriculum filled with opportunities to showcase equality. Pupils discuss views around traditional and modern family and gender roles, sexism, human rights and causes of crime including social and financial reasons amongst other topics.

Inspirational People of Faith Unit

Pupils study an entire unit on the struggles faced by religious people in their fight for social justice. They study the likes of Malala Yousafzai as a female education activist, and other figures that are relevant to their context. Pupil are inspired to acknowledge other social issues and how we can be part of the solution.

Religious Practices Units	Pupils learn the importance of equality from six world religions and a non-religious perspective in their Religious Education lessons. For example, pupils study 'Zakah' (charity) as a fundamental practice for Muslims to promote social equality.
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Careers and Employability

To support our pupils growing understanding of how our subject might support them with employment, we plan in explicit links between their subject area and possible career pathways. Examples of the careers we highlight are:

Social worker
 Journalist
 Midwife
 Hospice Worker
 Lawyer
 Author
 Politician
 Public relations officer
 Tour guide
 Chaplain

KS3 - AT A GLANCE

	AUT 1 (6)	AUT 2 (8)	SPR 1 (5)	SPR 2 (6)	SUM 1 (6)	SUM 2 (8)
Year 7	Does God exist?		Christianity: the basics	Judaism: the basics	Eastern Religions	The Life of Jesus
Year 8	Inspirational People of Faith	Islam: the basics	An introduction to ethics: theories	Spirited Arts: the basics of spirituality	An introduction to philosophy: Ultimate Questions	Image of God: the basics of philosophy
Year 9	An introduction to ethics: theories	An introduction to Islam	Inspirational People of Faith	Humanism	An introduction to Christianity	War and Peace

NOTES

- **RED** = Needed for GCSE (Religions, ethics and peace and conflict)
- **BLUE** = Requirement/recommendations of locally agreed syllabus of Nottinghamshire 2021-2025
- Units taught in year 9 (2022) will have more depth than those taught in year 8.