



RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Curriculum Overview



The curriculum at West Derby School reflects the aspirations we have for all students. It is designed to be as ambitious as the National Curriculum, offering a first-class education that is rich in knowledge and skills, whilst also being broad and balanced throughout the key stages. The aim of Religious Studies is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

Departmental Overview

The Religious Studies curriculum is taught by two full-time specialist teachers.

Departmental Staff

Miss J Dunn: Head of Humanities/SLT Line Manager

Mr J McLaren: Deputy Head of Humanities/Head of Religious Studies

Miss H Benson: Teacher of Religious Studies

Year 7 Religious Studies (KS3)

Religious Studies aim for year 7:

Rich knowledge of Religions

Curriculum Overview

Topics covered:

- What are the key beliefs and practices of Buddhism?
- What are the key beliefs and practices of Sikhism?
- Should Religious buildings be sold to feed the starving?
- What is good and what is challenging about being a teenage person of faith?

New Knowledge (What we would like students to know and understand by the end of year 7)

Unit 7.1: What are the key beliefs and practices of Buddhism?

- Describe some important events in the life of the Buddha.
- Identify the main beliefs of Buddhists and how Buddhists try to follow these beliefs.
- Describe how Buddhists follow the Five Precepts/Four Noble Truths in detail and how this can make positive improvements to a believer's life.
- Explain why and how Buddhists celebrate the festival of Wesak
- Compare the beliefs of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists.
- Explain how being a Buddhist impacts on daily life.

Unit 7.2: What are the key beliefs and practices of Sikhism?

- Describe some important events in the life of Guru Nanak.
- Explain the importance of Guru Nanak's three day disappearance and explain some important Sikh beliefs.
- Describe the ideas conveyed about Sikhism through the 5ks and whether you believe outward symbolism can strengthen faith.
- Explain whether you think Guru Gobind Singh's actions were justified and use key new religious terminology articulately and in the correct context.
- Correctly identify the reasons why Sikhs have chosen to settle in Britain during the 20th century and what their contributions to the UK have been.
- Explain the significance of Bandi Chhor Divas and how it is celebrated.

Unit 7.3: Should religious buildings be sold to feed the starving?

- Consider who is responsible for supporting people in need.
- Explain how religious practices based in particular buildings assist worship (church/mosque/gurdwara)
- Express insight into whether charitable acts can be considered as acts of worship.
- Express insight into the enquiry question 'should religious buildings be sold to feed the starving?'

Unit 7.4: What is good and what is challenging about being a teenage person of faith?

- Give examples of some challenges faced by religious teenagers in Britain and how they respond.
- Appreciate what is good about being a teenage religious believer in Britain today and appraise what challenges are involved.
- Express insight into the enquiry question 'what is good and challenging about being a teenage person of faith?'

New Skills

Explain and interpret ways that the history and culture of religions and worldviews influence individuals and communities, including a wide range of beliefs and practices, in order to appraise reasons why some people support and others question these influences.

Explain the religions and worldviews which they encounter clearly, reasonably and coherently; evaluate them, drawing on a range of introductory level approaches recognised in the study of religion or theology.

Explore some of the ultimate questions that are raised by human life, making well-informed and reasoned personal responses and expressing insights that draw on a wide range of examples including the arts, media and philosophy.

Disciplinary Vocabulary

- **Unit 7.1:** Buddha, Buddhist, dharma, The Four Sights, The Eightfold Path, meditation, dukkha, The Five Precepts, The Four Noble Truths, annatta, Theravada, Mahayana, bodhisattva, arhat, hinayana, karuna, bhikku
- **Unit 7.2:** Sikh, Sikhism, guru, Guru Granth Sahib, caste, langar, Khalsa, Kartarpur, Five K's, vand chakna, nap japna, kirat karni, Golden Temple, Bandi Chhor Divas
- **Unit 7.3:** atheist, humanitarian aid, worship, cathedral, mosque, zakat, Sikh, gurdwara, sewa
- **Unit 7.4:** Judaism, Torah, Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, shabbat, mitzvot, kosher, antisemitism, ummah, hajj, Islamophobia, prejudice, discrimination

Prior Learning and Recall

Students will be asked to recall the systematic study of Christianity and Islam which they studied at KS2.

Examinations/Key Assessments

Pupils complete progress tasks every 5-6 lessons and complete an assessment exam each term.

Homework (Including Links)

Homework will be set in line with the department's homework policy on Satchel:One and will focus on learning of subject specific vocabulary, recall of both new and prior learning and assessment preparation.

