

KS3 RS Curriculum overview

Year 7

Introduction to Religious Studies

Celebration

Buddhism

Life of Jesus

Prophet and Guru

Parables and Stories

Year 8

Our local parish churches

Judaism

Looking for God and Creation

Natural world and how we use its resources

Year 9

Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and Racism

Start of GCSE course

Relationships and families

Religion and life

Summary of reasoning behind and sequencing of the curriculum

Year 7

The introduction to Religious Studies begins with a baseline assessment developed over the last 3 years. This data allows us to understand where each student is coming from in terms of their basic skills of knowledge, understanding and evaluation with the massive variation that exists in RS provision in the primary schools. We then make sure the students are aware of some key basics such as the names of the main religions, their symbols and what those symbols mean. The first module is called Celebration for a reason. The idea is to show how religion can be fun as well as being connected with serious beliefs and meanings. This reassures students that discussion and evaluation are at the heart of our RS curriculum and not preaching! However, the module introduces the idea of good and evil that will be at the heart of much of our study. Having thought about fun, good and evil then we study Buddhism because it emphasises the importance of thinking and living a way of life. This is naturally more serious. It also reminds students that not all religions are based around believing in one God. The module makes the students think about the balance between thinking and action that is so vital to living rewarding lives. We then move into a crucial module about the Life of Jesus because we feel it is vital that students understand the Christian traditions that have underpinned our nation (British values) and also how they affect the calendar and our lives. This is why the module begins around Christmas and generally ends just before Easter. The discussion of the resurrection shows the difference between religions such as Christianity with its miracles and

traditional Buddhism with its focus on Enlightenment. We finish year 7 thinking about the importance of individuals to religions. This links well with the life of Jesus but the contrast between Jesus as the Son of God and the Prophet and Guru is an important one for students to understand. They also help the students think about the contrasting concepts of gentleness and fighting for what you believe in.

Year 8

Year 8 begins with a study that is relevant both locally and nationally. Students focus on the key features inside and out of buildings that are significant in their local physical landscape. The study is based around the concept of knowing and understanding that church features exist for one or a combination of reasons based around tradition, utility (use) and putting across a message (being a symbol). The discussion emphasises the contrast between the building as a thing of beauty and the church as a community. The tradition of the church is a good link into the study of Judaism that dominates year 8. Firstly, the concepts of obedience and having a contract or agreement are the basis of thinking about traditional Judaism and this is a great link into the story of Anne Frank that makes up the second part of the module. The issue of the Covenant (Jews are obedient to God and he looks after them) is highlighted superbly by the Holocaust when it is compared to Moses and the Passover Story. Anne understandably asks Peter Van Pels where God is and to try and answer that question the next module is called Looking for God. The idea is to make sure the students know and understand that if God exists he is probably not an old man with a beard sitting on a cloud and the emphasis on Creation begins students' journey of thinking about the differences between religion and science. Having thought about how our natural world might have begun then to finish the year we think about it being sustained. Fairness is the key issue to think about at the beginning of the module and how the resources of the earth are shared out and this moves on to a study of the environment based around the key question for Christians of stewardship vs. dominion.

Year 9

In a largely white area with a limited range of socio-economic groupings we feel it is very important that the issue of racism is studied in detail. This is done through a module that focuses on the stories as Christians of Rosa Parks and MLK in the USA. The focus of the module is about whether we should stand up for what is right and what methods we should use. It also helps students understand how a religious faith can motivate someone to great things. We then start the GCSE course at Christmas in year 9. The sheer amount of content in the new GCSEs makes this desirable (although I have delayed the start of the course until Christmas in order to spend longer on racism than the GCSE does) but we feel strongly that the two modules (Relationships and families and Religion and Life) are ones all students should study because they deal with such vital issues. These include in the relationships module issues such as sex and sexuality, contraception, marriage and divorce and gender prejudice. Religion and life includes the two controversial and important issues of abortion and euthanasia. We feel that the end of year 9 is an excellent time to look at these key issues in preparation for adult life and is part of our overall contribution in RS to the SMSC provision in the school.

Overall summary

The intent of the KS3 curriculum is to provide a broad and balanced study of a number of key concepts that are crucial to religious people and give students the opportunity to discuss and think about them. The curriculum is also intended to give students the necessary skills to move forward to success at GCSE in terms of the three skills of knowledge, understanding and evaluation and in terms of their examination technique. We believe that these two objectives are not mutually exclusive and can be achieved together. The intent of the curriculum is to make a significant contribution to the school's SMSC provision. For example, the students will think about God as a spirit but also think about animal rights. Lastly, the intent of the curriculum is to make a real contribution to the development of the students' literacy skills. The implementation is based around a combination of the curriculum identifying the key knowledge, understanding, evaluation and concepts for each module so that all staff can keep the bigger picture in mind and also through following the policies of the Humanities faculty in terms of such issues as assessment, marking, rewards and homework. Lastly, staff should be able to show their creativity in the implementation of the curriculum and especially use that to take into account the needs of both the particular groups and individuals that are in front of them. The impact of the RS curriculum is that all students should value developing key knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and actions of others. They should develop their communication skills both written and oral. They should develop the values of tolerance and respect. They should feel a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them. They should develop resilience and independence. They should develop the skills to be citizens in a modern, multicultural society while at the same time understanding different traditions. Lastly, having developed skills of evaluation based on knowledge and understanding they should be able to settle on their own values and beliefs based on impartial study and a love of enquiry.

