

RE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW **TWY**

Intent

Subject specific knowledge and content

Our RE curriculum aims to develop students as curious, evaluative and empathetic thinkers who are able to live alongside people of a variety of faiths because they have a deep understanding of the multiplicity and complexity that exists within the concepts of God, religion, belief and practice. The knowledge and skills they will learn will equip them to become scholarly theologians.

The RE curriculum begins by providing students with an in-depth theological understanding of the concept of God across the dharmic religions as well as Judaism. This focused and detailed curriculum provides the foundation for students to then progress into examining the beliefs and practices of two major world religions (Christianity and Islam) and apply an understanding of these beliefs to a range of philosophical and ethical issues (marriage & the family, God & revelation, religion & life, peace & conflict, crime & punishment).

By initially focusing the curriculum on the concept of God, we challenge students to immediately see the diversity and complexity of understandings of God in the world around them and they encounter the discipline of theology in depth and in different contexts. By focusing on the singular concept across different faiths, they are exposed to diversity and complexity. As students begin the GCSE curriculum, we have then chosen to focus on the beliefs and practices of Islam and Christianity because: the choice reflects the demographic of the UK as they are the largest two religions in practised in the UK; study of Christianity helps develop students' understanding of our foundations as a Church of England Trust; we believe it is important to accurately educate students about Islam so they are able to critically recognise the invalidity of many misconceptions about this religion that exist within society, particularly in the last decade.

Subject specific skills:

In RE, we teach a variety of subject-specific skills which are represented in the assessment objectives that run throughout our curriculum:

Assessment Objective	Key Skills
AO1: Knowledge and understanding: - Influence and impact on individuals, communities and society	Explanation – giving reasons for beliefs/actions Explanation of influence – giving actions as a result of beliefs Application – giving examples of practices Empathy – considering impact
AO1: Knowledge and understanding: - Similarities and differences	Comparison – within and between religion Explanation – reasons for differences/similarities
AO1: Knowledge and understanding: - Sources of authority	Textual analysis (explanation) – explanation of meaning
AO2: Analysis and evaluation	Evaluation – considering divergent views and making judgements based on evidence/clear argument Critical enquiry/curiosity – discussion and debate provoked by analysis of content

How do students 'get better' at RE?*

In all year groups, alongside the skills and knowledge gained when studying RE, students should develop **empathy** and **curiosity** towards individuals, communities and societies.

Year 7

A year 7 student should have a deep knowledge of the concept of God in Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism whereas, in when learning about Buddhism, students will explore the concept of enlightenment. They will be able to relate and contrast how this concept manifests in other beliefs, practices and traditions within and between the religions. Each student should have a secure ability to explain reasons for diverse beliefs, and gain confidence in understanding and interpreting religious texts as a source of authority. Students will begin evaluating and analysing different beliefs and practices within and between these religions.

Year 8

A Year 8 student should have detailed knowledge of key beliefs and practices in Christianity. Each student should be able to:

- Explain these beliefs and practices: - reasons for them; how they influence and impact believers; as well as draw out the similarities and differences of how these are practiced within the faith tradition.
- Reference, interpret and apply scripture as a source of authority to relevant beliefs and practices.
- Analyse and evaluate beliefs, teachings and practices by reaching justified judgements.

Year 9

A Year 9 student should have detailed knowledge of key beliefs and practices in Islam. Each student should be able to:

- Explain these beliefs and practices: - reasons for them; how they influence and impact believers; as well as draw out the similarities and differences of how these are practiced within the faith tradition.
- Reference, interpret and apply scripture as a source of authority to relevant beliefs and practices.
- Analyse and evaluate beliefs, teachings and practices by reaching justified judgements.

In year 9, students will also have the opportunity to apply Christian and Muslim beliefs to contemporary, philosophical and ethical issues.

Year 10

A Year 10 student should have a detailed knowledge of the application of key beliefs in the lives of Christians and Muslims, and how they manifest in their practices and attitudes to contemporary, philosophical and ethical issues. Each student should have an advanced ability to explain reasons for and compare religious practices and ethical attitudes, using a wide range of relevant evidence, as well as a secure ability to evaluate a variety of religious practices and attitudes.

KS5 - In RE A Level we seek to establish in the student an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion and worldviews; in order to develop systematic knowledge and understanding of religious and philosophical thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies.

Legal and national framework for RE:

Religious Education is a statutory subject for all pupils aged between 5-19 years and we have a duty to provide RE in line with the National Curriculum requirement to offer a balanced and broadly-based curriculum. As an academy, we are not compelled to use the locally agreed syllabus (LAS) for RE however as a Trust we still engage with our borough schools to consult on the LAS and are aware of its content when planning our own curriculum. (See LAS [here](#)).

RE's place in the wider school curriculum

The RE curriculum has an important role within the wider school curriculum. As a Church of England Trust, the RE curriculum links to the wider school ethos and structures. In particular, RE has a large role to play in the school SMSC policy as it provides students with understanding of many of our trust practices (e.g. assemblies and tutor times), provides opportunities for spiritual reflection by evaluating philosophical questions (e.g. is there a life after death), provides students with understanding of a range of cultures, develops students into human beings able to live and be tolerant in a diverse society. The RE departments work closely with other Humanities departments in acknowledgement of the cross-curricular skills we share and therefore use joined up techniques to develop these e.g. evaluation. As with all subjects across the Trust, the RE curriculum has an important part to play in developing students' literacy skills, and therefore we include whole school strategies in our curriculum.

Implementation

Key principles of unit planning

Knowledge sequencing:

Skills and knowledge are planned into the curriculum using a spiral approach. We teach key beliefs of a religion before key practices so that students understand the reasons behind what people do. This approach of teaching beliefs and practices is revisited when students encounter new religions and worldviews so that these foundational concepts are understood in greater detail as they progress through the curriculum in a spiralled approach.

