



Statement of Intent

Every subject maximises the potential of each student, enabling them to become successful learners, confident learners and responsible citizens. We will ensure that all students are well prepared for life and work and are keen to make a positive difference to the world they live in.

Religious Education

Intent

We base our work around the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025. We seek to provide an innovative and rigorous approach that will promote high standards of RE within our school. This success was recognised in the summer term when the school was awarded 'Gold' in the RE Quality Mark (run by the Religious Education Council). Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, belief about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

Skills

At the heart of the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education is the need for coherent understanding of several religions (systematic study) before bringing them together and comparing different traditions (thematic study). RE is more than learning about 'otherness' but encourages enjoyment in understanding the lives of others, thinking critically and logically and accessing specialist vocabulary. Students are encouraged to think deeply and reflectively, enjoy a good debate and resist extreme narratives. In our students we try to foster the skills of empathy, critical thinking, debate, essay writing, reciprocity and reflectiveness.

Purpose of Study

In RE students learn about religion in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to ultimate and moral questions. Students learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response and to agree or disagree respectfully.

Aims

The principle aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that students can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Assessment

We measure impact in many different ways, the end of unit topic tests and the more formal PPE exams in KS4. These highlight exactly who needs more help to meet their target grades and we can then take proactive measures to intervene. In KS3 we make use of DIT to secure knowledge and then re-visit the topics/skills at a later date to see if this knowledge has stuck.

In key stage 4 we can make our intervention bespoke and by invitation. This may be helping those who are struggling with attainment or to really add that extra push to enable students to achieve the highest grade. Assessment is ongoing and constant, from the tasks set to questioning to the more formal assessments listed above. We use this to tweak and inform our teaching. The way we really gauge how much impact our curriculum is having is by looking at exam results but also asking the students, student voice is very important to us.

Rationale

Our students come to us with many different experiences of RE and our first task is to explain what RE is not, we are here to teach not preach. Students understand where RE sits within the humanities and we spend time thinking about the importance of RE and, 'what's in it for them'.

Year 7

We start with an introduction to RE and address any misconceptions. We encourage students to think about the many different lenses through which we see and experience the world. We start with a systematic study of Christianity as the majority faith worldwide, nationally and locally. We try and include elements of philosophy to avoid the 'dip' from Y6 to Y7. Students learn about Christian theology including the Trinitarian formula and the life of Jesus including his teachings. We explore how the life of Jesus impacts on festivals in the UK and the lived experience for Christians. Students learn about the work of Christians in the local community. The summer term is a systematic study of Buddhism, origin of the faith, teachings of the Buddha and beliefs about the afterlife and reincarnation/karma.

Year 8

Students are encouraged to think about life as a journey, do we all have the same amount of good and bad in our lives? What do we do to mark our milestones and how does faith help with this? Our rationale is that this equips students for real life, understanding marriages, baptisms and funerals for example. We then take a systematic approach to the study of the Sikh faith before a thematic approach to considering life after death. We try to pull in elements of Buddhist tradition here, linking back to prior learning. The skills of research, analysis, empathy and debate are needed for the final unit of work, based around, 'good, bad, right and wrong' with a focus on animal rights.

Year 9

The ways in which we make moral decisions are continued at the start of year 9, considering how we make moral decisions and what they are based on. We highlight the link with other subject areas such as Geography when we consider should Christians be greener than everybody else? In the Spring term we consider why there is suffering, from a humanist and Christian viewpoint. Students look at the Holocaust (this is a focus in History at the same time) and the role religion played, why do some people lose their faith in times of adversity and why does adversity sometimes strengthen belief? We feel that the Holocaust is the most important thing that we teach, we look at how hate can spread and grow and what are the warning signs to be aware of. Hate doesn't start with genocide but prejudice and discrimination. Students consider what we can do in our local, national and global community to help stop hate.

We then move onto the systematic study of Islam and consider what is good and challenging about being a Muslim teenager in Britain today? Being aware of Islamophobia is important as is having high quality RE to know what the religion is about (Islam means Peace and submission) and how this is reflected in daily life. This is particularly important as in Cornwall we are not so religiously diverse as in other areas of the UK.

