



# Religious Studies

---

## Quality of Education

|                                     |                                       |                                    |                                                        |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Published:</b><br>September 2026 | <b>Next review:</b><br>September 2027 | <b>Statutory/non:</b><br>Statutory | <b>Lead:</b><br>Rachel Hale<br>Head of Social Sciences |
| <b>Associated documents:</b>        |                                       |                                    |                                                        |
|                                     |                                       |                                    |                                                        |
| <b>Links to:</b>                    |                                       |                                    |                                                        |
| SMSC Policy<br>Curriculum Policy    |                                       |                                    |                                                        |

## Contents

|                                                     |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Contents .....                                      | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| 1. Religious Studies and our Christian Vision ..... | 2                                   |
| 2. The right of withdrawal .....                    | 2                                   |
| 3. The curriculum.....                              | 3                                   |
| 4.1 Statement of Intent: Key Stage 3 .....          | 3                                   |
| 4.2 Statement of Intent: Key Stage 4 .....          | 3                                   |
| 4.3 Key Stage 5 .....                               | 4                                   |
| 4. Philosophy of Religion .....                     | 4                                   |
| 5. Religious Ethics.....                            | 4                                   |
| 6. Developments in Christian Thought .....          | 4                                   |
| 7. Core Religious Studies at post 16.....           | 5                                   |
| 8. Assessment in Religious Studies.....             | 5                                   |
| 9. Monitoring and Evaluation .....                  | 5                                   |
| 10. Review.....                                     | 5                                   |
| 11. Learning Journey .....                          | 6                                   |

### 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the Academy's approach to the provision, curriculum, assessment and quality assurance of Religious Studies. It has been developed by the Head of Faculty for Social Sciences and reflects the Academy's commitment to providing a rigorous, coherent and intellectually ambitious Religious Studies curriculum.

The policy is consistent with the Academy's Christian foundation and is informed by the Church of England Statement of Entitlement and the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Through its curriculum, the Academy seeks to ensure that pupils develop substantive knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews alongside the disciplinary knowledge required to interpret, analyse, compare and evaluate them.

### 2. Religious Studies and our Christian Vision

*"Life in all its fullness" (John 10:10)*

Religious Studies makes an important contribution to the Academy's Christian vision by enabling pupils to engage seriously with questions of belief, meaning, purpose, morality and human identity. Pupils study Religious Studies throughout Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, providing continuity in the academic study of religion and worldviews while supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The curriculum encourages thoughtful enquiry, intellectual curiosity and respectful engagement with a range of perspectives. In doing so, Religious Studies supports pupils in developing the knowledge, confidence and critical capacity required to participate constructively in a diverse society.

### 3. The right of withdrawal

The Academy is a Church of England school in which a distinctive Christian ethos contributes to the life and curriculum of the school. Religious Studies is therefore regarded as an important element of pupils' educational entitlement and of the Academy's wider educational provision.

The Academy nevertheless recognises the legal right of parents and carers to withdraw their child from Religious Education, and the corresponding rights that apply to pupils where relevant. Any request for withdrawal will be considered in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements and Academy procedures.

## 4. The curriculum

### 4.1 Statement of Intent: Key Stage 3

The Key Stage 3 Religious Studies curriculum is designed to develop pupils' secure and increasingly sophisticated knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews. Through the systematic study of theology, philosophy and the social sciences, pupils explore how beliefs are formed, interpreted and expressed, and consider their significance within contemporary British society.

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to engage critically with fundamental questions concerning meaning, purpose, morality, the nature of reality and what it means to be human. Particular emphasis is placed upon Christianity, reflecting the Academy's Church of England foundation, alongside the study of Islam, other religious traditions and non-religious worldviews. This breadth enables pupils to recognise both diversity between traditions and diversity of belief and practice within them.

Recognising that pupils enter Year 7 with differing experiences of Religious Education, the curriculum establishes secure foundations in the knowledge and skills required for successful study. Pupils encounter key aspects of the Judeo-Christian tradition and develop knowledge of Christianity and Islam, both of which continue into GCSE study. They also explore religious celebrations and consider how religious and non-religious worldviews, including Humanism, respond to contemporary issues such as environmental responsibility.

In Year 8, pupils broaden and deepen their understanding through increasingly demanding theological and philosophical enquiry. They consider questions relating to the existence of God and the problem of evil and suffering, and examine how belief is expressed through worship and lived religious practice. Comparative study, including consideration of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, develops pupils' ability to identify similarities, differences and diversity within and between traditions. The curriculum also considers how religious belief can influence individuals and communities, enabling pupils to examine the relationship between conviction and action.

In Year 9, pupils apply knowledge developed across the key stage to more complex philosophical, ethical and social questions. Topics include religious responses to evil and suffering, ethical perspectives on war and the place of religious and non-religious worldviews in contemporary Britain. Increasing emphasis is placed on interpretation, analysis and evaluation so that pupils are prepared for the academic demands of GCSE Religious Studies.

Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils are encouraged to research, question, discuss and reflect upon their own views and the views of others. The curriculum promotes respectful engagement with religious and non-religious perspectives and supports pupils in expressing reasoned conclusions with clarity and evidence.

Assessment is used throughout Key Stage 3 to establish what pupils know, understand and can do. Each unit includes assessment opportunities and pupils complete an end-of-year assessment. Assessment information is used to support pupils' progress, inform teaching and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing pupils for Key Stage 4 and for informed participation in contemporary society.

