

## **RE Department**

### **Curriculum Intent and Rationale**

The aim of the RE curriculum is to encourage students to become knowledgeable and considerate members of the society, by using powerful and extensive breadth of substantive knowledge. The curriculum is written in such a way as to inspire their curiosity beyond the classroom to grow into life-long learners of RE. Through an effective religious education, we can enable young people to question the fundamentals of human existence and explore the most basic beliefs of religion. RE provides opportunities for children and young people to reflect and analyse, to discuss and debate, to explore and discover, and to learn more about the world in which they live, therefore the 'powerful knowledge' enables students to effectively engage with and communicate about the world around.

The RE curriculum emphasises respect for others, regardless of their beliefs, race or social status. In our diverse society, children need an understanding of other principal religions and other world views. In teaching about the beliefs and traditions of other people, the subject promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice. Such tolerance is vital in a world that is increasingly fraught with extremism, division and hatred.

Religion and belief has a claim to be an indispensable part of a complete education because of the influence of religions and beliefs on individuals, culture, behaviour and national life. Most religions and beliefs offer answers to life's deepest questions and most young people are seeking answers to those questions, as they grow into independence and work out how to live a good life.

The RE curriculum, which is delivered through the mastery rubric curriculum, gives students the opportunity to discuss challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, and what it is to be human, about death, about why people believe in God, and the difference between right and wrong through developing their disciplinary knowledge. Religious education is perhaps one curricular subject which asks more questions than it answers.

These key ideas need to be covered and reflected in the teaching of the new RE curriculum, which has been divided into these three key themes: beliefs and practice, philosophy and ethics which will be taught across the three year groups. This will provide students with a coherent knowledge and understanding to comprehend key religious beliefs and make links between how beliefs are expressed through practices and how they are linked to key philosophical ideas and debate and also how they contribute and influence to key ethical and moral decisions. This highlights that the study of RE is multidisciplinary in nature. The RE curriculum incorporates a balance between these three disciplinary areas.

The RE curriculum incorporates a balance of 'believing', 'living' and 'thinking' this will enable students to be more secure in their knowledge and understanding and be able to connect threshold concepts, while being receptive to a diversity of views and develop them into becoming more deeper thinkers; in other words, they more religiously literate. This links the

substantive knowledge students will gain through the content taught and the disciplinary knowledge the RE curriculum enables them to develop by allowing them to understand how the knowledge was established. Throughout the RE curriculum, students explore and develop their substantive and disciplinary knowledge by studying religious texts/scripture quotes and analysing their meaning in order to understand the 'why' and 'how' and understanding key specialist vocabulary of the knowledge being studied.

The process of discussion and debate also allows students to develop their disciplinary knowledge through forming their own reflections and conclusions as well as allowing students to consider the rights and wrongs of a moral/ethical or philosophical issue. The disciplinary knowledge is embedded in each 'Big Question' as it requires students to question and delve deeper into their understanding of the substantive knowledge they acquire throughout KS3 and KS4.

In year 7 students will focus on the key beliefs and this will intertwine with how and why individuals put these beliefs into practice. The big question being 'What do people believe and how does it influence their lives?' Students will develop their substantive knowledge by studying the key beliefs in four of the major world religions, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism, considering similarities and differences not only between the different faiths but also from within each religion itself. How the key beliefs influence a person's actions will be debated and discussed. Students will also consider why a believer believes in the things they do, which leads them to reference quotes and teaching from sacred scripture and key figures, such as, Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha and Guru Nanak.

Students will move on to look at how the substantive knowledge of these beliefs are put into practice and reflected in a place of worship and through different forms of worship with the big questions being 'How do people put their beliefs into practice through worship?'. This will focus on looking at the design of the building and how each feature reflects or is associated with a key belief, while looking at the impact on the believers and their worship or the development of their spiritual relationship with God.

Finally, students in year 7 will look closely at key examples of how certain key individuals have been influenced by their faith, beliefs and practice and the impact it has had on their life and work, the big question being 'How have certain people been influenced by their faith to help others?'. These key figures include Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King and Gandhi, students will reflect on the impact of their work on the world and how what they did may have been influenced by their religious beliefs. How these individuals have helped individuals, their community locally and globally will be studied. Students will consider how their faith may have acted as a catalyst that shaped their actions which still holds importance in the modern world today.

In Year 8 Students will focus on key religious festivals from the major world's religions this will allow students to use the substantive knowledge developed in year 7 to assess how the key beliefs are reflected through religious celebrations and the impact they have on the individual and the community. The big questions they will focus on will be 'Why and how do

people celebrate festivals and what impact does it have on them? Students will discuss and debate the importance of festivals and consider similarities and differences.

