Religious Studies

"The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils 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."
Leicestershire Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2021

Intent:

The Religious Studies curriculum aims to develop a passion for learning, including the study of philosophical, ethical, religious and non-religious worldviews. RS is an essential component of a broad and balanced curriculum, enabling pupils to enter into a rich discourse about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. Pupils are empowered to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions through an open, enquiring and exploratory RS curriculum.

RS allows pupils to explore religious and non-religious beliefs in local, national and global contexts, in order to develop coherent understanding. Pupils approach this through a systematic study of religious worldviews including how beliefs, practices and sources of authority influence and are interpreted by believers. This is interleaved with key thematic study which also includes non-religious world views, whereby pupils explore responses to current affairs and key issues within the dynamic 21st century context they find themselves.

From this rich knowledge of religions and worldviews, pupils are able to develop their own understanding of the world and how to live, making sense of the views, understanding the impact on believers' lives and making connections to their own experiences, as outlined by the Leicestershire Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils will be taught to think critically, so they can leave the school as critical world citizens who do not take all things at face value; this is particularly pertinent with social media and the distribution of 'fake news'. We also aim for pupils to identify their own worldviews and moral codes, be those religious or non-religious and help them approach life choices with confidence. The curriculum also supports wider school priorities such as SMSC and British Values.

Students will develop their personal knowledge whilst learning the substantive threshold concepts. By using a variety of disciplinary knowledge, such as theology, philosophy, ethical, humanism, science, sociology and politics, students are able to access a variety of world views and approaches to the study of religious studies.

Implementation:

Our teaching is responsive to the needs of our pupils, ensuring that pupils have secure substantive, disciplinary and development of their personal knowledge through the understanding of threshold concepts and their real-world application. In Religious Studies, we believe in equipping our pupils with the knowledge to confidently tackle philosophical and ethical questions. To do this, we focus on teaching a knowledge-rich curriculum which develops pupils' knowledge of key concepts found in religious and non-religious worldviews. Pupils develop their skills to carry out informed debates and analysis of key issues.

Our curriculum offers opportunities to develop and practice knowledge and understanding, using skills of oracy and extended writing. This secures pupils learning, ensuring they can make connections between existing and new knowledge. Our teaching is underpinned by metacognitive behaviours, encouraging and facilitating all pupils to take

ownership of their own learning and learn how to know about religion with respect and tolerance. This is done through strategies such as modelling, metacognitive talk, use of concrete examples, appropriate challenge, effective use of vocabulary, coaching style feedback, questioning, independent practice and retrieval.

The curriculum is designed to ensure coherent understanding of world religions by systematically studying religious world views and comparing different traditions including non-religious world views within thematic study. By ensuring each topic is well sequenced with knowledge building, and topics being interleaved between systematic and thematic study, pupils can make sense of the world, understand the impact of belief and make connections between their own learning and experiences of the world.

Key Skills

Explanation	Discussion	Enquiry	Evaluation	Analysis
Being able to clearly explain key ideas using evidence and reasoning A key part of the end of topic assessment is explanation	Critically analysing key ideas and sharing them with the class in a clear manner Debating different viewpoints on current affairs and wider issues	Examining concepts and ideas Asking probing questions Investigating key themes from different religions Reflect on the three strands from the LAS- believing, expressing and living	Assessing both sides of the argument and reaching a clear conclusion Considering different points of view and critiquing the arguments	Breaking down concepts into their key components and examining these Analysing key texts from religion Analysing sources

Key Stage 3:

Our curriculum is taught with a mixture of systematic study of religion and thematic learning, giving pupils the chance to learn, use and compare new concepts as well as enhance their understanding and skills in the wider world. These transferable skills will support study of the discipline at both Key Stage 4 and 5.

Year 7

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Year 7	How did we get here?	What is the role of Jesus Christ in Christianity?	What do we mean by Sanatan Dharma?
Year 8	How should we treat…? The environment, animals, humans	What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?	What does it mean to be ethical? Theories
Year 9	How do we act in an ethical way? Applied	Do we need to prove the existence of God?	What do we mean by Sikhi?

