

Religious Education

Curriculum Principles

Our department vision:

We develop students to make informed decisions and judgements about the world around them, promoting tolerance and acceptance of diverse cultures and viewpoints.

By the end of their all-through education, a student of RE at Dixons Kings will:

- Know key beliefs and practices of world faiths and how such beliefs influence individuals and communities. They will know how sacred writings and key individuals impact people today as well as knowing how certain philosophical arguments may challenge religious ideas and morals. This supports Ofsted's recent review of RE (May 2021) about delivering high quality substantive knowledge so students have accurate knowledge about religion and non-religion.
- Understand how to make informed decisions relating to religious, philosophical and ethical beliefs and to appreciate diversity within and between religions. They will understand how to value beliefs different to their own and critically analyse and evaluate the impact of various beliefs on an individual and the world around them. This supports Ofsted's review of RE where it emphasised the importance of personal knowledge and allowing "students to build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study".

In order to truly appreciate the subject and create deep schema, topics within RE have been intelligently sequenced with the following rationale:

- Students begin looking at the skills needed to articulate content effectively and coherently. This is done by looking at specific structures and frameworks that are reinforced throughout the year and allows them to interact with the knowledge given. Students engage with new skills by looking at Islam as our intake and demographic means that a considerable number of students are likely to come with a good baseline of knowledge in this area. This means that more emphasis may be put on building GCSE exam skills and improving literacy for RE. This also means that greater emphasis can be put on things students don't know, rather than things they already know, broadening their knowledge of the wider world and other religions and cultures.
- At KS2, students have a mixed experience when it comes to RE. Some students may be taught about religions like Islam and Christianity at primary level, and some are not. As a result, RE is taught on the basis that many students come with little or no knowledge. A constructivist approach is taken so students have an opportunity to share what they may know and then build upon it. This is why lessons are planned with brainstorm/ mind-map activities or MWB questioning when starting new content and challenging misconceptions is kept in mind when planning lessons. For example, students may assume Muhammad (pbuh) wrote the Qur'an or was given it as a full book and the lesson about the revelation story emphasises this is not the case. Students may also assume Christians believe in three gods due to the concept of the Trinity so the lesson on the Trinity and retrieval tasks following that does challenge this.
- At KS3, students focus on all the world faiths to promote tolerance and acceptance of diverse cultures and viewpoints. They explore key beliefs and practices within each faith and are able to see commonality and differences among world faiths and other beliefs. We have looked at themes that run across each religion and have explicitly added it to the SOW so students recognise and appreciate commonalities. This knowledge is then used and applied to ethical and moral issues such as the use of prisons, the value of the world and the debate around freedom of religious expression. Not only does this knowledge allow them to have the necessary basis to be successful in their GCSEs, it also allows them to critically evaluate the role of religion in all of human life and appreciate how it may form a basis for moral and ethical viewpoints. This is why at KS3 students study outside of the GCSE specification requirements. For example, they study Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism as well as exploring philosophical views surrounding the existence of God, especially in relation to the problem of evil and suffering in the world. Being able to identify the religious reasoning behind various moral decisions will also allow students to develop their own methods of moral reasoning outside a religious context. This supports Ofsted's review of RE where it is encouraged that the RE curriculum also helps students develop 'ways of knowing' so they learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion.
- At KS4, they begin the GCSE which is centred on two religions: Christianity and Islam. Islam is taught as the other main religion because not only does it share many commonalities to Christianity with it being an Abrahamic faith, but it is also the most other influential religion in Great Britain today. At the same time, it is the most relevant religion to study in the current international climate with the conflicts in the Middle East, and it is a religion mentioned the most in the media usually through the lens of terrorism, war and fear. As a result, it is important to deconstruct myths and clarify truths about the key principles and beliefs in Islam so students are equipped to tackle misconceptions surrounding the faith even outside the classroom.
- **KS3 RE builds the foundation for them to do well at GCSE as they are exposed to exam skills, exam question structures and some exam content in Year 7 and 8. For example, they study basic beliefs and practices in Christianity in Year 7 and explore topics like crime and human rights in Year 8, which they study in greater detail at GCSE. Students begin**



with learning key beliefs and practices within the faith and use this as well as other knowledge to apply to ethical and moral situations when studying Paper 2 (Thematic Studies). It allows students to have a good understanding of the faith and the importance of sacred writings and key individuals before exploring to what extent these religious convictions shape a person's moral compass and views of issues in the world, and specifically in contemporary British society. For example, when looking at the value of the world and the relationship between science and religion regarding the origins of the universe, they refer back to the creation story in Genesis, the nature of God in both religions and arguments related to the problem of evil and suffering. This equips students to go on to A-level and university level through the content taught at GCSE and the emphasis put on philosophical problems and the fact that understanding and analysis of religious texts as well as alternative interpretations prepares them for potential theological study at a higher level.