We finish the year by looking at Cornish spirituality and culture, understanding places of spiritual significance such as the standing stones, St. Nectan's Glen etc. and the old religious traditions of Cornwall.

In addition, all year groups have the opportunity to take part in NATRE's (National association of RE teachers) 'spirited arts' competition.

Why do we teach these topics and why in this order?

What we teach is guided by the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus for education. The syllabus covers early years' foundation stage through to 16-19 provision so the skills and content naturally build upon each other, so in this sense most of the work has been done for us. However, we have autonomy over the order of what is taught within a key stage.

As the agreed syllabus is updated every five years to start from scratch and reinvent the wheel each time is a big task. We therefore looked at what we had in place, what worked well and what needed to go to make room for our new content. We also gave consideration to age appropriateness, maturity levels of students and the skills we wanted to build. We also wanted a balance of thematic and systematic approaches to the study of RE.

There are certain themes and pedagogical principles that weave through the key stages. We draw from Rosenshine but also wanted time to explore a Montessori approach where to some extent, students can choose an area of interest, such as within year 9 and the moral issues homework project. We have listened to student voice who reported that they really enjoyed the moral issues element of the subject and this, along with building the foundation skills for debate is why it was decided to have this in Year 7 for example. Experience often is the biggest factor in deciding when to teach a particular topic. The local LTRE group meet regularly to discuss the curriculum and we are jointly planning the Cornish spirituality curriculum.

Year 10 and 11 GCSE groups follow AQA Spec A Route A with a focus on Christianity and Islam.

Year 10

Students that opted for this subject are given an investigative, extended piece of homework to complete over the summer of Y9, this gives us an idea of student attitude to learning and to flag any potential barriers to learning. This gives a basic understanding and helps to underpin the learning undertaken up until the Easter holidays.

We start with Christian beliefs as per the specification and then move on to practices in the second half of the Autumn Term. We look at how beliefs affect practices so although we move on we are referring back to and making more concrete the learning undertaken in the beliefs unit of work.

The first half of the Spring Term is looking at Islamic beliefs, and we look for commonality between the two faiths, such as religious figures, Holy books, angels and a belief in judgement. The second half of the Spring Term is centred around Islamic practices as per the specification.

At the end of each of these units a topic test is taken, once all this content is covered they will sit a past paper.

Students are encouraged to RAG their knowledge against the spec points and time is made to identify and plug gaps in knowledge. Students have a spread sheet with links that take them to online lessons so catching up is easy to do.

The Summer term is spent starting content for paper two, the 'ethics' part of the course. We start with the Crime and Punishment unit of work, looking at both Muslim and Christian responses. Students are encouraged to apply the subject knowledge acquired studying paper one to predict a response or attitude to the issue at hand in paper two. Sources of Authority used in paper one are also applied where appropriate. Students employ their debate skills first encountered in Y7 to really get to the argument and evaluation of a given statement. In key stage three, part of our assessment is based around 'evaluation' style questions so the structure and language of such questions are now brand new to them.

Year 11

The Autumn Term starts with our second of four units, 'relationships and families'. We look, as always, at what we already know and have a focus on biblical exegesis. This means looking at the context a text was written in and the audience intended. We look at how scripture /SOA can be used in debate. We also link back our learning to 'the journey of life' unit covered in year 8 which looks at rites of passage and why they are important.

In the second half of the Autumn Term we look at Religion and life. There are links here with the PD curriculum in terms of unwanted pregnancy and the family as the building blocks of society.

Our final unit of work is Peace and Conflict. We start by looking at modern historical conflicts and apply The Just War Theory to see how these conflicts sit within this framework. The idea of protest, conscientious objecting and justice is covered. Again this has links to the wider PD curriculum.

The remainder of the academic year is spent on general and targeted revision. Much attention throughout the course is spent on how to answer exam style questions, gaining maximum marks in the time allotted. The analogy used is like a recipe, subject knowledge are the ingredients and how you put together your answer is the method.