Website to use

[KS3 Religious Studies - BBC Bitesize](#)

Click on the relevant topic which you are studying to help you with your homework

How Parents can Help

- Parents can help by ensuring pupils are completing their homework quizzes, they attend lessons and are fully equipped.
- Parents can also help by watching/reading current affairs (the news, documentaries) with their child and discussing these at home.

Year 8 Religious Studies (KS3)

Religious Studies aim for year 8:

To examine the different ways of studying Religion

To gain an Implicit understanding of the study of specific disciplines

To applying and interpret religions

Curriculum Overview

- What is good and what is challenging about being a teenage person of faith?
- How do people express their spirituality through the arts?
- Is death the end?
- What are the ethical debates facing modern society?

New Knowledge (What we would like students to know and understand by the end of year 8)

Unit 8.1: Is death the end?

- Describe the idea of a soul
- Describe what Christians and Muslims believe about the soul using key words.
- Explain who is most likely to believe in a soul and why and explain three differences and three similarities between Islamic and Christian beliefs.
- Evaluate whether the idea of Heaven and Hell could pose theological problems which strengthen atheists arguments
- Describe Islamic and Christian beliefs about the afterlife.
- Compare ideas about reincarnation to ideas about the afterlife from Abrahamic religions. Use religious terminology and quotes from holy texts.
- Explain in detail the different ways both religious systems account for judgement and punishment using quotations and all today's new key terminology.

Unit 8.2: What are the ethical debates facing modern society?

- Identify different attitudes religions have towards animals and whether these are mostly practical or moral.
- Describe how religious laws concerning animals can cause issues today and describe the similarities in attitudes between six world religions.
- Describe some of the attitudes of Islam and Christianity towards freedom of expression.
- Explain in detail the different religious attitudes towards freedom of expression and where there can be clashes with human rights.
- Explain in detail the different religious attitudes towards immigration and social cohesion. Describe religious views using quotations from holy texts.
- Explain in detail the different religious attitudes towards the genders, the LGBT+ community and how this can present human rights issues.
- Analyse whether adherents of traditional Islam and Christianity can embrace progressive ideas about gender whilst still taking holy texts literally.
- Describe what social justice is and several different religious attitudes towards different movements.
- Explain in detail the different religious attitudes towards social justice. Describe religious views using quotations from holy texts.

Unit 8.3: What is good and what is challenging about being a teenage person of faith? (N.B. This topic moves to Y7 from September 2024 and will be replaced by Was Jesus a Radical? in September 2025)

- Give examples of some challenges faced by religious teenagers in Britain and how they respond.
- Appreciate what is good about being a teenage religious believer in Britain today and appraise what challenges are involved.
- Express insight into the enquiry question 'what is good and challenging about being a teenage person of faith?'

Unit 8.4: How do people express their spirituality through the arts?

- Consider the question: what is worship?
- Explain and interpret a range of understandings of worship.
- Explain how welcoming and charitable actions can be seen as worship.

- Outline the features of one religious art form and say why it is important to members of that faith.
- Illustrate definitions of 'spirituality' with examples Explain the impact of music and art in helping people to express ideas beyond words, including beliefs.
- Present a variety of interpretations of the 'spiritual' and explain how these are expressed.

New Skills

Develop skills which have been first taught in Year 7

- Explain and interpret a range of beliefs, teachings and sources of wisdom and authority including experience in order to understand religions and worldviews as coherent systems or ways of seeing the world.
- Observe and interpret a wide range of ways in which commitment and identity are expressed. They develop insightful analysis and evaluation of controversies about commitment to religions and worldviews, accounting for the impact of diversity within and between communities.
- Examine and evaluate issues about community relations and respect for all in the light of different perspectives from varied religions and worldviews

Disciplinary Vocabulary

- 8.1: soul, reincarnation, samsara, karma, atman, moksha, heaven, hell, jannah, jahannam, near death experience.
- 8.2: ethics, dominion, soul, stewardship, freedom of expression, democracy, community cohesion, multiculturalism, gender, transgender, patriarchy, vaccination
- 8.3: Judaism, Torah, Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, shabbat, mitzvot, kosher, antisemitism, ummah, hajj, Islamophobia, prejudice, discrimination.
- 8.4: religious, spiritual, aniconism, calligraphy, Psalms, annunciation, mandala, Dhammapada, religious experience, immanent, transcendent, miracle, holy, numinous.

Prior Learning and Recall

- Systematic study of Sikhism
- Systematic study of Buddhism
- Interpretations of Jesus
- The importance of Religious buildings as a place of worship
- Challenges about being religious in modern day Britain.

