

Religious Studies (RS) at Norbury High

Overview

The RS Department at Norbury High aims to provide students with an extensive, profound and meaningful understanding of faith and culture. It allows students to explore the major philosophical and ethical questions of life, from creation to afterlife, which will give them a sense of identity and community, and equip them to live in a complex, polarized, and multi-religious and multi-secular society.

Religious education is crucial in the world today for it breaks down barriers and stereotypes, bringing people together in the fight for social justice and global peace. The RS Department encourages its students to discover the views of others through developing their comprehension, evaluation and discussion skills, with aims of understanding influence, diversity and key ideas to outline students' similarities and have a respect for their differences.

Our practitioners teach each religious view from a 'neutral stance', however this does not translate to teaching from a 'non-religious' worldview. We ensure that each religion is covered in a profound way so that pupils are provided with a depth of knowledge that can be utilized in later study.

At Key Stage 3 students are taught 2 lessons per fortnight, which increases to 6 at Key Stage 4, and 11 at Key Stage 5.

Parents and carers reserve the right to withdraw their children from all or part of religious education.

Key Stage 3

The Key Stage 3 Curriculum is centered around delivering a broad and profound curriculum. Our aim is to ensure that our curriculum is not superficially broad so that depth can be achieved, ensuring transferring disciplinary knowledge between the Key Stages and beyond.

Curriculum is split between specific themes, such as the environment and religious food laws, and a deep dive into the major 6 religions, as well as humanism and non-religious perspectives.

Year 7 – Theme: Beliefs

UNIT 1: Where do my world views come from?

Students explore the concept of a worldview: the lenses through which people understand life, meaning, and reality. They examine religious and non-religious worldviews, comparing how different perspectives shape values and identity.

Assessment: Baseline assessment (prior learning)

UNIT 2: What food laws do believers follow?

Learners investigate how belief influences dietary practices, studying food laws in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and other traditions, discussing how it expresses identity.

Assessment: Interpreting Text

UNIT 3: Who is God? Who is Jesus? (Also taught to Year 8 in Autumn 2 25/26)

This unit focuses on who God is and what are God's qualities across Abrahamic faith. It also looks at Christian beliefs about Jesus; his life and influence on today's Christians

Assessment: Evaluating arguments,

UNIT 4: How do religious believers know right from wrong? (SoW)

Students learn how different religions and worldviews make moral decisions. They explore sacred texts, religious leaders, community traditions, conscience, and reason as sources of moral guidance, comparing similarities and differences.

Assessment: Interpreting Text

UNIT 5: What core beliefs are taught in Hinduism?

This unit introduces core Hindu beliefs such as dharma (duty), karma (actions and consequences), samsara (rebirth), and the concept of Brahman. Students explore Hindu deities, worship practices, and how beliefs shape celebrations.

Assessment: Examining influence

UNIT 6: How diverse are Jewish beliefs?

This unit examines the diversity within Judaism, including Orthodox, Reform, and Progressive perspectives. Students investigate beliefs about God, the covenant, mitzvot, and the role of community, exploring how these vary across Jewish groups.

Assessment: Expressing diversity

Year 8 – Theme: Practices

UNIT 1: How do Muslims stay on the straight path? The Five Pillars

Students study the core practices of Islam—Shahadah, Salah, Zakah, Sawm, and Hajj—and how these shape the lives of Muslims worldwide. They explore the spiritual purpose of each pillar and how they build community and devotion.

Assessment: Interpreting Text

UNIT 2: Who is God? Who is Jesus?

This unit focuses on who God is and what are God's qualities across Abrahamic faith. It also looks at Christian beliefs about Jesus; his life and influence on today's Christians

Assessment: Evaluating arguments,

UNIT 3: How do Sikhs practice social justice?

This unit highlights Sikh teachings on service and justice. Students learn about the Khalsa, Langar, and Sikh activism, linking these to human rights and poverty.

Assessment: examining influence

UNIT 4: Who has made a difference to the world?

Students investigate inspirational female figures who have promoted justice, peace, or positive social change. They evaluate how belief can motivate individuals.

Assessment: Examining Influence

UNIT 5: How do Buddhists achieve Nirvana?

This unit introduces the life of the Buddha and key Buddhist beliefs such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, impermanence, and compassion. Students explore how these teachings influence Buddhist practice and attitudes.

Assessment: Interpreting Text

UNIT 6: Do religious believers have a duty to the poor?

Learners explore religious and ethical perspectives on wealth, poverty, charity, and fairness. They analyse teachings from Christianity, Islam, Humanism, and other traditions, debating questions around inequality and moral responsibility.

Assessment: Evaluating Arguments

Year 9 – 25/26

UNIT 1: Are animals equal in value to humans?

This unit is a study of how different religious and non-religious believers value animals based on ethical framework from key individuals.

Assessment: Evaluating arguments, interpreting text

UNIT 2: How does Karma affect believers of Dharmic Faiths?

Students examine Hinduism and Sikhism, understanding Karma in their daily lives.

Assessment: Expressing diversity, examining influence

UNIT 3: Is the afterlife real?

This unit introduces the afterlife, especially heaven and hell from an Abrahamic faith perspective.

Assessment: Evaluating arguments, Interpreting text

Key Stage 4

Students will study the Eduqas (formerly WJEC) GCSE, which incorporates three exams. These exams feature a mixture of short answer questions and essay writing.

Students will focus on the study of Christianity and Islam throughout. Component 1 allows them to make comparisons between these two religions on different themes. Components 2 and 3 provide for a much more extensive and independent study into each of these religions, focusing on their core beliefs and practices.

Year 10

Component 1: Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in modern world.