- To ensure content is recalled and revisited, we adopt several methods to encourage retrieval. Students will consistently revisit topics (spaced learning) through regular retention 'do-nows' and this addresses challenging keywords as well as reinforcing skills needed to answer a question. Do-nows are systematically designed so it covers a full range of topics taught. Formative assessments largely involve students reflecting upon what they have learnt previously so retention of content is maintained. Alongside this, there are review lessons within SOW to recall previous learning and support with retrieval. Homework tasks are created to encourage revision with keywords tests; reinforce skills taught with practice questions and recall key beliefs and teachings with knowledge quizzes. Each piece of homework is either teacher marked or peer-marked during the lesson to ensure it is purposeful and errors/misconceptions are corrected.

The RE curriculum at Kings has been influenced by:

- Ofsted research review series: religious education (published May 2021)
- AQA Specification A for examinations 2018 onwards: Islam, Christianity, Themes (non-textual studies)
- Lat Blaylock and his work with NATRE
- Black and William's Inside the Black Box related to marking and feedback
- The Learning Scientists on spacing and retrieval practice ('Understanding how we learn')
- NATRE (subscribed to this as a department)
- Michael Young on powerful knowledge and Olaf Franck on accessing powerful RE knowledge

Our RE curriculum ensures that social disadvantage is addressed through:

- The fact that, from the outset, it is made clear to students that they can achieve highly and this opens opportunities for them later in life
- Our emphasis on particular literacy skills allows students to be more articulate and to communicate ideas with clarity. These are transferrable skills enabling students to access any subject better. For example, the PEE/PEEL structure is something other faculties such as History and Geography also encourage
- It allows them to explore and gain knowledge about beliefs and values different to their own that they may not encounter elsewhere. DKA is in an area of Bradford where students are mainly exposed to the British Pakistani culture and the religion of Islam so it is important for students to engage with a wide range of world faiths and worldviews so that they can flourish both within their own community and as members of a diverse and global society. This is why in Year 7 they also study Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism and specific practices within the faith they may not be familiar with such as the Sabbath and Langar meal
- The content delivered allows students to engender responsible attitudes towards other people and allows them to gain better emotional intelligence. It allows students to have a safe space to discuss their own beliefs and values which they may not have at home and be able to address misconceptions through a meaningful and informed dialogue. For example, at KS4 they look at homosexuality and the status and treatment of homosexuals within religion
- They explore moral dilemmas such as animal testing, euthanasia and the death penalty allowing them to gain an awareness of different beliefs, situations and policies in the world that shapes a person's attitudes to such ethical issues
- Stereotypes are challenged by exploring issues like the status and role of women in religion so they reach informed opinions
- Marking of and feedback for SEN is more frequent than non-SEN to improve their progress and disadvantaged students receive priority for intervention support both in the classroom and after school. This is to ensure every opportunity is taken to close the gap



- All revision material is provided so there is no requirement to purchase resources from an external company and free online resources like Memrise are also used to aid and support learning. Textbooks are not used but revision guides written by the department so students have greater access to the resource and are able to engage with it better
- Access to Home Learning is provided to all students and this is updated on a weekly basis to ensure all lessons are online in the case of absence. This allows students to access homework tasks as well and receive electronic copies of knowledge navigators. Laptops are provided to certain students to ensure they have equality of access to this

We fully believe RE can contribute to the personal development of students at Dixons Kings through:

- Allowing students to reflect upon key philosophical questions such as the origins of the universe, the afterlife and beliefs about God and the existence of God. This is achieved through asking open-ended questions and creating a safe learning environment where students can not only share their views, but respectfully challenge views different to their own. Through this they learn that people may have disagreements in life, but we can still live in harmony
- Teaching about the world faiths as this ensures students gain an insight into the lives of others so that they learn to accept and respect differences within faiths and cultures, as well as appreciate similarities between them. For example, students are taught about the Langar meal in the Sikh tradition as well Zakah in Islam and the emphasis of serving and helping others in Christianity. This helps to combat prejudice and discrimination and promote community cohesion within Bradford as well as the wider local and global community. SOW have been intentionally designed to cover similar themes within religion so such comparisons can be made. For example, they study the nature of God in all faiths as well as exploring the influence of key figures and sources of authority for religious believers today
- Providing opportunities for social development. Social development involves working with people from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds as well as cooperating with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively. This is why students are taught about how religion encourages peace, love and harmony between people and teaches its followers to value every individual. Students explore how key figures like Jesus, Muhammad (pbuh) and Gandhi used peaceful methods to resolve conflicts and how organisations such as the Corrymeela Community encourage interfaith dialogue and promote positive citizenship. This supports British values of creating a society that is cohesive and built upon mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith
- Guiding students in their moral development. This is the ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and their readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives as well as an understanding of the consequences of actions. For example, at KS3 and KS4, students look at crimes and the intention behind a crime as well as looking at the use of animal testing for medical purposes. They are also given the opportunity to discuss key life questions in Year 8 such as what are our morals and how do we make moral decisions. This also helps prepare them for future life in employment and lifelong learning
- Helping students to understand British values. In RE we make a unique contribution by getting people to think about tolerance and respect. The curriculum allows students to explore concepts of fairness and justice, the rule of law, and the idea that we all count and we all deserve a say in what happens in our communities.