Examinations/Key Assessments

Pupils complete progress tasks every 5-6 lessons and complete an assessment exam each term on topics studied previously (will include year 7 content).

Homework (Including Links)

Homework will be set in line with the department's homework policy on Satchel:One and will focus on learning of subject specific vocabulary, recall of both new and prior learning and assessment preparation.

Websites to use

[KS3 Religious Studies - BBC Bitesize](#)

How Parents can Help

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Year 9 Religious Studies (KS3)

Religious Studies aim for year 9:

Lived Religions

Clear synthesis learning

Wide Ranging and age appropriate topic content

Curriculum Overview

Topics covered:

- What is philosophy and can we prove the existence of God?
- Is Religion a power for peace or a cause for conflict in the world?
- What are religious attitudes to matters of life and death?

New Knowledge (What we would like students to know and understand by the end of year 9)

Unit 9.1: What is philosophy and can we prove the existence of God?

- Explain why Plato believed that we cannot trust our senses to know the truth and describe the Analogy of the Cave.
- Explain Paley's design argument and evaluate whether it proves the existence of God.
- Explain the argument from miracles and evaluate whether miracles prove the existence of God.
- Describe the classical problem of evil and Mackie's Inconsistent Triad and explain why they pose a problem for religious believers.
- Describe the Augustinian theodicy and evaluate whether he successfully defends God against the problem of evil.

Unit 9.2: Is religion a power for peace or a cause of conflict in the world?

- Identify quotations from Islamic and non-Islamic sources which support ideas about peace and conflict.
- Describe what we can learn from Islamic and non-Islamic sources about peace and conflict and the differing attitudes held by Muslims.
- Explain in detail whether using quotations from holy texts is the best way to argue that a religion is peaceful or not.
- Identify quotations from Christian and non-Christian sources which support ideas about peace and conflict.
- Describe what we can learn from Christian and non-Christian sources about peace and conflict and the differing attitudes held by Christians.
- Explain in detail whether you think Christianity has changed to be a more peaceful religion over time or not.
- Correctly identify instances of antisemitism throughout history and in the world today. Identify whether antisemitism also points to wider problems in society.
- Describe in detail instances of antisemitism in the modern world and throughout history. Explain any political links the instances share and to what extent antisemitism also indicates wider problems in society.
- Identify different ways that religious leaders can be held responsible and not responsible for religious conflicts.
- Describe how religious leaders have encouraged conflicts and how those conflicts have played out.

Unit 9.3: What are religious attitudes to matters of life and death?

- Describe arguments for and against the death penalty, referring to morality and the examples identified today.
- Explain in detail arguments and counter arguments for the death penalty, referring to religious and non-religious opinions.
- Analyse articulately whether the death penalty is moral, based on a wide range of religious and non-religious opinions, reaching a well-informed conclusion.
- Analyse whether both Islam and Christianity overall support the idea of sanctity of life over quality of life.
- Describe reasons for and against euthanasia and explain whether the reasons for and against euthanasia are about quality of life or sanctity of life.
- Identify different religious and non-religious views about abortion. Describe different religious viewpoints using new terminology, describe whether you think abortion should be about the rights of the mother or the rights of the foetus.
- Consider whether we have a moral responsibility to be vaccinated and evaluate the risk posed from anti-vaccination movements.

New Skills

Explain how and why individuals and communities express the meanings of their beliefs and values in many different forms and ways of living, enquiring into the variety, differences and relationships that exist within and between them.

Consider and evaluate the question: what is religion?

Analyse the nature of religion using the main disciplines by which religion is studied

Explore and express insights into significant moral and ethical questions posed by being human in ways that are well-informed and which invite personal response, using reasoning which may draw on a range of examples from real life, fiction or other forms of media.

Disciplinary Vocabulary

- **9.1:** philosophy, empiricism, rationalism, realm of appearances, realm of forms, first cause argument, Infinite regress, design arguments, miracle, omnipotent, omnibenevolent, theodicy, inconsistent triad
- **9.2:** jihad, lesser jihad, greater jihad, crusade, Islamic State, The Troubles, holy war, Operation Bluestar
- **9.3:** capital punishment, morality, abortion, euthanasia, sanctity of life, quality of life, pro-life, pro-choice, vaccine, vaccination

Prior Learning and Recall

Students should be able to use religious studies knowledge and skills from year 7 and 8 to extend their understanding of new content in year 9.

Examinations/Key Assessments

Pupils complete progress tasks every 5-6 lessons and complete an assessment exam each term on topics studied previously (will include year 7 and 8 content).