KS3 Assessment

At Key Stage 3 each topic is one term in length and pupils are assessed every half term to assess their knowledge, understanding and evaluation skills. All topics will have age specific topic-based exemplars and grade descriptors.

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This assessment will take the form of:
A piece of extended writing mid-term which is usually an evaluation question. These are marked against age specific topic-based grade descriptors to give a grade from Secure Plus (S+) to Beginning (B).
A multiple choice quiz out of 10 completed as an OMR
An End of Topic Test which comprises of multiple choice, shorter knowledge or understanding question(s) and an evaluation extended writing piece. All assessments are out of 22. There will be more knowledge questions for Y7 and less marks for an evaluation question, with the knowledge questions reducing in Y8 and then Y9 to give more marks for evaluative essay, thus shifting the focus to higher-level thinking skills.

The data from these assessments is used to inform the data snapshots which alongside an effort level, is reported to parents.

Key Stage 4

GCSE- AQA Route A

Year 10 AQA Religious Studies Route A	Topic 1 Christian Beliefs	Topic 2 Theme D- Religion, Peace and Conflict	Topic 3 Islam : Beliefs	Topic 4 Theme A- Relationships and Family
Year 11 AQA Religious Studies Route A	Topic 1 Theme B- Religion and Life	Topic 2 Islam: Practices	Topic 3 Theme E- Crime and Punishment	Topic 4 Christian Practices

Those pupils who opt to study the GCSE in Religious Studies complete AQA Route A through the study of Islam and Christianity for Paper 1, and Non-Textual Thematic Studies for Paper 2, completing Themes A, B, D and E.

Pupils receive three lessons a week, beginning in Year 10. The curriculum is interleaved between the Study of Religions and Thematic Studies papers to allow for maximum engagement and to ensure pupils can apply concepts to contemporary issues. The skills at GCSE have been developed during KS3 and then extended in KS4, with a greater focus on using evidence for logical chains of reasoning and evaluation to ensure justification of arguments.

GCSE- KS4 Assessment

Over the GCSE course, pupils have eight end of topic tests to assess their progress and inform data snapshots. They also answer one 12-mark evaluation question each topic, which is teacher assessed and a range of lower mark answers which are self-assessed using success criteria and model answers.

Pupils also complete one trial examination per year. This data is reported to parents.

We use AQA past paper questions with their mark schemes to assess pupils learning and grade these from 9-1 using grade boundaries from AQA. The department often peer mark and the team have partaken in training with AQA to ensure confidence in assessing. Every lesson includes retrieval practice as per our focus on metacognition, and these often also consider Agarwal's idea that higher level questioning can be included in retrieval practice.

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Core RS

The Locally Agreed Syllabus says that students should follow an exam course and that all pupils must follow a Religious Studies course in Key Stage 4, and this presents an opportunity to teach Religion, Philosophy and Ethics to our cohorts in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Pupils will be given an effort grade at each data snapshot.

Pupils are encouraged to engage and reflect with their own beliefs and those which differ with deep respect. They are expected to make rigorous comparisons between beliefs to facilitate a greater tolerance for beliefs which differ from their own. Pupils are also expected to make historical and cultural connections between religious viewpoints and their origins which shows how these beliefs are interconnected.

Pupils are provided with the opportunity to analyse the validity of viewpoints and how persuasive they find them. They are asked to justify their viewpoints on ethical dilemmas showing that they have considered a variety of religious and non-religious viewpoints

Year 10	Topic 1 Should the UK bring back Capital Punishment?	Topic 2 What is Western Philosophy?	Topic 3 Life After Death	Topic 4 Relationships and the Family
Year 11 For first teaching 2025-26	Topic 1- Religion and Human Rights	Topic 2 Is religion a cause for good or a cause of conflict in the world?	Topic 3 Religion and the Sport	(Exam season)

KS4 Assessment

Students will be assessed at the end of every topic with an OMR covering the substantive and disciplinary knowledge. They will also complete one teacher assessed presentation and one self-assessed extended writing per year, with secure success criteria in place to allow for accuracy.