

Religious Studies 5 Year Curriculum Overview

5 Year Curriculum Intent:

It is impossible to be a well-informed person without knowledge of religion. A course in Religious Studies is vital for living life in a pluralistic society and a global culture, the study of religion encompasses many other disciplines such as politics, medicine, law, history, literature, and anthropology and of course that vital concept so often ignored, ethics.

Religion is a major source of inspiration, meaning and controversy in human culture, it informs every aspect of human civilisation, including but not limited to history, politics, economics, art and literature. It humbles trade as the major transnational force across the globe. One cannot even hope to understand human history, civilisation and literature let alone current affairs and politics without knowledge of religion.

Religion has inspired artists, musicians, hymn makers and writers including TS Elliott, Dante, Tupac Shakur, Euripides, William Blake, Tolstoy, Einstein and Gandhi among countless others. Religious ritual and belief are among the most powerful forces uniting past and present, shaping memory and identity from generation to generation and across millennia.

Religious Studies is a diversified and multi-faceted discipline focusing on the study of specific traditions and the general nature of religion as a human phenomenon. It spans cultures around the world, ancient as well as modern. It also combines a variety of mythologies including but not limited to textual, historical, literary, social scientific, philosophical and art historical approaches. Religious Studies provides excellent training for a variety of careers such as law, counselling, journalism, medicine, politics, writing, psychology and the arts.

Our department encourages pupils to become well informed and independent thinkers prepared to learn and engage with other cultures, and people and from their ideas. The department requires pupils to think without bias and to pay close attention to facts through the un-prejudicial reading of texts and sources. Pupils are encouraged to have an open attitude towards all people and to make observations of individual and group behaviours. Pupils apply critical analysis and interpretation to literary and material data based on appropriate theoretical and methodological tools. Pupils are expected to communicate findings and conclusions through a process of analytical writing.

Fundamentally the department seeks to develop thoughtful human beings who can function in an over simplified narrative driven society where the truth is a commodity that can be bought and only a tiny proportion of human beings seek to see through the diet of propaganda that they are fed daily.

The lessons within the department are fundamentally a space for discussion and thought, we aim to deliver the following for every student within the classroom irrespective of ability or background.

1. A space to consider personal ideas and the ideas of others
2. A space to learn about aspects of UK society that are a concern for all citizens.
3. An opportunity to engage with the topics discussed either verbally or through written work considering the strengths of individual students.

Careers Links

The following skills are central to religious education and are reflected in the learning opportunities at Weaverham. This syllabus places an important emphasis on the development of skills at all stages of learning. This section highlights the skills intrinsic to RS, followed by the contribution of RS to the broader skills in the curriculum. These skills are:

a) **Investigation** – this includes:

- asking relevant questions;
- knowing how to use a variety of sources in order to gather information;
- knowing what may count as good evidence in understanding religion(s).

b) **Interpretation** – this includes:

- the ability to draw meaning from artefacts, works of art, poetry and symbolism;

- the ability to interpret religious language;
- the ability to suggest meanings of religious texts.

c) **Reflection** – this includes:

- the ability to reflect on feelings, experience, attitudes, beliefs, values, relationships, practices and ultimate questions.

d) **Empathy** – this includes:

- developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow;
- the ability to consider the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others;
- the ability to see the world through the eyes of others, and to see issues from their point of view.

e) **Evaluation** – this includes:

- the ability to debate issues of religious significance with reference to evidence, argument, opinion and statements of faith;
- weighing the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience.

f) **Analysis** – this includes:

- distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact;
- recognizing bias, caricature, prejudice and stereotyping;
- distinguishing between the features of different religions.

g) **Synthesis** – this includes:

- linking significant features of religion(s) together in a coherent pattern;
- connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole.

h) **Application** – this includes:

- making links between religion and individual, community, national and international life;
- identifying key religious values and their links with secular values.

i) **Expression** – this includes:

- the ability to articulate ideas, beliefs and values;
- the ability to respond to religious ideas, beliefs and questions through a variety of media.

j) **Self-understanding** – this includes:

- the ability to draw meaning from significant experiences in their own and others' lives and from religious questions and answers.

Essential Skill and the contribution of RS:

- LITERACY
- NUMERACY
- ICT CAPABILITY
- LEARNING AND THINKING SKILLS
- PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS
- SOCIAL SKILLS
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RS makes a significant contribution to five of these six essentials for learning in the following ways:

LITERACY

RS can help pupils to:

- acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary;
- communicate their ideas with depth and precision;
- listen to the views and ideas of others, including people from religious traditions;
- be enthusiastic about the power and beauty of language, recognizing its limitations;
- develop their speaking and listening skills when considering religious beliefs and ideas and articulating their responses;
- read, and interpret at an appropriate level, sacred texts;
- write in different styles such as poetry, diaries, extended writing and the synthesis of differing views, beliefs and ideas;
- evaluate clearly and rationally, using a range of reasoned, balanced arguments.

Of all the key areas in the curriculum, literacy, in many ways, is the one RE has the strongest connections with.

In terms of **speaking and listening**, learning in RS can help pupils to:

- listen well to the viewpoints of others;
- structure ideas and viewpoints clearly;
- make relevant comments on their learning in RS;
- articulate their own views and ideas using reasoned arguments;
- use specialist vocabulary with increasing accuracy and fluency.

