Curriculum overview: Religious Studies (2025-2027)

Key Stage 2

Students should be able to:

- Describe and make connections between different features of the religions and worldviews, discovering more about celebrations, worship, pilgrimages and the rituals, which mark important points in life, in order to reflect on their significance.
- Explain, with reasons, the meanings and significance of religions and worldviews to individuals and communities.
- Discuss and present thoughtfully their own and others' views on challenging questions about belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, applying ideas of their own in different forms.
- Describe links between stories and other aspects of the communities, responding thoughtfully to a range of sources of wisdom and to beliefs and teachings that arise from them in different communities.
- Explain the challenges of commitment to a community of faith or belief, suggesting why belonging to a community may be valuable, both in the diverse communities being studied and in their own lives.
- Apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities can live together for the wellbeing of all, responding thoughtfully to ideas about community, values and respect.
- Describe a range of beliefs, symbols and actions so that they can understand different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- Outline similarities and differences within and between different religions and worldviews.
- Discuss and apply their own and others' ideas about ethical questions, including ideas about what is right and wrong and what is just and fair, and express their own ideas clearly in response.

Key content requirements at GCSE

The Study of Religions: Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

Sikhism & Buddhism:

- Students should be aware that Sikhism and Buddhism are two of the diverse religious traditions and beliefs in Great Britain today and that the main religious tradition in Great Britain is Christianity. This knowledge may be applied throughout both **The Study of Religions** as well as **Thematic Studies**.
- Students should show an understanding of the beliefs, teachings and practices of Sikhism and Buddhism and their basis in Sikh and Buddhist sources of wisdom and authority.
- They should be able to refer to scripture and/or sacred texts as appropriate.
- Students should be able to explain the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices of religion on communities and societies.
- Common and divergent views within Sikhism and Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.
- Students may refer to a range of Sikh and Buddhist perspectives in their answers, for example the perspective of sahajdhari and amritdhari Sikhs or Theravada, Mahayana, Zen and Pure Land Buddhists.

Thematic Studies (Themes B, D, E and F)

- Students should be aware of different religious perspectives on the issues studied within and/or between religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.
- Students must also study religious, philosophical and ethical arguments related to the issues raised, and their impact and influence on the modern world.
- Students will be expected to show their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religion and beliefs.
- Students will be expected to make specific references to sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/or sacred texts.
- Students may refer to any relevant religious texts
- Students must demonstrate knowledge and understanding that:
    - the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian
    - the religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse.
- Students may draw upon Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religions and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.

Key skills requirements at GCSE

Students should be able to demonstrate their ability to:

- apply knowledge and understanding of two religions
- apply knowledge and understanding of key sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/ or sacred texts, where appropriate, which support contemporary religious faith
- understand the influence of religion on individuals, communities and societies
- understand significant common and divergent views between and/or within religions and beliefs
- apply knowledge and understanding in order to analyse questions related to religious beliefs and values
- construct well-informed and balanced arguments on matters concerned with religious beliefs and values set out in the subject content.

Curriculum Intent

Our GCSE covers Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity and four contemporary ethical themes, ensuring our students have a diverse choice of intriguing subjects to explore. Students will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues. Students will also gain an appreciation of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. They will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills. All these skills will help prepare them for further study.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Portable knowledge
Year 10	**<u>Buddhist Beliefs and teachings</u>** **The Dhamma** • Dhamma • Dependent arising • The Three Marks of Existence - anicca - anatta - dukkha • The human personality in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions • Human destiny - different ideals in Theravada and Mahayana traditions: Arhat (a 'perfected person') and Bodhisattva ideal • Buddhahood and the Pure Land **The Buddha and the Four Noble Truths** • The Buddha's life - birth and life of luxury - Four Sights - ascetic life - Enlightenment • Four Noble Truths - types of suffering - causes of suffering - end of craving - Eightfold Path	**<u>Theme F: Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice</u>** **Human rights** • Prejudice and discrimination • Equality, freedom of religion and belief • Human rights and responsibilities • Social justice • Racial prejudice and discrimination **Wealth and poverty** • Uses of wealth • The responsibilities of wealth • Exploitation of the poor including - fair pay - excessive interest - people-trafficking • The responsibilities of those living in poverty • Charity **<u>Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment</u>** **Religion, crime and the causes of crime** • Good and evil intentions and actions • Reasons for crime • Views about law breakers	**<u>Sikh Practices</u>** **Worship and service** • Religious features of the gurdwara • The role of the gurdwara within the Sikh community • The role of prayer in the home • The role and importance of the akhand path • The langar as an expression of sewa (selfless service) • Meditating on God's name in daily life and in the gurdwara **Festivals and lifestyle** • Origins and significance of - Vaisakhi - Divali - Gurpurbs • Visiting historical gurdwaras • Birth and naming ceremonies • The initiation ceremony • Significance of the names Singh and Kaur	Knowledge of command words Knowledge of Christian, Buddhist and Sikh beliefs Knowledge of key terms i.e. • atheist • theist • monotheist Knowledge and application of concepts i.e. • sanctity of life • justice • human rights • harmony • tolerance • prejudice • discrimination • equality • freedom of religious expression • forgiveness • compassion • deterrence • reformation • retribution

