

Year 8 Curriculum Intent: Religious Education

At Dixons Cottingley we develop students to lead successful and happy lives and make a positive contribution to their community. Our curriculum in each year is designed to provide experiences, opportunities, knowledge and skills that enrich and challenge our students. We understand that the curriculum is key to determining the life chances and choices for our students and therefore we will not compromise on providing the very best. We achieve this in Religious Education through the below:

By the end of Year 8 students at Dixons Cottingley studying will be exposed to the following:

The Key Stage 3 course will be posed around three ways of knowing:

1. Theology: Do all religious believers think the same way?
2. Ethics: How do religious beliefs and worldviews help us to understand the world's big ethical dilemmas?
3. Philosophy: How do our religious beliefs and worldviews help us to understand the world's big philosophical dilemmas?

Across each year these three schools of thought will be taught explicitly and the level of academic rigour will build. Using these three lenses as the foundation for our curriculum will allow for links to be made across the five years of study. This will enable powerful knowledge to be embedded through spacing and intervening of content.

There will be a theological focus of the beliefs and practices in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism across the programme of study. Other religions will be considered when looking at responses to ethical and philosophical questions. The diversity within each faith group will be taught. An example of this might include looking at Islam through the lenses of Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi Muslims. There will also be a consideration of wider world views. This will involve the teaching of humanism and other world views that do not accept the existence of God or base their understanding of God as separate from organised faith. World views will also allow the consideration of those within a denomination who do not fully accept the orthodoxy of their religions teaching.

In addition to this focus on theology there will also be learning across each year dedicated to ethical and philosophical questions. These topics have been chosen as they are the big areas of debate and dispute with British Society today. They will therefore also allow a focus to be built around British values. We will consider ethical issues such as the treatment of animals and philosophical questions such as the origins of the universe. Teaching will allow students to examine and evaluate the religious and world views and also allow them to weigh up their own personal view.

Year 8 will focus on the following theological, ethical and philosophical issues:

- The beliefs and practices of Hinduism.
- The beliefs of Buddhism.
- A study of religious ethics and morality with a case study of punishment and the death penalty.
- The study of humanism and its influence on way of life
- The problem of evil and suffering

By the end of Year 8 students at Dixons Cottingley studying Religious Education will be taught the following skills:

- Students will develop skills of evaluation through the analysis and assessment of a wide variety of different viewpoints.
- Students will develop skills of critical thinking as they draw from the teachings of Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism, along with secular worldviews.
- Students will develop the skills of description, explanation and evaluation as they analyse beliefs, practices and diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals.
- Students will deploy and develop the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other types of evidence.

In order to truly appreciate the subject and create deep schema, Religious Education has been sequenced with the following rationale:

- Students will appreciate the significance of the disciplinary nature of Religious Education and "ways of knowing." This will be done through the lens of theology, philosophy and ethics. These lenses will provide for different learning questions to be posed and addressed. They will open up students to the big questions that face society today and provide them with the skills to evaluate other big ethical and philosophical questions beyond the scope of our curriculum.
- At Key Stage 3 four of the world's major religions have been chosen to be considered in depth along with wider world views. This should allow for an in-depth study of each and ensure that the diversity across these views can be considered. The basis for the choice of these religions and views is the Bradford Agree Syllabus which sets out a programme of study for schools from reception to Foundation Stage to Key Stage 5. At points in the curriculum each view will be taken in turn and dealt with separately to develop, and deep



and profound knowledge based on key beliefs and practices. However, the beliefs and practices must also be compared to show the comparison and diversity amongst them. This will ensure that students leave with a detailed and full knowledge of the four most significant views in the UK today, (Christianity, No faith, Islam, Hinduism) in addition to a study of a smaller minority faith (Buddhism)

- There will be a focus on philosophy and ethics across the curriculum in order to enable students to evaluate the relevance of religious teachings and practices in developing an informed understanding of themselves, their communities and the world in which they live; articulate the ways in which religious and non-religious worldviews affect understanding of life and its significance and give their own standpoint; reflect on and evaluate others' values and attitudes in developing their own.
- Teaching for GCSE will begin in Year 9 for all students. The teaching in year 9 will be a bridge between Key Stage 3 and GCSE. It will continue to focus on the areas of theology, ethics and philosophy but will develop and deepen knowledge and understanding of Christian and Muslim beliefs. The philosophical and ethical questions will continue to be analysed using a wider range of faiths and other world views.
- The level of rigour and challenge has been coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulative knowledge. For example, the teaching of Christianity and Islam is introduced in years 7 and 8 and then built upon and extended at key Stage 4. This is important in order to allow a comparison between these two most significant faith groups within Britain. It will also develop an understanding of the diversity and differences within these faiths, and also to build the blocks of knowledge that are required for Key Stage 4 study.
- At the core of our planning and sequencing are three questions that will be referred to across Key Stage 3 studies. These are: Do all religious believers think the same way? How do religious beliefs and worldviews help us to understand the world's big ethical dilemmas? How do our religious beliefs and worldviews help us to understand the world's big philosophical dilemmas?
- Although the religions will be taught discreetly there will be opportunities to identify similarities and differences between the beliefs and practices of each religion using the practice of interspacing and knowledge recall.
- Year 8 will focus primarily on the development of a theological understanding of Hinduism and Buddhism. It will allow students to explore the beliefs and practices of these faiths whilst also analysing the similarities and difference between them, and also between the Abrahamic Faiths.
- In Year 8 there will be a focus on ethics and morality. Students will engage with the ethical religious and non-religious arguments around punishment and the death penalty.
- In Year 8 there will be a philosophical focus on the problem of evil and suffering.