The curriculum then moves onto the philosophical theme, which will focus on the big question 'How and where do people look for God?' At the heart of the discipline of philosophy is a process of reasoning. Philosophy is as much about the process of how students will be taught to try to seek knowledge and truth as it is about seeking answers to difficult questions. This unit of study will use dialogue, discussion and debate to refine the way in which students think about the world and humankind's place in it. Students will consider the different arguments for and against God's existence, also looking at origins of the world, through the scientific and religious beliefs about evolution and creation. Students will use previous substantive knowledge about religious beliefs about God, his nature and characteristics in order to use disciplinary knowledge to explain how religion verifies his existence, arguments against will be developed from non-religious and humanist views.

The big question then moves on to the ethical theme 'How does religion impact human rights and justice? This focuses on how students will be able to apply prior knowledge about key beliefs and practices to how religion responds to the ethical issue of how humans should be treated, what rights they have, how it tackles prejudice and discrimination. Students will consider the meaning of wealth, causes of poverty and the responsibility to the poor.

Students will complete their Key Stage Three RE Curriculum journey in Year 9 by exploring the 'How does religion impact people's treatment of the world and themselves? Students will consider the moral and ethical issues of whose responsibility it is to look after the world and why, while moving on to debate the issues of abortion, euthanasia and use of drugs and what people may consider 'it's my body, my choice' versus the arguments for that sanctity of life. This will go back to considering previous substantive knowledge about key beliefs on the nature of God and his omnipotence and his purpose for creating humans.

The next big question 'What are the rites of passage at the different stages in the life of a believer? The focus will be on the birth marriage and funeral ceremonies in Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. This will enable students to understand how religion marks the important stages in one's life and the meaning of the key beliefs and symbolism attached to them.

Finally, students will take a closer look at some key religious figures in religion by asking the big question 'Who are the important figures in religions and why are they important?' Students will look at the importance, experiences, life and work of Moses, Abraham, Muhammad, Jesus, the Sikh Gurus and St Paul. Students will reflect on how their words and actions shape religion. They will reflect on what makes them a religious leader how they are a role model to people in society today. The impact of life and how people live and treat others will also be explored.

There is an in-depth study of religion into KS4 GCSE following the AQA syllabus, where they will look at key beliefs and practices in Islam and Christianity as the main religious tradition of Great Britain. Students will use the substantive knowledge and disciplinary knowledge

skills developed through KS3 to apply them to a more in depth look at some of the beliefs and practices studied in the earlier years.

Component one is the study of religion, in Islam students will look at What are the key Muslim beliefs? and 'How do Muslims show their submission to God?. Students will explore who is God and his immanent and transcendent nature. This will lead student to look and how then does a transcendent God reveal himself and why. There will be a close look at the relationship between God and humans, what His purpose for mankind is and what the ultimate goal in this world is and what lies beyond.

This leads students to consider the last big question 'How do Muslims show their submission to God? This will entail a closer look at the five pillars and how they show commitment to the faith and submission to God's will, student will be able to make links with how these practices are a preparation for the afterlife. Students will also consider the unity of the community and how faith is not just focusing on yourself but others too.

The study of Christianity will enable students to reflect on how the religion may shape and influence British values. The focus being similar to that of Islam with regards to looking at the nature of God while further developing knowledge of the Trinity and the person of Jesus. The next stage is to move on to consider key Christian practice and with a detailed look at the sacrament of baptism, two key festivals – Easter and Christmas and the role of the church in the local and wider community.

Students will move on to study Component two where students will study 4 key themes in which they will discuss and debate philosophical and ethical issue from both a religious and non religious viewpoint. These issues will centre about who we are, what is our purpose, how did we come into being, the impact of the divine and how he reveals himself, while also looking at the attitudes of religion to peace and conflict and crime and punishment.

To support students learning KS4 skills are taught 'down' into KS3, with student's regularly assessed using GCSE questions, giving an opportunity for extended writing under timed conditions. The curriculum has been designed to ensure mastery throughout, with consolidation of previous learning evident in each topic, component and composite. Students will start to develop and master the skills required to study RE and utilize the writing frames to construct their own well-informed and accurate opinions. Regular specialist vocabulary tests are also incorporated into their study ensuring students are able to learn and apply key vocabulary learnt on the content studied.

To ensure a smooth transition between the key stages, both summative and formative assessments take similar format, the layout of key stage three assessments and types of questions will be similar to those of KS4 and the actual GCSE assessments and are marked using GCSE level descriptors. Feedback is also given in a similar format so that students can reflect on their progress in the same way as they would at GCSE.

The new curriculum has been designed with the focus to create independent, curious and critical thinkers of RE. It is only when young people have grappled with these enormous

questions that they can begin to make sense of what they themselves believe and think. As education becomes increasingly utilitarian, viewed often as a means merely of contributing to a skills-based economy, the religious education can encourage pupils to think, and to develop their own sense of identity. Moreover, if young people are encouraged to recognise their own uniqueness and value, they will flourish both as individuals and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community.