



Religious Studies

Quality of Education

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Associated documents:			
Links to:			
SMSC Policy Curriculum Policy			

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Introduction

1. This policy has been drafted by the Head of Faculty for Social Sciences.
2. This policy is consistent with the school's Christian foundation and has been guided by:
 - Church of England Statement of Entitlement
 - Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

How this proposal reflects our Christian vision

'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10

Students engage in religious studies throughout key stages 3,4 and 5. It offers the opportunity for academic study, alongside supporting the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of students.

The right of withdrawal

As a Church of England school with a strong Christian ethos that underpins the whole of school life it is expected that all students desiring to study here will wish to participate fully in the religious studies programme that is offered. Notwithstanding this, the legal right to withdraw students from religious studies remains.

The curriculum

Statement of Intent: Key stage 3

The aim of the religious studies department at key stage three is to develop each student's knowledge and understanding of the religious beliefs which form contemporary society. We do this through the systematic study of theology, social science (living) and philosophy (questioning). We also study beliefs in relation to modern life in British society. Our intention is to provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose in life, their own spiritual beliefs and develop their moral compass. This includes beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. We aim to develop students' knowledge and understanding of Christianity in the main, but of other world religions and world views that offer answers to these questions. Students arrive with a varied of experience of Religious Studies from the primary phase so the intention of year 7 in particular is to embed the core skills of learning about and learning from religion in our students. As a Church of England academy, the importance of empathy of all beliefs, both religious and no faith is of paramount importance so we can instil tolerance in our students.

The Religious Studies curriculum is implemented through a combination of thematic and systematic learning of religion (theology). Students are also given opportunity to experience how religion is practiced in a diverse social setting. Throughout year 7 to 9 students will have the opportunity to question, research and reflect on their own views as well as the views of other religious and non-religious opinions (philosophy). Year 7 is based upon ensuring students have a good grasp of the key content of the founding fathers of the Judeo-Christian traditions, how different faiths celebrate their beliefs as well as a clear understanding of the two of the main traditions they will study at their time at The National Academy: Christianity and Islam. Both of these traditions will be continued to GCSE study.

In year 8 students will further develop the skill of understanding as well as broadening their understating of other world faiths and philosophical concepts. Through where is God they will have the opportunity to respond to philosophical questions such as 'does God exist' and 'why is there evil and suffering in the world?' This unit culminates in a creative piece to enable students to express their views in art form-these art works are then displayed around the academy. Through the Christian worship unit students will deepen their understanding of how Christians practice their faith, this revisiting some of the content from the life of Jesus unit in year 7 but widen their understanding of world faiths through looking at the religion Hinduism. They will also begin to use their ethical

reasoning in 'whose fault is it', using their understanding of the world religions they have studied so far and to apply that knowledge to the ethical issue of the environment and animal rights.

Year 9 will focus far more upon the application of knowledge and revisit the core beliefs studied in years 7 and 8 but use their understanding to gain a deeper understating of core philosophical and ethical issues such as how people of faith put their faith into action, how they respond to issues of evil and suffering and how they respond to issues of punishment and forgiveness. Year 9 will challenge students by looking at a broad range of religious and non-religious views so they can develop their evaluate skills in preparation for the GCSE course.

Throughout key stage three students will be assessed according to the attainment target 1 and 2 criteria which will translate to assessment objective one and two at GCSE. Each unit will be assessed and every year will have an end of year test so students will understand how they are progressing and so the faculty can judge the impact that the curriculum is having on both preparing them for key stage four but also to go into the wider world with a good understating of faith in Britain and the world today.

Statement of intent: Key stage 4

The aim of the religious studies department at key stage four is to continue to develop each student's knowledge and understanding of the religious beliefs of Christianity and Islam in accordance with the OCR Religious Studies GCSE specification for full course. The intention of the course of study is to give students a more in-depth knowledge of the beliefs and teachings of the two largest world religions, Christianity and Islam. This is particularly because Britain is a Christian country and Islam is the second largest religion in the UK. Also, to dispel any misconceptions out student may have about either religion.

The religious studies curriculum is implemented through a combination of thematic and systematic learning of religion as students have been familiar with at key stage three. Two assessment objectives dominate our teaching- the AO1 skill of knowledge and understanding of the faiths studied, supported with evidence of sources of wisdom and authority, and the AO2 skill of analysis and evaluation to enable students to delve deeper and to critically evaluate the faiths they study.

In year 10 students cover the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity as well as how the faith is practiced in the modern world. Students then progress to applying these beliefs and teachings to a number of thematic issues. In year 10 this includes issues relating to families and relationships such as issues of divorce and marriage in contemporary society, equality and also the roles of men and women in the family and society. Students also study religion, peace and conflict where different Christian opinions about war and pacifism are explored. This unit also looks at social justice and forgiveness in the modern world. At the end of year 10 students are introduced to the existence of God unit and look at different arguments about the existence or non-existence of God as well as traditional philosophical arguments. They also consider the different beliefs about religious experience and revelation. In year 11 students also study the dialogues topic which encourages them to look at faith in contemporary Britain-why we are considered to be a Christian country, but also to be aware of the rising secularization, the role of faith schools and how Christians interact and resolve differences between denominations but also with people of different faiths or none. At the end of year 11 students study the Islam paper for the OCR exam and look at the beliefs, teachings and practices in a similar way to the first topics studied at the start of the GCSE course.

Throughout the course, students are encouraged to support their knowledge with evidence from scripture and sources such as different denominations. The course also ensures that key knowledge is interleaved so students regularly retrieve prior knowledge to deepen their understanding of these two world faiths.

Throughout key stage four students will be assessed according to the GCSE assessment objectives one and two which are clearly explained to the students in their own terms. Assessments using mark schemes are used throughout each topic with an end of unit assessment in each topic as well as mock exams which take place in year 10 and year 11 before the final GCSE exam. A bit part of the reason we cover this syllabus is to enable our students go into the wider world with a good understating of faith in Britain and the world today. Our subject is very

discussion based and we aim to equip our students with the ability to be able to defend their own beliefs and also develop the critical thinking skills necessary for life in modern Britain today.

Key stage 5

Students have the option of taking AS/A2 Religious Studies (OCR). The course is aimed at enabling students to further their understanding of philosophical and ethical issues. For example, whether God exists or how to make moral decisions. Religious studies is beneficial to those who want to debate and discuss religious issues from a variety of perspectives, including non-religious viewpoints. The course covers:

Philosophy of religion

Covering ancient philosophical influences, the nature of the soul, mind and body. Looking at arguments for the existence/non-existence of God. The nature and impact of religious experience, the challenge of the problem of evil. Then looking at the nature of God and issues in Religious Language.

Religious ethics

The course will cover the study of Normative Ethical theories, application of the ethical theories to two contemporary moral issues – euthanasia and business ethics. Looking then at ethical language and thought, debates around the significant idea of conscience. Finally, sexual ethics and the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious belief.

Developments in religious thought

Religious beliefs, values and teaching, their interconnections and how they vary historically and in the contemporary world. Looking in detail at sources of wisdom and authority, practices which shape and express religious identity – considering how these vary within a tradition. Significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought. Key themes related to the relationship between religion and society.

All students take part in a weekly tutor session on 'moral, world and religious views'. This programme covers topics such as medical ethics, peace, Diwali, war, racism and Easter.

Assessment in Religious Studies

Assessment in Religious studies (excluding KS5 moral, world and religious views programme) follows the academy assessment policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Studies will be subject to the established QA practices operating within the school.

Review

This will be reviewed annually.

Religious Studies Journey

