

## **Religious Studies**

“The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.”

Leicestershire Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2021

### **Intent:**

The Religious Studies curriculum aims to develop a passion for learning, including the study of philosophical, ethical, religious and non-religious worldviews. RS is an essential component of a broad and balanced curriculum, enabling pupils to enter into a rich discourse about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. Pupils are empowered to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions through an open, enquiring and exploratory RS curriculum.

RS allows pupils to explore religious and non-religious beliefs in local, national and global contexts, in order to develop coherent understanding. Pupils approach this through a systematic study of religious worldviews including how beliefs, practices and sources of authority influence and are interpreted by believers. This is interleaved with key thematic study which also includes non-religious world views, whereby pupils explore responses to current affairs and key issues within the dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> century context they find themselves.

From this rich knowledge of religions and worldviews, pupils are able to develop their own understanding of the world and how to live, making sense of the views, understanding the impact on believers’ lives and making connections to their own experiences, as outlined by the Leicestershire Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils will be taught to think critically, so they can leave the school as critical world citizens who do not take all things at face value; this is particularly pertinent with social media and the distribution of ‘fake news’. We also aim for pupils to identify their own worldviews and moral codes, be those religious or non-religious and help them approach life choices with confidence. The curriculum also supports wider school priorities such as SMSC and British Values.

### **Implementation:**

Our teaching is responsive to the needs of our pupils, ensuring that pupils have secure knowledge and understanding of threshold concepts and their real-world application. In Religious Studies, we believe in equipping our pupils with the knowledge to confidently tackle philosophical and ethical questions. To do this, we focus on teaching a knowledge-rich curriculum which develops pupils’ knowledge of key concepts found in religious and non-religious worldviews. Pupils develop their skills to carry out informed debates and analysis of key issues.

Our curriculum offers opportunities to develop and practice knowledge and understanding, using skills of oracy and extended writing. This secures pupils learning, ensuring they can make connections between existing and new knowledge. Our teaching is underpinned by metacognitive behaviours, encouraging and facilitating all pupils to take ownership of their own learning and learn how to know about religion with respect and tolerance. This is done through strategies such as modelling, metacognitive talk, use of concrete examples, appropriate challenge, effective use of vocabulary, coaching style feedback, questioning, independent practice and retrieval.

The curriculum is designed to ensure coherent understanding of world religions by systematically studying religious world views and comparing different traditions including non-religious world views within thematic study. By ensuring each topic is well sequenced with knowledge building, and topics being interleaved between systematic and thematic study, pupils can make sense of the world, understand the impact of belief and make connections between their own learning and experiences of the world.

### Key Skills

Explanation	Discussion	Enquiry	Evaluation	Analysis
Being able to clearly explain key ideas using evidence and reasoning A key part of the end of topic assessment is explanation	Critically analysing key ideas and sharing them with the class in a clear manner Debating different viewpoints on current affairs and wider issues	Examining concepts and ideas Asking probing questions Investigating key themes from different religions Reflect on the three strands from the LAS- believing, expressing and living	Assessing both sides of the argument and reaching a clear conclusion Considering different points of view and critiquing the arguments	Breaking down concepts into their key components and examining these Analysing key texts from religion Analysing sources

**Key Stage 3:** The below is for the current Y7.

Our curriculum is taught with a mixture of systematic study of religion and thematic learning, giving pupils the chance to learn, use and compare new concepts as well as enhance their understanding and skills in the wider world. These transferable skills will support study of the discipline at both Key Stage 4 and 5.

	<u>Term 1</u>	<u>Term 2</u>	<u>Term 3</u>
<b>Year 7 <u>2023-24</u></b>	How did we get here?	What is the role of Jesus Christ in Christianity?	What do we mean by Sanatan Dharma?
<b>Year 8 <u>2024-25</u></b>	How should we treat...? The environment, animals, humans	What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?	What does it mean to be ethical? Theories
<b>Year 9 <u>2025-26</u></b>	How do we act in an ethical way? Applied	Do we need to prove the existence of God?	What do we mean by Sikhi?

### KS3 Assessment

At Key Stage 3 each topic is one term in length and pupils are assessed every half term to assess their knowledge, understanding and evaluation skills. All topics will have age specific topic-based exemplars and grade descriptors.

All topics will have exemplars and grade descriptors.

This assessment will take the form of:

A piece of extended writing mid-term which is usually an evaluation question. These are marked against age specific topic-based grade descriptors to give a grade from Secure Plus (S+) to Beginning (B).

A multiple choice quiz out of 10 completed as an OMR

An End of Topic Test which comprises of multiple choice, shorter knowledge or understanding question(s) and an evaluation extended writing piece. All assessments are out of 22. There will be more knowledge questions for Y7 and less marks for an evaluation question, with the knowledge questions reducing in Y8 and then Y9 to give more marks for evaluative essay, thus shifting the focus to higher-level thinking skills.

The data from these assessments is used to inform the data snapshots which alongside an effort level, is reported to parents.

### Key Stage 4

<u>Year 10</u>  CORE RE (non examined)	Topic 1  Ultimate questions	Topic 2  Religion and medical ethics	Topic 3  Religion and the media	Topic 4  Ethics and religion in sports and leisure  Religion and human rights
Year 11  CORE RE (non examined)	Topic 1  Ethics	Topic 2  Religion and human rights	Topic 3  Capital punishment	Topic 4  Ethics and religion in sports and leisure

Those pupils who opt to study the GCSE in Religious Studies complete AQA Route A through the study of Buddhism and Christianity for Paper 1, and Non-Textual Thematic Studies for Paper 2, completing Themes A, B, D and E.

