

Religious Studies Curriculum

The Vision for all our students who study RS (Intent)

RS seeks to challenge all students to explore different cultures and to discuss the key global issues that confront humanity in the 21st Century. RS should enable pupils to gain information of the 6 principle religions in the UK. It should allow students to develop an understanding of the beliefs values and traditions on individuals, communities and society from both within the UK and wider world. Students should be able to make reasoned and informed judgements of the different regions and moral issues with reference to key teachings from the different religions. Most importantly students should develop respect and tolerance towards people who hold views different to their own whether those views be directly about religion, or politics or other moral values.

There are four specific aims of the RS department at KEVI.

Firstly, students should view RS as an interesting and exciting subject. All teachers within the department have an agreed belief that is through the good teaching of RS that we can help our students develop as decent people.

Secondly, we wish to transmit knowledge and understanding of RS, both within the United Kingdom and of the wider world. Students should have an understanding of the negative impact of intolerance and ignorance on community; locally, nationally and internationally.

Thirdly, it is our aim that students continuously develop life skills such as thinking, evaluating, analysing, empathizing and communicating; there are very few jobs that do not require these skills. The most important skills we wish to develop are those of thinking and communicating. The ability to think imaginatively is the most fundamental skill to develop, but in order to express ideas, students must also be able to communicate effectively; after all, it is no good having a good idea if you cannot tell anyone about it.

Finally our mission is to prepare students for the rigours of the GCSE exams. This will begin in Y7 where class based assessments will echo the wording of the examination questions. The exam process in GCSE RS is robust with students being asked to remember key teachings and information of 6 topics. We would be remiss if we did not take this into account.

“The lessons taught in RE are especially necessary after leaving school, as we meet people from different backgrounds, traditions and religious beliefs from across the world. The underestimated importance of RE is also that it helps overcome prejudices and negative stereotypes.” – The Guardian

Rationale (Implementation)

We have a discrete lesson for RE in key stage 3 because we feel that this best provides a basis for the GCSE that students pursue at KS4. There is one compulsory lesson a week in KS4 this meets the governments requirements for RE delivery. We follow short course because this then also gives the students a GCSE outcome which adds to their CV. Students who wish can top this up to the full course GCSE by opting for it as an option at KS4 at the end of Year 9.

RE coverage at KS5 remains ad hoc and is covered through the Tutorial programme covered by the Head of 6th form through guest speakers etc.

Key Stage 3 pupils study a wide range of religious beliefs and then compare and contrast them. They then begin to apply these beliefs to philosophical and moral issues that affect us today. Topics and religions covered at Key Stage 3 include;

- Buddhism
- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Christianity
- Sikhism
- Human Relationships
- Medical Ethics

- Human Rights
- Humanism
- Prejudice
- Poverty

There are many enrichment and extra-curricular activities for Key Stage 3 pupils to take part in to help raise their attainment, including guest speakers – specifically the Youth Net, visits to local places of worship, visits to Lichfield Cathedral, and foreign visits.

KS4 exam courses

Key Stage 4 pupils currently study for the WJEC Eduqas GCSE. This consists of six topics (full course), including ethics topics on Relationships; Life & Death; Good & Evil and Human Rights. There are also topics on Christianity and Buddhism. These two religions were chosen as they give contrasting opinions and reflections on the various issues we have to deal with on the course. They also offer a diversity of eastern and western based religion.

Students can opt to complete either short or full course GCSE RE. The short course only covers topics on Christianity, Buddhism, Relationships and Life and Death.

Relationships covered topics on the family, attitudes towards sex; marriage and divorce. It is a popular topic in class. Life and Death looks at the complicated issues of abortion and Euthanasia focusing on questions to do with quality and sanctity of life. The topic also covers the many religious and scientific theories on creation and evolution.

If students opt for the full course they will also cover the topics on Human Rights and Good and Evil. The former looks into the different religious positions and the evolution of the idea of Human Rights over time. There are also depth studies into religious leaders who have stood up to human rights abuses including Malala Yousafzai who fights for equal rights for girl's education.

The religious element of the course focuses on the beliefs and teachings of both Christianity and Buddhism. Students who choose full course will also cover practices of both religions as well.

Religious Studies offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression and of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

There is support at both ends of the academic spectrum for the subject. Students who struggle to achieve are offered extra support from staff in the form of targeted planning and questioning, 1:1 support and revisions sessions.

SMSC

Students experience and search for meaning, the purpose in life and the values by which we live. In learning about different religions and why people believe, students should have the opportunity to learn from their experiences, to reflect on and interpret spirituality and their own lives and discuss and reflect on ultimate questions.

Students are given the opportunity to be reflective about their own beliefs when studying moral issues in Y8 such as the WMD debate or whether animals have a soul or not and the implications of this; as well as across the topics in the GCSE course. They are also encouraged to use their imagination and creativity in their learning when practicing Mindfulness.

Students learn about shared and differing moral values, while debating moral dilemmas about right and wrong, good and bad, and so on. Students discuss issues such as people's responsibility towards the world and future generations. Students have the opportunity to make a personal response to right and wrong and to consider other peoples' responses to moral issues. Students are given the opportunity to recognise the difference between right and wrong, and readily apply this understanding in their own lives, when studying morals in Y8 such as whether or not refugees should be given safe haven in the UK and in the GCSE. They are also encouraged to understand of the consequences of their behaviour and actions when learning about 'Evil and Suffering' as part of the GCSE.