	<u>Sikh Beliefs and Teachings</u> **Key beliefs** • The nature of God • God as Creator • The nature of human life • Karma and rebirth • The five stages of liberation • The importance of being God-centred **The nature of human life** • The oneness of humanity and in the equality of all • The expression of the equality of all in the stories of the lives of the Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib and Sikhism today • Sewa (selfless service) • The role and importance of the sangat (religious community)	• Views about types of crime including - hate crime - theft - murder **Religion and punishment** • Aims of punishment including - retribution - deterrence - reformation • The treatment of criminals including - prison - corporal punishment - community service • Forgiveness • The death penalty		**Key Terms: see 100% sheets**

Year 11	**<u>Buddhist Practices</u>** **Worship and festivals** • Buddhist places of worship and their features • Puja • Meditation - samatha - vipassana - visualisation • Different ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning in Theravada communities and in Japan and Tibet • Festivals and retreats including - Wesak - Parinirvana Day **Buddhist ethics** • Ethical teaching - kamma and rebirth - compassion - loving kindness • The five moral precepts • The six perfections in the Mahayana tradition **<u>Theme D: Religion, Peace and Conflict</u>** **Religion, violence, terrorism and war** • Peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation • Violence and violent protest • Terrorism • Reasons for war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation • The just war theory, including the criteria for a just war • Holy war • Pacifism **Religion and belief in 21st century conflict** • Religion and belief as a cause of war • Nuclear weapons, including nuclear deterrence • Weapons of mass destruction	**<u>Theme B: Religion and Life</u>** **Origins and value of the universe** • The origins of the universe, including scientific views • The value of the world • The use and abuse of the environment • The use and abuse of animals **The origins and value of human life** • The origins of life including scientific views • The sanctity of life and quality of life • Abortion • Euthanasia • Death and an afterlife	**<u>Revision and exam preparation</u>**	Knowledge of command words Knowledge of Christian, Sikh and Buddhist beliefs and practices Knowledge and application of concepts i.e. • sanctity of life • quality of life • dominion • stewardship • pacifism • peace • protest • forgiveness • justice **Key Terms: see 100% sheets**

	• Peace-making • Victims of war			

GCSE external assessment:
Religious education uses the GCSE 1-9 grading system, where 9 is the best grade. Religious education is assessed by examination only. All examinations are terminal (at the end of Year 11). The assessments are comprised of the following components:

There are two written papers, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes. Both papers are worth 50% of the final grade.

- Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices
- Component 2: Thematic studies

SMSC in religious education
Religious education enables pupils to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues in depth. We aim to help pupils to grow and develop as people by preparing them for the adult world and allowing pupils to make sense of the world. In keeping with the ethos of the school, SMSC is embedded across the key stages to allow students to engage with meaning and promote personal development.

Spiritual development in religious education
Education in religious education enables students to search for meaning in the purpose of life and the values by which we live. Students are able to interpret their own spirituality and their lives and discuss and debate ultimate questions. They are given opportunities to explore the beliefs and values of others and develop and understanding of, and respect for these. We encourage imagination and creativity in lessons and as part of independent learning. We aim to deliver the curriculum in a way that engages the students and gives them a sense of awe and wonder about themselves, others around them and the world in which we live.

Moral development in religious education
The courses taught at all key stages and especially at KS4 and KS5 have ethical dilemmas embedded in the schemes of work. Students frequently question, justify and challenge moral dilemmas about right and wrong, good and bad and consider the ethical implications of choices we make as a human race, such as abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering and business ethics. They are expected to critically analyse and assess ethical issues and reflect on this in relation to their own lives and of those around them.

Social development in religious education
In religious education, students have opportunities to work with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. They frequently partake in group work, allowing them to learn to cooperate with others and resolve conflicts effectively. They are encouraged to understand the importance of taking an interest in the way different communities and societies operate. Frequent participation in group work allows students to become accustomed to working as part of a team to achieve mutual goals and developing this skill will in turn enable them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

Cultural development in religious education
Within this subject, students are provided with opportunities to explore different cultures through visits to places of worship and exposure to speakers with a different cultural heritage. Living in a multi-cultural society, they are encouraged to demonstrate respect and show tolerance towards
people from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. They are taught topics which centre on tolerance, respect and celebration of diversity throughout KS3 and KS4 with the intention to combat discrimination of any sort.