### 4.2 Statement of Intent: Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4, the Religious Studies curriculum builds upon the knowledge, concepts and disciplinary approaches established at Key Stage 3. Pupils follow the OCR GCSE Religious Studies full-course specification, with focused study of Christianity and Islam alongside philosophical, ethical and contemporary themes.

The curriculum is intended to develop detailed and accurate knowledge of religious beliefs, teachings and practices while enabling pupils to examine how these are interpreted and applied. Study also provides opportunities to address misconceptions and to develop a more nuanced understanding of diversity within and between religious traditions.

Teaching combines systematic and thematic approaches to religion. Pupils develop the knowledge and understanding required by Assessment Objective 1 (AO1), including the effective use of sources of wisdom and authority, and the analytical and evaluative skills required by Assessment Objective 2 (AO2). These complementary objectives enable pupils to move beyond description and construct reasoned, evidence-informed responses to religious, philosophical and ethical questions.

In Year 10, pupils study the principal beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and consider their expression in contemporary life. Pupils then apply this knowledge to thematic study, including families and relationships, marriage and divorce, equality, the roles of men and women, peace and conflict, war, pacifism, social justice and forgiveness. Pupils are also introduced to philosophical arguments concerning the existence and non-existence of God, together with differing understandings of religious experience and revelation.

In Year 11, pupils extend their study through consideration of dialogue and the place of religion in contemporary Britain. This includes the relationship between Christianity and British society, secularisation, faith schools, denominational difference, and dialogue between people of different religious and non-religious worldviews. Pupils also undertake detailed study of Islamic beliefs, teachings and practices in preparation for the OCR examination.

Throughout the course, pupils are expected to substantiate their knowledge and arguments through appropriate reference to scripture and other sources of wisdom and authority. Core knowledge is deliberately revisited and retrieved so that pupils strengthen long-term retention, make connections across topics and develop increasingly secure understanding.

Assessment at Key Stage 4 is aligned with GCSE Assessment Objectives AO1 and AO2. Pupils complete regular formative and summative assessments, including end-of-unit assessments and mock examinations in Years 10 and 11. Assessment and feedback are used to identify strengths, address misconceptions and support pupils in developing increasingly precise knowledge, analysis and evaluation.

Beyond examination preparation, the curriculum seeks to develop religious literacy, critical thinking and reasoned communication. Through structured discussion and evaluation, pupils learn to explain and justify viewpoints while engaging respectfully with perspectives that differ from their own.

#### 4.3 Key Stage 5

At Key Stage 5, pupils may choose to study OCR A Level Religious Studies. The course provides a rigorous academic study of Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and Developments in Christian Thought, enabling pupils to engage with complex arguments, competing interpretations and significant questions concerning belief, morality, knowledge and human existence.

### 5. Philosophy of Religion

This component examines ancient philosophical influences; questions concerning the soul, mind and body; arguments for the existence and non-existence of God; the nature and impact of religious experience; the challenge presented by evil and suffering; the nature of God; and issues in religious language. Pupils are expected to analyse philosophical arguments carefully and evaluate competing conclusions.

### 6. Religious Ethics

This component develops pupils' understanding of normative ethical theories and their application to contemporary moral issues, including euthanasia and business ethics. Pupils also examine ethical language and thought, debates surrounding conscience, sexual ethics and the ways in which developments in religious belief influence ethical reasoning.

### 7. Developments in Christian Thought

This component considers Christian beliefs, values and teachings, including their interconnections and their historical and contemporary development. Pupils examine sources of wisdom and authority, practices that shape and express

religious identity, diversity within Christianity, significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought, and key themes concerning the relationship between religion and society.

## 8. Core Religious Studies at post 16

Alongside examination courses, all pupils participate in a weekly tutor programme (Religion, Philosophy and ethics) focused on moral, world and religious views. The programme addresses a range of religious, ethical and social themes, including medical ethics, peace, human trafficking, justice and punishment and trolling, and contributes to pupils' broader understanding of the beliefs and issues that shape contemporary society.

## 9. Assessment in Religious Studies

Assessment in Religious Studies, excluding the Key Stage 5 religion, philosophy and ethics core RS course delivered through the tutor programme, is undertaken in accordance with the Academy Assessment Policy. Assessment is integral to curriculum delivery and is used to establish the security of pupils' knowledge and understanding, identify misconceptions, inform subsequent teaching and support pupils in developing the disciplinary skills required at each key stage.

Assessment approaches reflect the demands of the relevant curriculum and qualification. At Key Stages 3 and 4, particular emphasis is placed upon accurate knowledge and understanding, the use of evidence and sources of authority, and the development of analysis and evaluation. Assessment information is used by teachers and subject leaders to support pupil progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

## 10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of Religious Studies provision is monitored and evaluated through the Academy's established quality assurance processes. Monitoring considers the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum, including the quality and consistency of teaching, pupils' work, assessment information and the extent to which pupils know more, remember more and are able to apply their knowledge with increasing sophistication.

Findings from quality assurance inform subject development, curriculum refinement, professional dialogue and, where appropriate, targeted improvement activity. The Head of Social Sciences is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy within the established whole-school quality assurance framework.

## 11. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where changes to statutory requirements, curriculum guidance, examination specifications or Academy policy make this necessary.

The Academy's Religious Studies learning journey provides a visual overview of curriculum progression from Year 7 to Year 11.

