



## Religious Education

### Curriculum Philosophy

Religious education is a core subject and reflects the **distinctive Christian ethos** and **spiritual DNA** of the St George's School community. It is the aim of the Religious Education Department to **promote Christian values consistently** amongst students, but without any expectation that they should belong to a denomination or faith. Religious education is the most human of the humanities and in turn it **supports community cohesion** and the **development of SMSC** (Social Moral Spiritual Cultural) and **Fundamental British Values**. Students grapple with the biggest questions about our existence, how we should live and how our society should be. Religious education **encourages curiosity, empathy and dialogue** across all sections of society, both locally and globally.

The RE classroom provides the perfect environment for **debate, questioning** and **critical analysis** of some of the most **complex, fascinating** and **perplexing areas** of the human experience: love, death, emotion, sexuality, crime, social justice and the environment, whilst presenting opportunities for **personal reflection** and **spiritual development**. It offers students an **insight into current affairs** and allows them to **explore different perspectives** through **understanding and tolerance**. As an interdisciplinary subject, combining elements of philosophy, literacy, sociology, language and science, RE plays a vital role in underpinning a broad and balanced curriculum and helping students see their **learning in the world around them**.

Finally, RE also has a unique scope to help students **make sense of their own lives** and their **own worldview**. It is a subject which truly embodies our ethos, inspiring our young people to believe, achieve and care through learning about and from religion.

**Our uniting scripture is "John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."**

Our RE curriculum engages, inspires, challenges and encourages pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to **answer perplexing questions**, which they will take with them in life beyond the classroom. As a subject, RE contributes significantly to the **Christian ethos** of the school and enables pupils to have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of God by **asking deep and searching questions** about their own faith and beliefs, as well as those of others. The teaching of RE makes links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of a range of faiths and worldviews, which is vital in helping to **identify and develop responsibility and respect** for all aspects of **diversity**, fully preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

**In order to achieve a true understanding of RE, topics have been intelligently sequenced based on the following rationale:**

- **Rigour** and **challenge** develops through the key stages and it has been coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulative knowledge. This means that students extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of a **range of religions and other world views** throughout the key stages.
- The RE curriculum is built upon **developing religious literacy** right from Y7. Students are introduced to key vocabulary in their knowledge organisers. This knowledge is revisited and reinforced in every single lesson, through researched retrieval and retention. It is then applied in a variety of different contexts in order to increase retention and flexibility of application. Vocabulary deconstruction, analysing meaning and links, and **exploring connections to the wider world** are vital in preventing common misconceptions. This allows students to produce oral and written responses which use **higher order thinking skills**, such as **analysis, evaluation and interpretation**.
- By studying **religion within a Christian context**, and reflecting the **Anglican tradition of our school**, we aim to provide **exciting** learning experiences and sequenced learning, reaching for the highest standards of religious literacy and academic rigour. Religious Education is taught in line with the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement. Our aims are expressed in the words of Lord Runcie: *"Nourish those of the faith; Encourage those of other faiths; Challenge those who have no faith."* (The Way Ahead, Archbishop's Council 2001).

**The RE curriculum will address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in students' knowledge and skills:**

- The RE curriculum will **expose** students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds to religious and non-religious traditions other than their own, **widening their scope of social understanding and diversity**. By studying a **range of world faiths and worldviews**, it provides students with the knowledge and skills to **flourish** both within their own community and as members of a diverse and global society.
- We recognise that not all students will join St George's from a church primary. In support of this, we begin our journey by asking the questions **'what does it mean to belong?'** and **'why are beliefs and values important to me and others?'**. By exposing the students to the main religions, we provide them with the core knowledge that is needed to progress further as a **compassionate member of society**.
- The RE curriculum will give students a **safe space to discuss their own beliefs and values**. This in turn, means that the teacher and other students can address misconceptions through a **meaningful and informed dialogue**.