Our belief is that homework is used for deliberate practice of what has been taught in lessons. We also use retrieval practice and spaced revision to support all students with committing knowledge to long term memory.

- Homework tasks are created to encourage revision with keywords tests; reinforce skills taught with practice questions and recall key beliefs and teachings with knowledge quizzes. Each piece of homework is either teacher marked or peer-marked during the lesson to ensure it is purposeful and errors/ misconceptions are corrected.
- Homework at KS4 is more systematic following a specific plan to ensure all content has been revisited and reviewed. For example, when studying Islamic Practices in Year 9/10, homework focuses on content learnt previously such as Islamic Beliefs and basic knowledge of Christianity taught in Year 7

Opportunities to build an understanding of social, moral and ethical issues are developed alongside links to the wider world, including careers:

- Students reflect upon their own values and beliefs and consider challenges posed by the beliefs they or others may hold. For example, they look at key figures in religion such as Jesus and Muhammad (pbuh) and discuss to what extent they are still important and relevant to people today
- It enables students to gain an insight into practices they may not be familiar with such as the commemoration of Ashura in Shi'a Islam as many students identify themselves as Sunni Muslims. This enables students to be aware of and appreciate the diversity of cultures and faiths in Britain and the world today, which is essential in any career when working with people from various backgrounds so that they can serve the community they work in well
- Students are taught how religion is an important expression of human experience when looking at how beliefs influence believers enabling them to develop respect for others and an understanding of beliefs and practices which



are different from their own. For example, students look at how the crucifixion of Jesus has led to specific practices today for Christians such as performing Holy Communion and celebrating Easter

- They study Christianity as that is the main religion in contemporary British society allowing them to reflect upon how the religion has shaped particular traditions in our country today and this is reinforced when they look at the abortion law in the UK and the use of the death penalty
- They explore real life issues such as euthanasia, the use of corporal punishment, abortion and animal testing. This allows them to appreciate how real-life issues are multi-faceted. They learn their judgements about it are affected by the moral domain (things inherently right or wrong based on their effect on others); the conventional domain (things being right or wrong based on what is socially acceptable) and the personal domain (things being right or wrong based on personal choices and opinions affected by factors such as the people you are around or religious/ non-religious values an individual may have). To do this they not only engage with religious views on morality but also other methods for moral reasoning such as the principle of utility and virtue ethics
- By exploring moral and ethical issues and engaging in discussions where they are taught to respectfully challenge an opinion, students learn how to work with others and resolve conflicting ideas/ problems in a more caring and informed manner
- Religious tolerance and ideas surrounding equality, diversity and valuing every individual is highlighted in the Human Rights topic. They explore the rights each individual is entitled to in Britain and their responsibilities in relation those rights. This enables them to not only learn about how they should treat others, but also empowers them to understand what they are entitled to in the local and global community. It gives them a voice to speak for themselves and others, to share their opinions and to find ways to tackle injustice on a daily basis
- Students reflect upon the causes of crime and the effectiveness of particular punishments and such skills may support them in careers related to law, counselling and working for the government. It may also support them if ever asked to become a member of the jury in the future

Remote working in our subject supports students to access the full curriculum in the following ways:

- **Students can join on Teams from home when lessons take place during school. This may be due to self-isolation or absence for another reason where a student may still be able to complete work and attend lessons/ parts of a lesson. They can receive live teaching and hear student responses, as well as make contributions via the Chat feature on Teams. All resources are available on SharePoint to download prior to the lesson and/or attached in the Chat during the lesson**
- **Microsoft Forms is used to set assignments and mark work and this occurs on a weekly basis so students can receive feedback. This consists of multiple choice questions and are in the form of GCSE style questions so exam practice and exposure is maintained**
- **Students have access to all resources on SharePoint including knowledge navigators**
- **Students may email teachers asking for support and the policy is for staff to respond within 24 working hours**
- **Videos have been recorded for lessons on certain topics and these can be shared as and when appropriate**

Further Information can be found in:

- Long term plans
- Schemes of work
- Knowledge Navigators
- Revision Guides (created by the RE department at DKA)
- AQA Specification A 8062