In year 7, we teach students we group the teaching of Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism to reinforce students' understanding of these religions and their common concepts and geographical roots. This is followed by teaching of Judaism and then a broader look at a variety of New Religious Movements. In year 8, students begin learning Christian beliefs, teachings and practices which forms the first half of paper one of their RE GCSE. In year 9, students learn Islam beliefs, teachings and practices which forms the second half of paper one of their RE GCSE. In both years, we begin by learning the key beliefs in these religions before introducing knowledge of how these beliefs are put into action with key religious practices. By year 10 then students have a strong foundational knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Islam which allows them to apply their knowledge from these topics to new ethical issues and religious practices, as well as including retrieval practice of the first two topics as we advance through new topics.

Skills sequencing:

As outlined in our 'how do students get better at RE' section above, we do not adopt a hierarchy of command words linked to steps of progress, in each year we develop students subject-specific skills to both support and challenge students appropriately to be equipped with the scholarly skills to become theologians. This is due to our recognition that skills are not discrete entities that are simply 'mastered' in each year, rather, we understand such skills overlap and continually support each other throughout the curriculum.

To become able theologians, students need to be able to explain key beliefs with references to the scriptural sources they have been interpreted from. As their knowledge of these beliefs grow, their ability to compare beliefs both within and between religions will also develop and by requiring comparison with previously learnt concepts, we are supporting students' memory using retrieval practice. In time, students are then able to explain the links and reasoning between 'what someone believes' and 'what they are influenced to do'. Having developed this substantive knowledge of core beliefs and concepts, students are then best able to apply, make judgements and evaluate the impacts, values and importance of these beliefs and concepts as they progress through the curriculum as scholars of RE.

Legal requirements:

The law requires that agreed syllabuses (although as academies we are not bound to follow the Ealing LAS) must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practice of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.' This requirement is reflected in our curriculum choice to teach all six major world faiths (all of which are represented in the UK and London) as well as our choice to study Christianity as one of the two religions required in the AQA GCSE syllabus.

The government outlines a school's duty to 'actively promote' the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and acceptance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Our RE curriculum carries out this duty across many topics: teaching each of the six major world religions to encourage understanding and acceptance of those with many different faiths and beliefs; teaching of the UK law in regards to sexuality, marriage and the family; international law and regulations in relation to war and conflict; individual liberty and respect for the law in crime and punishment. In addition, we cover some topics required by the statutory Relationships and Sex Education, such as different types of family and attitudes to sex and marriage.

Sequencing of RE lessons

RE lessons vary according to their place within the scheme of learning and in order to meet the assessment objectives. However, we often include the following elements in the structure of our lessons, often strategies supported by cognitive science to support students' long-term memories:

- Retrieval practice to recap prior learning at the start of the lesson
- Introduce new content and information
- Application/analysis/evaluation of new content (in context of prior learning)
- AfL throughout, often using MWB and traffic light cards to ensure assessment on the whole class to inform next steps
- Exam practice (at KS4)
- Self assessment of low stakes testing in prep booklets

We support students' literacy using many of the following strategies:

- Toolkits (to aid writing, reading and oracy)
- Key word glossaries and knowledge organisers
- Structured talk
- Class reading and text dependent questions
- Writing frames and sentence parameters
- Modelling and part-modelling answers

- Literacy marking code
- Teacher modelling of tier two and tier three vocabulary

To support the delivery of the curriculum, we update regularly our lessons on COPIA, curriculum overviews by year group, unit planners (outlining assessment objectives) and an assessment planner.

Impact

Key assessment principles

In class, we regularly use low stakes testing to aid students' long term memory. This is largely through recap quizzes as starter tasks, retrieval quizzes in GCSE prep booklets, true and false quizzes, exam question practice in timed condition. For prep, we sometimes use forms quizzes which are self-marking and allow for repeated low-stakes questions and retrieval practice across the curriculum.

At Q2 and Q4, we assess students on cumulative and *substantive** knowledge across each key stage to facilitate recall and develop students' long term memory and learning. We assess students on the skills in line with the key stage they are in (see skills description above). At Q1 and Q3 we use a lighter-touch approach to assess students' knowledge and skills from recent lessons, particularly lighter-touch at KS3 in proportion to our curriculum time.

Summative assessments support students in developing their skills and knowledge because we test them on carefully selected knowledge and skills and we provide students with detailed individual and class feedback based on their WWWs and EBIs. We then create tasks and lessons following this feedback which requires students to redraft and respond to this feedback to ensure they make progress as a result of the assessment. The assessments are taken under exam conditions and so the process of attempting recall supports the transfer of information into the semantic long term memory, and this is reinforced in the feedback lessons which recall the same information following the assessment. The revision booklets, lessons and tasks prior to the assessment also support this consistent recall of information to strengthen students' long term memory. At KS4, our assessments use AQA GCSE exam style questions. At KS3 have used the assessment objectives to design our own exam questions to scaffold and support skill and knowledge acquisition.

Formative assessment is used throughout the curriculum to inform next steps for students and our future curriculum design. This is done by low stakes testing in class which informs the next task and teaching in class, as well as feeding into revision and review lessons in preparation for quarterly assessments. Heads of Department across the Trust also collaboratively review the curriculum following assessment points to adapt and refine the curriculum, target future assessments accurately and identify necessary interventions for sub-groups and classes where necessary. All classroom teachers also perform their own data analysis at quarterly assessment points to identify interventions for individual students, tweak their lessons according to weakness and common areas of misconceptions.

*Language used in reference to Oftsed's 2021 report into research in RE: [Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-series/religious-education)