## **We fully believe RE can contribute to the personal development of students at St George's:**

- A true love of RE involves learning about **various cultures** and we fully believe that as a subject it can contribute to the **personal development** of our students at St George's. We therefore **teach beyond the specification requirements**, but do ensure students are well prepared to be successful in their GCSE examinations. We have chosen to study **Buddhism** alongside **Christianity** at GCSE level, presenting pupils with a **diverse outlook** at two major world faiths, whilst also allowing them to explore their own views in relation to the **divine, spiritual** and **scientific** aspects of the world around us.
- It provides opportunities for students within each scheme of work to **discuss** and **critically reflect** upon key questions of **meaning, philosophy** and **truth**, such as the origins of the universe, life after death and beliefs about God.
- It will allow students to consider the **relationship between religion and cultures**, and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices. The teacher will always make the class aware of the **diversity**, as well as **sensitivity** to the questions and **challenges** that different views and cultures can present. By learning about a wide range of world faiths and world views, this will **promote racial and interfaith harmony** and **respect for all; combat prejudice and discrimination**, and **promote awareness** of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.
- It will provide opportunities for **social development**, allowing students to **investigate** social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the **diversity of viewpoints** within and between religions, as well as the **common ground** between religions.
- By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils will be familiar with the **origins** and **history** of Christianity as well as some of the other major world religions. Pupils will be able to describe a range of religious concepts including the practices of **worship** and **pilgrimage**, as well as religious **rites of passage** and **expressions of faith**. Pupils will understand the significance of **religious rules** such as 'The Ten Commandments' and 'The Five Pillars of Islam' and their lasting importance in contemporary society. Pupils will also develop confidence in becoming **courageous advocates, challenging injustice** and suffering in the world and through personal experience, **foster empathy** and **tolerance** within a diverse world. Through the teaching of stewardship, pupils will **develop care and respect for each other and the world** in which they live. Teaching of the '**Golden Rule**', is of vital importance at St Georges, within Christianity and is upheld by all religions, and other religious stories and parables will instil and reinforce the qualities of **kindness** and **tolerance** and support the need for **equality** for all.
- By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils will demonstrate a deeper understanding of **Christian** and **Buddhist beliefs, teachings**, and **practices** and how these can differ depending on denomination. Pupils will identify how each faith might view the world around them, as well as the **values required to live out their lives as part of a religious community**. Pupils will **confidently articulate justified opinions** on ethical issues, giving religious, non-religious and personal views. Pupils will be able to explain in detail how religious teachings in both Christianity and Buddhism can be applied to **contemporary moral issues** such as euthanasia, abortion, abuse of the world and the use of corporal and capital punishment. Students will know how religious organisations support the global problems of injustice and poverty and link religious teachings to these issues.

**At KS3 and KS4, our belief is that homework should be focused on revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of retrieval practices.**

- At Key Stage 3, pupils will gain an understanding of **subject specific key terms** through Knowledge Organiser homework. These terms will be highlighted during their curriculum time and their knowledge will be expanded upon by putting these into context and practice. Recall quizzes and glossary tasks aim to consolidate this knowledge and understanding in preparation for assessment.
- At Key Stage 4 pupils will also gain an understanding of **subject specific key terms** relevant for the GCSE specification. These terms will be a focus of homework and are required in order for pupils to be able to fully engage with GCSE style questions.

## Curriculum Sequencing

All children are entitled to a curriculum and to the powerful knowledge that will open doors and maximise their life chances. Below is a high-level overview of the critical knowledge children will learn in this particular subject, at each key stage from Year 7 through to Year 11, in order to equip students with the cultural capital they need to succeed in life. The curriculum is planned vertically and horizontally giving thought to the optimum knowledge sequence for building secure schema.

|               |               | <b>Sequencing</b>  |
|---------------|---------------|--|
| <b>Year 7</b> | <b>Term 1</b> | <p><b>What does it mean to belong?</b> An introduction to Religious Education; the difference between religious and worldviews. The impact of belonging and the importance of community as a Christian value.</p> <p><b>What does it mean to be a person of faith?</b> Core beliefs and concepts of the Abrahamic and Dharmic faiths.</p>  |
|               | <b>Term 2</b> | <p><b>What does it mean to have affirmation of faith?</b> The purpose of faith - focusing on Jewish beliefs and customs. What can be gained from pilgrimage - what, where and why?</p> <p><b>Dharmic religions.</b> Central Hindu beliefs, pluralism and non-theistic religions: Buddhism.</p>   |
|               | <b>Term 3</b> | <p><b>Where in the world is Christianity?</b> Who was Jesus? Christianity as a global community. Who is Jesus to non-Christians?</p> <p><b>Where in the world is Islam?</b> Core beliefs and the Five Pillars. Who was Muhammad? Expressions of faith; the mosque, prayer and wudu.</p>  |
| <b>Year 8</b> | <b>Term 1</b> | <p><b>Why do people believe in God?</b> The nature of God for Christians, the Teleological Argument, religious experience, miracles. The problem of evil &amp; suffering and is God dead?</p> <p><b>Is death the end?</b> Death &amp; the afterlife, different beliefs and responses from the religious, non-religious and the media.</p>  |
|               | <b>Term 2</b> | <p><b>What does it mean to be a good steward?</b> Stewardship, dominion, the impact of human action on our planet and the response of faith communities to the abuse of the planet.</p> <p><b>Is it fair?</b> Fair treatment of others; prejudice &amp; discrimination. Influence of the media, the impact of charity (Christian Aid, Fairtrade), understanding human rights &amp; social justice.</p> |
|               | <b>Term 3</b> | <p><b>Do sacred texts enable response in times of crisis?</b> Christian use and understanding of the Bible. The influence of sacred texts on behaviour and their relevance today.</p> <p><b>What happens when faith and courage collide?</b> Courage and faith, Christian persecution, Martyrdom, Gandhi, Maximilian Kolbe, Malala Yousafzai, Malcolm X, Desmond Doss, Jesus.</p>                      |