Homework (Including Links)

Homework will be set in line with the department's homework policy on Satchel:One and will focus on learning of subject specific vocabulary, recall of both new and prior learning and assessment preparation.

Websites to use

[KS3 Religious Studies - BBC Bitesize](#)

Click on the relevant topic which you are studying which will help you when completing homework

How Parents can Help

- Parents can help by ensuring pupils are completing their homework quizzes, they attend lessons and are fully equipped.
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Year 10/11 Religious Studies (KS4)

Curriculum Overview

In Years 10-11 students follow a course in AQA Religious Studies. Students will sit two examinations at the end of Year 11 forming 100% of the course.

Our GCSE specifications provide a broad understanding of the beliefs and practices of the faiths Christianity and Islam, as well as promoting religious literacy and the contemplation of ultimate questions. Students will be able to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in light of what they have learnt. There will be a range of relevant and contemporary themes to study that will promote awareness of modern-world issues and engagement within the classroom. Students of all abilities will be challenged and inspired, whilst developing valuable skills sought after by higher education and employers.

The course builds upon work you have already done at Key Stage 3. You will complete a systematic study of the core beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam as well as thematically exploring the responses of both religions to some of the major ethical and philosophical issues of life in the 21st century. For example:

- Warfare and the use of weapons of mass destruction
- The right to protest
- Terrorism
- Pacifism
- Human sexuality
- Sex and relationships
- The nature and purpose of families

New Knowledge (What we would like students to know and understand by the end of GCSE)

The specification builds on and enhances learning from Key Stage 3 and provides a broad understanding of the beliefs and practices of the faiths Christianity and Islam, as well as promoting religious literacy and the contemplation of ultimate questions. Students will be able to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in light of what they have learnt. There will be a range of relevant and contemporary themes to study that will promote awareness of modern-world issues and engagement within the classroom. Students of all abilities will be challenged and inspired, whilst developing valuable skills sought after by higher education and employers.

- **Christianity – beliefs (Y10)**
 - Beliefs about the nature of God
 - Creation
 - The afterlife
 - Jesus Christ
 - Salvation
- **Religion, peace and conflict (Y10 Summer Term/Y11 Autumn term)**
 - Violence, terrorism and war
 - Peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation
 - How religion causes conflict
 - Religious attitudes to nuclear war
 - Religious attitudes towards peace
- **Islam – beliefs (Y11)**
 - Beliefs about the nature of God
 - Prophethood
 - The Qur'an

- The Imamate (Shi'a)
- The afterlife
- **Relationships and families (Y11)**
 - Human sexuality
 - Sex and relationships
 - The nature of marriage
 - The nature and purpose of families

There is no presumption made about faith or commitment and so the course is accessible to all pupils regardless of whether they hold any religious belief or not.

New Skills

Activities will enable pupils to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key religions studied.
- Explain and analyse key beliefs and teachings of those religions.
- Apply those teachings to demonstrate religious beliefs about a wide range of moral and ethical issues.
- Personally reflect on their own responses to moral and ethical issues and reach justified conclusions.
- Adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion.
- Explore religions and beliefs, reflect on fundamental questions, and engage with them intellectually and respond personally.
- Enhance personal, social and cultural development, to understand different cultures locally, nationally and in the wider world.
- Reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their learning.

Disciplinary Vocabulary

Students will be provided with a list of key terms and definitions at the beginning of each topic and these will also be included in revision materials. A sample list is provided below:

Christianity: Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, denomination, omnipotent, omnibenevolent, just, trinity, Holy Spirit, Son of God, creation, the Word, incarnation, resurrection, blasphemy, crucifixion, ascension, heaven, hell, afterlife, day of judgement, purgatory, sin, salvation, grace, atonement.

Islam: Allah, tawhid, monotheistic, supremacy, Qur'an, Sunnah, Sunni, Shi'a, immanent, transcendent, omnipotent, beneficent, merciful, adalat (justice), Jibril, Mika'il, predestination, akhkirah, prophet, prophethood, risalah, Iblis (Satan), Ka'aba, caliph, imam, imamate, Torah, Psalms, Gospel, Scrolls of Abraham.

Prior Learning and Recall

Students should be able to use subject knowledge, skills and vocabulary from KS3 to build on this at KS4.

Homework (Including Links)

Homework will be set in line with the department's homework policy. Activities will include researching upcoming topics, revising for assessment as well as learning key terminology.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
GCSE Religious Studies - AQA - BBC Bitesize		

How Parents can Help

- Parents can help by ensuring pupils are completing their homework and completing adequate revision.
- They attend lessons and are fully equipped.