Students explore similarities and differences in religions and cultures through which they should

begin to link religion to personal action in everyday life. This is reflected in their relations with others in the classroom and their ability to work together co-operatively. Through the study of different religions, students are made aware of the similarities and differences they may have with other students in their class.

Students learn about other religions, giving them an opportunity to see what it means to belong, to develop confidence in themselves and be able to respond positively to similarities and differences in our multi-faith and changing society.

Students are given the opportunity to understand and appreciate of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others when learning about multiculturalism in Year 8 and different Christian & Buddhist communities in the GCSE.

By studying RE pupils will have the opportunity to have developed an awareness of legal and human rights which underpin society and the need for a mutual respect and understanding of cultures different to our own. They will have conducted research to understand the implications of the diverse national religious ethnic identities in the UK. They will have considered through class debate the importance of democracy and free speech; free press and responsibility. All pupils investigate different citizenship themes within RE; they partake in group work and discussion. They all have the opportunity to express their own views and are taught to respect the views of their peers. They reach balanced conclusions which will have looked both sides of specific arguments.

British Values

We want to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all students to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is done through the schemes of work which include topics and themes on the holocaust, human rights campaigners, and animal rights laws in the UK, issues surrounding multiculturalism and good and evil at GCSE.

Concept of cultural capital

Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that a student can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, knowledge and competence; it is one of the key ingredients a student will draw upon to be successful in society, their career and the world of work. Cultural capital promotes social mobility and success in our stratified society. Cultural capital gives a student power. It helps them achieve goals, become successful, and rise up the social ladder without necessarily having wealth or financial capital. Cultural capital is having assets that give students the desire to aspire and achieve social mobility whatever their starting point.

This is done through Geography teaching in a number of ways:

- Personal reflections on beliefs of others, comparing to one's own.
- Personal reflections on views of God.
- Personal attitudes towards forgiveness.
- Reflections on the role of the family.
- Impact of Christian ideas on wider British society
- Exploring spiritual beliefs from a variety of religious and cultural traditions
- Reflections on differing views on an afterlife
- Impact/influence for Christians and wider cultural impact of traditional and non-traditional Christian beliefs and teachings
- Personal impact for Christians, reflection on personal responses (and wider cultural impact) on personal beliefs
- Moral implications of war, including issues of technology; moral basis for pacifism
- Impact within specific religious cultures of attitudes to war; wider cultural impact.
- Impact on community cohesion of both exclusivism and inter-faith dialogue.
- impact and implications of exclusiveness, ecumenicalism and inter-faith dialogue

Cross-curricular opportunities, literacy and numeracy

RS at KEVI ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop the highest levels of literacy. High levels of literacy help provide the foundations for students to become life-long learners and socially responsible members of society.

We seek to develop our students' skills and help them to engage with reading and writing. In addition to reading and writing, we also believe that literacy helps develop effective speaking and listening skills and enables students to use language in order to become independent learners, thinkers and communicators.

We do this by a range of strategies (this is not an exhaustive list:

- Key word recognition activities
- Paragraph prompts
- Display key words so all can see them.
- Model sentences and answers to show the meanings of words.
- Mind maps
- Rephrase a question and simplify the language if necessary.
- Use audio learning strategies eg podcasts.
- Cloze activities help develop vocabulary.
- writing mats
- Use visual images to support language.
- Collate advantages and disadvantages in a table using key terms and then use connectives to construct sentences.
- Invisible questions: pupils given answers and they construct possible questions.
- Synonyms
- Exporting language
- Explanation of historical language
- Writing for purpose
- Skimming and scanning
- Source evaluation

Numeracy like Literacy has great importance within RS; High levels of numeracy help provide the foundations for students to become life-long learners and socially responsible members of society.

We seek to develop our students' skills and help them to engage with figures and quantities. In addition to basic maths. This is done by:

- Estimation and rounding
 - Life of Jesus and other key figures
- Number and number processes
 - Timelines of how different religions have evolved
- Fractions, decimal fractions and percentages
 - Percentages of world faiths
 - Percentages of world faith groups in the UK
- Money
 - Wealth & poverty
 - Poverty line
 - Cost of war
- Time
 - Timelines of different world faiths
- Measurement
 - Discussions about impact of different laws and ethics on society
 - Discussions about impact of war on society and economy
- Data and analysis
 - Graphs to show drop of Christianity over time in the UK
- Ideas of chance and uncertainty
 - Discussions about ethical decisions people make in different circumstances e.g. abortion and immigration

Other cross curricular links include with History when religion is covered e.g. Black Death as a punishment from God. Good & Evil topic has links to Art in terms of religious paintings. Also, science in the coverage of theory of evolution and Big Bang Theory. Life Matters has lots of cross over in term of relationships. World disruption of faiths has links with geography.

Careers (Gatsby benchmark 4 coverage)

- Guest speakers are asked to explain their career pathway with students
- Potential career links are discussed to different topics e.g. Relationships – marriage guidance counsellor; Peace & War – work at the UN and international negotiators; abortion & Euthanasia – mental health professionals
- Good & evil links to criminal psychology, lawyers, journalism and the police

We are proud of our students and their success:

Key Stage 4

	2017	2018	2019
Percentage of students achieving 4+ in RS	68% A*-C	45%	67.3%
Percentage of students achieving 5+ in RS		27%	47.3%
Percentage of students achieving 7+ in RS	11.6% A*/A	8%	7.3
Average P8 for RS			