The Religious Studies curriculum at Cottingley has been influenced by:

- The Bradford Agreed Syllabus which identifies a common programme of study for all young people across the District. This programme has been developed with all Local Authorities in West Yorkshire. This document was written in conjunction with leading educationalist in the field of Religious Studies and is the bedrock of our curriculum. It should equip students with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. We want our students to develop an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society with its diverse religions and worldviews. Religious Education will develop a student's religious literacy which in turn will enable them to deploy this knowledge to help promote respect in the diverse communities in which they live.
- The Ofsted RE research paper May 2021. The Re Department agrees with the finding that the curriculum should cover substantive content and concepts in depth rather than covering excessive amounts of content superficially. This allows students to grasp a bigger picture about the place of religion and non-religion in the world. The course is therefore built around the three key questions identified earlier. This will allow students to construct a schema more clearly and retain the deep religious theological knowledge that is necessary. The department also supports the idea the curriculum should include 'ways of knowing' as a form of knowledge that pupils build through the RE curriculum. This helps pupils learn about the construction of substantive knowledge, its accuracy, its reliability and how provisional that knowledge is. Pupils are therefore prepared to think in critical and scholarly ways about the representations of religion and non-religion that they learn through the curriculum and encounter in the world beyond. This will be done through approaching topics through the lens of theology, philosophy or social science (ethics)

Our Religious Education curriculum ensures that social disadvantage is addressed through:

- Disadvantaged students will follow the same curricular pathway as it is important that they are provided with access to the same body of religious knowledge. They will be supported through quality first teaching and intervention and support as required. Enrichment activities including guest speakers from different faith groups and the use of religious artefacts will also develop their engagement and progress.
- SEN students follow the same curricular pathway as it is important that they are provided with access to the same body of religious knowledge. This is supported through clearly differentiated teaching which will include access to seeing and working with religious artefacts.

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. This will be supported in year 8 by a



common framework of learning and understanding for each of the religions that are studied. Commitment to memory of this knowledge will be supported through the interspacing of knowledge, with regular reflection and comparison of the faiths throughout the course

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

- Equipping students with systematic and powerful knowledge about the six world religions and non-religious views so that they are able to evaluate and analyse local, national and world events.
- Developing confident individuals who can participate positively in society with its diverse religious and world views based on the acquisition of a body of powerful knowledge about these religious and non-religious world views.
- The learning of the importance of values and responsibilities through religious and non-religious perspectives in order to help guide and develop citizens who make a positive contribution to society. This will be done through the development of a deep religious literacy which will enable them to deploy this knowledge when encountering the diversity of the society in which they live.
- Students experiencing and searching for meaning and 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 the “big questions” questions.
- Giving students the opportunity to be reflective about their own beliefs when studying, for example, ‘Why do some people believe in God?’
- Being given the opportunity to understand and appreciate the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others when learning about British values and beliefs.
- Exploring similarities and differences across the Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Through this study, students are made aware of the similarities and differences they may have with other students in their school, community, nation and the wider world.
- Supporting the learning in other curricular areas such as English, geography and history. For example, geography is supported through the moral imperative in all religions to support and demonstrate stewardship for planet.
- According to the RE commission in 2018, RE ‘should explore the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews play in all human life’. RE is designed to nurture SMSC development. Therefore, students learn about a wide range of faiths and not just Christianity and Islam. By doing so, the RE curriculum is also following the requirements of the Bradford Agreed Syllabus.
- Students study philosophy and ethics in KS3. By doing so, it means that students will be able to articulate reasoned and critical responses to the wider issues in society. This work will enrich and deepen their knowledge as it is outside of the expected domain of the Bradford Agreed Syllabus.
- Students will understand the purpose behind why they learn about a range of religions and philosophical concepts at KS3 in relation to careers guidance. For example, they will be informed that there is a need for writers, journalists, people working in public service e.g. police officers, doctors, nurses to have a good understanding of the religious beliefs of the communities they serve.

Further Information can be found in:

- Long term plans
- Knowledge Navigators