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| Year 9  | Term 1 | <p><b>How visible are religious beliefs and worldviews?</b> Role of religion in society today, faith in everyday life, changing attitudes to faith including celebrity culture. How do we know what is true? Socratic questioning and the love of wisdom.</p> <p><b>What really matters in the journey of life?</b> Rites of passage: birth, Bar and Bat Mitzvah, funerals, cycle of time; samsara and rejection of materialistic life.</p>  |
|         | Term 2 | <p><b>Where in the world is Judaism?</b> Who were the Jews? Covenant and the promised land. Being a British Jew, blessings and gratitudes.</p> <p><b>How and why should we commemorate the Holocaust?</b> Who were the six million? What was the Holocaust? Why the Jews? What was Jewish life like during the Holocaust? Shoah - how and why should it be remembered?</p>   |
|         | Term 3 | <p><b>Christianity Beliefs: Key beliefs:</b> Nature of God, trinity, Creation, Incarnation, Redemption, Life after death.</p> <p><b>Christianity Beliefs: Jesus and salvation:</b> incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Original sin, means of salvation, salvation.</p>  |
| Year 10 | Term 1 | <p><b>Christianity Practices: Worship and festivals:</b> Worship; prayer, formal and informal, Lord's Prayer, sacraments, pilgrimage, festivals; Christmas and Easter.</p> <p><b>Christianity Practices: Role of the church:</b> food banks, street pastors, place of mission and Church growth, the worldwide church; reconciliation, persecution, the Church's response to world poverty..</p>   |
|         | Term 2 | <p><b>Buddhist Beliefs: Key beliefs:</b> The birth of the Buddha, the four sights, the Buddha's ascetic life, enlightenment, the Dhamma, the concept of dependent arising, the three marks of existence: dukkha, anicca and anatta, the noble truths, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, the Arhat and the Bodhisattva, Pure Land Buddhism.</p> <p><b>Buddhist practices: (Pt 1) Worship:</b> Worship, Meditation (Samantha &amp; Vipassana), Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning..</p>              |
|         | Term 3 | <p><b>Buddhist practices: (Pt2) Festivals:</b> Wesak and Parinirvana Day, kamma and rebirth, compassion (karuna), loving kindness (metta), the five moral precepts and the six perfections.</p> <p><b>Thematic Studies: Crime and punishment:</b> What is crime and punishment? Reasons for crime, attitudes to lawbreakers and types of crime, the aims of punishment, suffering, the treatment of criminals; prison, corporal punishment and community service, religious attitudes to forgiveness, corporal punishment, capital punishment.</p> |

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| Y 11 | Term 1 | <p><b>Thematic Studies: Peace and Conflict:</b> The meaning and significance of: peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, violence, including violent protest, terrorism, reasons for war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation. The just war theory, including the criteria for a just war, Holy war, Pacifism.</p> <p><b>Thematic Studies: Relationships and families (Pt 1):</b> Human sexuality, sex before and outside of marriage, contraception and family planning.</p>  |
|      | Term 2 | <p><b>Thematic Studies: Relationships and families (Pt 2):</b> Marriage, divorce and remarriage, the nature and purpose of families, religious attitudes to gender equality.</p> <p><b>Thematic Studies: Religion and life:</b> The origins of the universe, the value of the world, the use and abuse of the environment, pollution, the use and abuse of animals. Abortion, euthanasia, death and the afterlife.</p>  |
|      | Term 3 | <p><b>Exam practice:</b> Revision of paper 1 and paper 2 topics in relation to exam preparation and technique. Skills required to answer each style of exam question to be reviewed.</p> <p><b>Questions 1-4: Knowledge and understanding:</b> Recall of key terms and key concepts, making clear and concise points without detailing too much information, the influence of religion or similarities/differences between the two, developing points in response and supporting with a relevant source of wisdom and authority.</p> <p><b>Question 5: Analytical and evaluative skills:</b> Deconstruction of the statement given and focusing an answer, including different viewpoints to support and argue against, writing persuasively, develop both arguments to show a logical chain of reasoning, application of religious arguments in support, evaluation focusing on judgement and the strength of arguments presented, as well as reaching a justified conclusion.</p> <p>Areas of <b>difficulty and misconception within each unit</b> to be targeted through revision:</p> <p><b>Paper 1 - Christianity:</b> The Trinity, salvation, worship, holy communion, mission and evangelism, reconciliation.</p> <p><b>Paper 1 - Buddhism:</b> Three marks of existence (dukkha, anicca, anatta), dependent arising, pure land, arhat and bodhisattvas, meditation (differences).</p> <p><b>Paper 2 - Thematic Studies:</b> The treatment of criminals, community service, reconciliation, just war theory, holy war, family planning, divorce, nature and purpose of families, religious attitudes to gender equality, the value of the world, use and abuse of the environment, euthanasia.</p> |