Relationships:

The purpose of marriage and family, marriage ceremonies, cultural traditions, divorce, adultery, same-sex relationships and gender equality

Life and Death:

Creation, religion and science, the environment, sanctity of life, abortion, euthanasia, funerals and the afterlife

Good and Evil:

Crime and punishment, death penalty, forgiveness, suffering and the problem of evil

Human Rights

Social justice, censorship and free speech, extremism, prejudice and discrimination, wealth and poverty

Year 11

Component 2: Christianity.

Christianity: beliefs and teachings:

Nature of God, the Trinity, creation, the life of Jesus and the afterlife

Christianity: practices:

Worship, prayer, sacraments, celebrations, pilgrimage and Christianity in Britain

Component 3: Islam.

Islam: beliefs and teachings:

The Ummah, Sunni and Shia, nature of Allah, prophets, angels, predestination and the afterlife

Islam: practices:

The Five Pillars of Islam, the 10 Obligatory Acts, jihad and festivals

Key Stage 5

Students study the OCR Religious Studies A Level, which incorporates three exams, featuring a choice of 4 essay questions each, of which students choose 3. Sat in summer of Year 13

Year 12

Unit 1: Philosophy of Religion

Ancient Philosophical influences

Plato (Understanding of reality, The Forms, The Analogy of the cave)

Aristotle (Understanding of reality, The four causes, The Prime Mover)

Soul, Mind and Body

Philosophical language in the thinking of Plato and Aristotle

Metaphysics of consciousness, including:

- Substance dualism
- Materialism

Arguments based on observation

The Teleological argument

The cosmological argument

Challenges to arguments from observation

Arguments based on reason

The ontological argument

The nature and influence of religious experience including:

The nature of religious experience

- Mystical experience
- Conversion experience

Different ways individual religious experience can be understood

The Problem of Evil

Different presentations

Theodicies that propose justification or reason for divine action or inaction in the face of evil

Unit 2: Religion and Ethics

Aquinas' natural law, including:

The Telos

The four tiers of law

The precepts

Fletcher's situation ethics, including:

Agape

The Four working principles

The six propositions

Conscience

Kantian Ethics

The Ethics of duty

The Hypothetical imperative

The categorical imperative

Utilitarianism

Utility

The Hedonic Calculus

Act utilitarianism

Rule utilitarianism

Euthanasia

Sanctity and Quality of life

Voluntary and non-voluntary euthanasia

Business ethics

Key ideas including

- Corporate social responsibility
- Whistle-blowing
- Good ethics is good business
- Globalization

The application of Kantian ethics and utilitarianism to business ethics

Unit 3: Developments in Christian Thought

Augustine on human nature

Human relationships pre- and post- Fall

Original sin and its effects on the will and human societies

God's grace

Death and the Afterlife

Heaven, hell and purgatory

Election

Knowledge of God's existence

Natural knowledge of God's existence:

- As an innate human sense of the divine
- As seen in the order of creation

Revealed knowledge of God's existence

- Through faith and God's grace
- Revealed knowledge of God in Jesus Christ

The person of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ's authority as:

- Son of God
- Teacher of wisdom
- Liberator

Christian moral principles

The diversity of Christian moral reasoning and practices and sources of ethics including:

- The bible as the only authority for Christian ethical practices
- The bible, church and reason as sources
- Love (agape) as the only Christian ethical principle

Christian moral action

The teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on

- Duty to God and duty to the state
- Church as community and source of spiritual discipline
- The cost of discipleship

Year 13

Unit 1: Philosophy of Religion

Nature or Attributes of God

Developments in the understanding of:

- Omnipotence
- Omniscience
- Omnibenevolence
- Eternity
- Free Will

Religious language: Negative, analogical or symbolic

The apophatic way – via negative

The cataphatic way – via positive

Symbols

Religious language: 20th Century perspectives and philosophical

comparisons

Logical positivism

Wittgenstein's views on language games and forms of life

Discussion about the factual quality of religious language in the falsification symposium

Unit 2: Religion and Ethics

Meta-ethical theories

Naturalism

Intuitionism

Emotivism

Conscience

Aquinas' theological approach

Freud's psychological approach

Sexual ethics

Consideration of the following areas of sexual ethics:

- Premarital sex and extramarital sex
- Homosexuality

The influence of developments in religious belief and practice on debates about the morality, legality and tolerability of these areas of sexual ethics

Application of the following theories to these areas of sexual ethics:

- Natural law
- Situation ethics
- Kantian ethics
- Utilitarianism

Unit 3: Development in Christian Thought

Religious pluralism and theology

The teaching contemporary Christian theolog of religion on:

- Exclusivism
- Inclusivism
- Pluralism

Religious pluralism and society

The development of contemporary multi-faith societies

Christian responses to, including:

- Responses of Christian communities to inter-faith dialogue
- The scriptural reasoning movement

Gender and Society

The effects of changing views of gender and gender roles on Christian thought and practice, including:

- Christian teaching on the roles of men and women in the family and society
- Christian responses to contemporary secular views about the roles of men and women in the family and society

Gender and theology

The reinterpretation of God by feminist theologians, including the teaching of Rosemary Radford Ruether and Mary Daly on gender and its implications for the Christian idea of God

The Challenge of Secularism

The rise of secularism and secularization, and the views that:

- God is an illusion and the result of wish fulfilment
- Christianity should play no part in public life

Liberation theology and Marx

The relationship of liberation theology and Marx, including:

- Marx's teaching on alienation and exploitation
- Liberation theology's use of Marx to analyse social sin
- Liberation theology's teaching on the 'preferential option of the poor'