



## 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. 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.

Alongside this, it provides huge scope for debate, questioning and critical analysis of some of the most complex, fascinating and perplexing areas of the human experience: love, death, violence, the environment, sexuality, crime, emotion and social justice. It provides students with 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 (to name a few); 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 perspectives, and to provide them with a space where they can develop spiritually and emotionally. It is a subject which truly embodies our ethos, inspiring children to believe, achieve and care through learning about, and from, religion.

The Religious Education curriculum engages, inspires, challenges and encourages pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to answer perplexing questions. Religious Education 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 the beliefs, faith and opinions of others. The teaching of RE makes links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of a range of faiths and worldviews. The RE curriculum will help identify and develop responsibility and respect for all aspects of diversity and fully prepare 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 on a daily basis, 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 high 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, quoted in *The Way Ahead* (Archbishop's Council 2001): "Nourish those of the faith; Encourage those of other faiths; Challenge those who have no faith."

**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. As a consequence, we begin our journey by asking the question 'why are beliefs and values important to me and others?' to address any gaps in the students' knowledge and skills. 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 which they may not have at home. 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:**

- 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. The RE curriculum allows 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 prayer and worship, as well as key festivals and rites of passage. 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 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 places of religious significance around the world, consider their importance historically, and as places of pilgrimage. 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 revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of retrieval practices.**

**Opportunities are built in to make links to the world of work to enhance the careers, advice and guidance that students are exposed to:**

- Students will understand how we should treat everyone respectfully e.g. in Y8, they explore religious teachings on equality and fairness. Staff will make it clear to students that by showing respect to all, we are preparing them for the world of work and instilling in them the values that they will need in order to work in a diverse workplace.
- Students will understand the purpose behind why they learn about a range of religions and philosophical concepts. This understanding and acceptance may inspire them to pursue a career in a field where this knowledge could be beneficial; for example a career working in public service; e.g. police officers, doctors, nurses would require a clear understanding of the religious beliefs of the communities they serve. Careers events and guidance will support pupils in understanding how studying RE could help them in their future careers.
- As part of their RE curriculum, students will acquire cross-curricular skills such as the ability to analyse, problem solve, write and speak eloquently. These skills practiced within the study of RE are interchangeable and transferrable, setting pupils up for a place at university or within their chosen career path.

**A true love of RE involves learning about various cultural domains. We teach beyond the specification requirements, but do ensure students are well prepared to be successful in GCSE examinations:**

- The GCSE RE specification is centred around two religions: Christianity and Buddhism. Therefore, it is important that the curriculum provides the building blocks for the students to be successful in their GCSE. This is done through not only revisiting key concepts of the religion i.e. the concept of the Trinity, but also allowing students to learn outside of the GCSE specification requirements. For example, they explore how belief about the nature of God is expressed through art in Christianity. This allows students to see each religion as a living, diverse faith. Core beliefs and practices of Christianity that are within the GCSE specification are embedded within day to day life of the academy. Pupils can learn about key concepts through our core values and through morning worship. This not only gives pupils additional knowledge, but also provides them with an experience of how faith can impact on an individual and a community.
- One of the key roles of RE in schools is to support community cohesion and the development of SMSC (Social Moral Spiritual Cultural) and Fundamental British Values. This is evidenced in the schemes of work, as each lesson is connected to encouraging the development of at least one aspect of SMSC. For example in Y7, so they fully understand that for many, religion is an integral part of their identity and culture, they explore the British values under the context of how religious teachings support and uphold them.

## 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.

		Sequencing
Year 7	Term 1	<b>What does it mean to belong?</b> What do we mean by belief and worldviews? Identity, belonging and community; focus on Christianity. <b>What does it mean to be a person of faith?</b> The Abrahamic faiths, Core beliefs of the Abrahamic faiths. Core beliefs of the Dharmic faiths.
	Term 2	<b>What does it mean to have affirmation of faith? (Places and actions)</b> Religious festivals including Shabbat, Pesach. Pilgrimage sites and the importance of Jerusalem.
	Term 3	<b>Where in the world is Christianity?</b> Who was Jesus; birth narratives, Jesus as a teacher including messianic prophecies. Christianity as a global community; who is Jesus to non-Christians? <b>Where in the world is Islam?</b> Core beliefs; Muhammad, the five pillars of Islam, the mosque.
Year 8	Term 1	<b>Where is God?</b> The nature of God, the teleological argument, the cosmological argument, religious experience, miracles, the resurrection, evil & suffering. <b>Is death the end?</b> Death & the afterlife, different religious beliefs.
	Term 2	<b>What does it mean to be a good steward?</b> Stewardship, dominion, different religious beliefs in response to stewardship. <b>Is life always fair?</b> Prejudice and discrimination, equality and Christianity, Social cohesion, charity and Fairtrade.
	Term 3	<b>Do sacred texts enable response in times of crisis?</b> Support in times of crisis, Christian use and understanding of the Bible, Biblical influences of behaviour and crisis response. <b>What does it mean to be a hero?</b> Courage and faith, Christian persecution, Martyrdom, Gandhi, Maximilian Kolbe, Malala Yousafzai, Malcolm X, Desmond Doss, Jesus.
Year 9	Term 1	<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. <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.
	Term 2	<b>What makes a good life?</b> What is a good life? Utilitarianism, virtue ethics, divine commands, situation ethics, religion and morality. <b>Why do we suffer?</b> Inconsistent triad, theodicies: soul making, free will and Augustine, Buddhism and the origin of suffering and how to end suffering. How does suffering lead to a rejection of God?
	Term 3	TBC – <b>Where in the world is Judaism?</b> / <b>Why should we challenge holocaust and genocide denial?</b>

Year 10	Term 1	<b>Christianity Beliefs: Key beliefs:</b> Nature of God, trinity, Creation, Incarnation, Redemption, Life after death. <b>Jesus and salvation:</b> incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Original sin, means of salvation, salvation.
	Term 2	<b>Christianity practices: Worship and festivals:</b> Worship; prayer, formal and informal, Lord's Prayer, sacraments, pilgrimage. <b>Role of the church:</b> food banks, street pastors, place of mission and church growth, the worldwide church; reconciliation, persecution, charity. <b>Buddhist Beliefs: Key beliefs:</b> Dhamma, dependent arising, three marks of existence, human personality, human destiny. The Buddha and the four noble truths: Buddha's birth, four sights, ascetic life, enlightenment. Four noble truths: dukkha, samudaya, tanha, magga.
	Term 3	<b>Buddhist practices: Worship and festivals:</b> Places of worship including temples, shrines, puja, meditation (different types) ceremonies, rituals, festivals and retreats.
Y 11	Term 1	<b>Thematic Studies: Relationships and families.</b> Human sexuality, sex before and outside of marriage, contraception and family planning, marriage, divorce and remarriage, the nature and purpose of families, religious attitudes to gender equality. <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.
	Term 2	<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. <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.
	Term 3	<b>Revision/ additional time for content</b>