Pupils receive three lessons a week, beginning in Year 10. The curriculum is interleaved between the Study of Religions and Thematic Studies papers to allow for maximum engagement and to ensure pupils can apply concepts to contemporary issues. The skills at GCSE have been developed during KS3 and then extended in KS4, with a greater focus on using evidence for logical chains of reasoning and evaluation to ensure justification of arguments.

#### **KS4 Assessment**

Over the GCSE course, pupils have eight end of topic tests to assess their progress and inform data snapshots. They also answer one 12-mark evaluation question each topic, which is teacher assessed and a range of lower mark answers which are self-assessed using success criteria and model answers.

Pupils also complete one trial examination per year. This data is reported to parents.

We use AQA past paper questions with their mark schemes to assess pupils learning and grade these from 9-1 using grade boundaries from AQA. The department often peer mark and the team have partaken in training with AQA to ensure confidence in assessing. Every lesson includes retrieval practice as per our focus on metacognition, and these often also consider Agarwal's idea that higher level questioning can be included in retrieval practice.

Every lesson includes retrieval practice as per our focus on metacognition, and these often also consider Agarwal's idea that higher level questioning can be included in retrieval practice.

#### **Core RS Please adapt to your school setting**

All pupils must follow a Religious Studies course in Key Stage 4, and this presents an opportunity to teach Religion, Philosophy and Ethics to our cohorts in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. At present, each school will teach their own curriculum. These may include but are not limited to: What do we mean by reality? Relationships and the Family; Religion and the Media; War and Pacifism; Medical Ethics; Life After Death and Attitudes towards the use of Drugs. Pupils will be given an effort grade at each data snapshot.

Pupils are encouraged to engage and reflect with their own beliefs and those which differ with deep respect. They are expected to make rigorous comparisons between beliefs to facilitate a greater tolerance for beliefs which differ from their own. Pupils are also expected to make historical and cultural connections between religious viewpoints and their origins which shows how these beliefs are interconnected.

Pupils are provided with the opportunity to analyse the validity of viewpoints and how persuasive they find them. They are asked to justify their viewpoints on ethical dilemmas showing that they have considered a variety of religious and non-religious viewpoints

## Key Stage 5- BEA and BCSF

### OCR Religious Studies- Philosophy, Ethics, and Development in Christian Thought

(Outline below as used by BEA)

Year 12	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
APO Ethics and Development in Christian Thought	Normative Ethical Theories- Natural Law; Situation Ethics; Utilitarianism	Normative Ethical Theories- Kantian Ethics Applied Ethics- Business Ethics; Euthanasia Development in Christian Thought- Person of Jesus Christ	Development in Christian Thought – The Person of Jesus Christ Christian Moral Principles Christian Moral Action
JDU Philosophy and Development in Christian Thought	Philosophy- Ancient Philosophical Influences Plato and Aristotle Soul Mind and Body Development in Christian Thought - Augustine's Teaching on Human Nature	Philosophy- Arguments for the Existence of God Development in Christian Thought – Knowledge of God's Existence Philosophy- The Problem of Evil	Development in Christian Thought – Death and the Afterlife Philosophy Religious Experience
Year 13	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
APO Ethics and Development in Christian Thought	Ethics- Conscience Meta Ethics Development in Christian Thought- Gender and Society Gender and Theology	Development in Christian Thought- Gender and Theology Liberation Theology Applied Ethics- Sexual Ethics	Revision and A Level Examinations
JDU Philosophy and Development in Christian Thought	Philosophy- Religious Language: Negative, Analogical or Symbolic Religious Language: Twentieth century perspectives and philosophical comparisons Development in Christian Thought- Attributes of God	Development in Christian Thought- Religious Pluralism and Society Religious Pluralism and Theology Secularism	Revision and A Level Examinations

There are two expert teachers who deliver the A Level content and topics have been chosen by areas of expertise and commonality to other areas of the course, to allow for synopticity. OCR Schemes of Work were used originally and have been adapted to stretch and challenge our learners. We interleave content and the different disciplines to allow for pupils to retrieve threshold concepts and practice different skills for difference disciplines

### Assessment

Pupils are assessed with 40-mark essays at the end of each topic, with 40% of the marks for AO1 (Knowledge and Understanding) and 60% for AO2 (Analysis and Evaluation).

This means that pupils complete 29 essays over the course. These are marked against OCR assessment criteria. Pupils complete three trials over the course as set by the college whereby they write three essays, as expected in the final examination. The department also add three extra trials- one per paper- after Easter of Y13.

### **Impact:**

As a rigorous and demanding academic subject, RS engineers critical thinking and rigour in our pupils. Our curriculum creates opportunities for our young people to develop their skills of dialogue, interpretation and analysis in a coherent context. All these are vital skills in a modern workforce where communication, cooperation and collaboration are core skills.

In Religious Studies, pupils learn to respect themselves and understand their own identity, to respect others and learn the rights of others as well as the rights and responsibilities of people within our society. At a time when communities are becoming even more diverse there is a need for Religious literacy to move towards a more tolerant society.

An education in Religious Studies opens doors to pupils. It may offer the opportunity to specialise in a specific field of religious studies such as political science, philosophy and the law which lead to a wide range of industries such as business, government, medicine, non-profit, counselling, careers within the law and lecturing. We are pleased that every year pupils continue their education at Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities, utilising their skills and subject knowledge to be successful in their chosen area of study, including Theology, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Ethics and Law.