In terms of **reading** RS can help pupils to explore a range of key stories, teachings and sayings from different religions, considering their meanings and the ways in which they have been interpreted;

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- distinguish between facts, opinions and beliefs;
 - make connections between different parts of a text;
 - consider viewpoints and arguments carefully;
 - reflect on how the contemporary media conveys the place of religion in the world e.g., newspapers, magazines, articles, leaflets, advertisements;
 - consider how and why texts have been influential and significant;
 - compare texts, looking at style, theme and language, identifying connections;
 - reflect on how ideas, values and emotions are explored and portrayed.

In terms of **writing** RS can help pupils to:

- use a range of techniques and different ways of structuring material to convey ideas, themes and beliefs;
- present material clearly, using appropriate layout, illustrations and organisation;
- develop logical arguments and cite evidence;
- analyse critically their own and others' writing;
- use specialist vocabulary accurately and consistently;
- use a variety of writing styles e.g. diaries, poetry and structured essays to convey their learning in RS.

ICT CAPABILITY

RS can help pupils to:

- make appropriate use of the internet or CD-ROM sources to investigate, analyze and evaluate aspects of religious beliefs and practices, ultimate questions and ethical issues;
- use email or video conferencing to communicate and collaborate with individuals in different locations, enabling associations to be made between religions and individual, national and international life;
- use multimedia and presentation software to communicate a personal response, the essence of an argument or a stimulus for discussion;
- use writing support and concept-mapping software to organise ideas and communicate knowledge and understanding of the diversity of belief and practice within and between religious traditions;
- use equipment such as digital cameras and videos, to bring authentic images into the classroom to support discussion and reflection, and to enhance understanding of the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the lives of local individuals and faith communities.

LEARNING and THINKING SKILLS

RS can help pupils to:

- investigate beliefs, practices and ways of life using resources effectively and developing knowledge and understanding;
- think creatively, sharing their own thoughts and conclusions, reflecting on how religions and beliefs express key beliefs and teachings in a variety of ways;
- investigate, reflect on and evaluate important question of meaning;
- communicate both ideas and values in religion and belief and their own thoughts and ideas, interacting with different audiences and using a range of media;
- evaluate the place and significance of religion and belief in today's world, developing their own views, using reasoned and thoughtful arguments.

PERSONAL and EMOTIONAL SKILLS

RS can help pupils to:

- identify their strengths and areas for improvement in their learning in RE be aware of both their own feelings and those of others, especially people from different faiths and beliefs;
- reflect on their experiences and how these might relate to their learning in RE;
- work both independently and collaboratively with others;
- demonstrate perseverance in their learning in RE especially when faced with challenging concepts and ideas.

SOCIAL SKILLS

RS can help pupils to:

- listen well and respond respectfully and sensitively when encountering people from different faiths and beliefs;
- show both empathy and critical awareness;
- consider their rights and responsibilities and the key beliefs and teachings within religion on human nature, relationships and the value /purpose of human beings.

The skills developed in Religious Studies are so wide ranging and so essential for life in the modern world that they are applicable to any subject area, critical thinking recognition of historical and cultural positions is vital for all areas of business, they can inform successful social interactions and can lead to a level of awareness that has a hugely positive impact in any area of employment. However, some of the most common career paths taken are as follows:

- Advice worker
- Archivist
- Charity officer
- Civil Service administrator
- Community development worker
- Diplomatic service officer
- Doctor
- Equality, diversity and inclusion officer
- Finance
- International aid/development worker
- Mediator
- Newspaper journalist
- Policy officer
- Politician's assistant
- Politician
- Solicitor
- Social Worker
- Youth worker
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	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 7	What is religion?	What does it mean to be a Buddhist?	What is stewardship?
5 Year Links	- Theology - Philosophy	- Theology - Eastern Philosophy	- Theology - Sociology
School Curriculum Links	- History - Science	- History - Geography	English – suffragette movement / gay rights / workers' rights
Year 8	What does it mean to be Jewish?	What does it mean to be a Christian?	What does it mean to be a Muslim?
5 Year Links	- Theology - Sociology	- Theology - Sociology	- Theology - Sociology
School Curriculum Links	- History – Holocaust - Geography – population movements - English – antisemitism	- Geography - History	- English – Macbeth - English - migration
Year 9	What is the purpose of human existence?	Is there any such thing as truth and justice?	Why does conflict perpetuate?
5 Year Links	- Philosophy - Theology	- Philosophy - Sociology - Theology	- Theology - Sociology
School Curriculum Links	Science – genetics and evolution	- History - Science	- History – Conflict - Geography – natural resources - English – refugees/ migration routes / origins of race /
Year 10	Christian Beliefs / Marriage and Family	Living the Christian life / Matters of life and death	Revision
5 Year Links	- Theology - Sociology - Philosophy	- Theology - Sociology - Philosophy	- Theology - Sociology - Philosophy
School Curriculum Links	Critical thinking	- Life Curriculum - Science	
Year 11	Muslim beliefs / Living the Muslim life	Crime and punishment / Peace and conflict	Revision
5 Year Links	- Theology - Sociology - Philosophy	- Theology - Sociology - Philosophy	- Theology - Sociology - Philosophy
School Curriculum Links	Critical thinking	Critical thinking	N/A