Key knowledge, understanding, evaluation/discussion themes and concepts for each module

Year 7

Introduction to Religious Studies

Key knowledge

Meaning of the word religion. Names of the six main religions of the world. Founders of those religions. Names of the symbols of the religions and what they look like. Message of the symbols. Chronology of those religions.

Key understanding

Why do people follow religions? Why are signs and symbols different? Why are symbols used to put across messages?

Key concepts

Religion. Founders. Symbols.

Celebration

Key characters

Rama and Sita.

Key knowledge

Events of the Rama and Sita story. Key messages of Rama and Sita story. How Hindus celebrate Divali. What special food Hindus eat at Divali.

Key understanding

Why do Hindus see the Rama and Sita story as so important? Why do Hindus use so many lights at Divali?

Key evaluation/discussion

“Celebration is the most important part of religion”

Key concepts

Good. Evil. Bravery. Friendship. Love. Light. Religion as fun!

Buddhism

Key characters

Siddattha Gotama

Key knowledge

Buddha's life of luxury. Buddha as a poor holy man. Middle Way. 3 Signs of Being. 4 Noble Truths. Eightfold Path. Enlightenment. Samsara. Karma. Nirvana. Meditation.

Key understanding

Why do Buddhists believe it is right to not have too much of anything but also not to have too little? Why do Buddhists believe that nothing stays the same? Why would you want to understand the meaning of life? Why do Buddhists believe in rebirth?

Key evaluation/discussion

“Meditation is the way to solve our problems”

Key concepts

Reincarnation/rebirth. Life force. Way of living not obedience to a God.

Life of Jesus

Key characters

God. Jesus. Virgin Mary. Shepherds. Wise men. John the Baptist. Disciples.

Key knowledge

Christmas story. Jesus' baptism. Calling of disciples. Palm Sunday. Last Supper. Crucifixion. Resurrection.

Key understanding

Why was Jesus sent by God? Why are people baptised? Why is Palm Sunday important to Christians? Why did Jesus die on the cross? Why do Christians believe in the resurrection?

Key evaluation/discussion

“Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead 3 days later”

Key concepts

Incarnation. Sin. Sacrifice. Eternal life. Faith vs. evidence.

Prophet and guru

Key characters

Guru Nanak. Muhammad.

Key knowledge

Guru Nanak-There is no Hindu nor Muslim. Muhammad-Makkah and Madina.

Key understanding

Why did Sikhism begin? Why were Muhammad’s ideas about God so unpopular with many people in Makkah?

Key evaluation/discussion

Guru Nanak-“Do not make your bread through the blood of others”

Muhammad-“Faith is what made Muhammad successful”

Key concepts

Love. Generosity. Gentleness. Fighting for what you believe in. Bravery. Faith in God gives people power and resilience.

Year 8

Our local parish churches

Key knowledge

Names of key features of the outside of a parish church such as tower, churchyard cross and gargoyles.

Names of key features of the inside of a parish church such as altar, stained glass window, lectern and font.

Whether these features are traditional, useful or put across a meaning (or a combination of more than one).

Key understanding

Why does a parish church have these features?

Key evaluation/discussion

“A plain church is just as good as a beautiful one”

Key concepts

Tradition. Usefulness. Meaning.

Judaism

Key characters

Abraham Moses Anne Frank

Key knowledge

Story of Abraham and Isaac. Passover Story. Seder Plate. Anne Frank’s story

Key understanding

Why did Abraham found Judaism? Why did Moses lead the Jews out of Egypt? Why did Anne Frank have to suffer?

Key evaluation/discussion

“You should always do what you are told”

Key concepts

Obedience. The Covenant (Agreement).

Looking for God and Creation

Key characters

God. Adam and Eve

Key knowledge

Bible creation story. Big Bang.

Key understanding

Why are we here? Why do people think God acts in the world?

Key evaluation/discussion

“If God made the Big Bang then who made God?”

Key concepts

Spirit. Power. Design. Experiencing God.

Natural world and how we use its resources

Key characters

Mother Teresa

Key knowledge

Basic needs of life. Poor conditions experienced by some children in the world. Christian Aid.

Key understanding

Why are the basic needs of humans so poorly shared out? Why do some Christians believe we should be stewards of the earth while others believe we should use it for our own benefit?

Key evaluation/discussion

“Humans can do with the world what they want”

Key concepts

Basic needs. Environment. Stewardship. Dominion.

Year 9

Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and Racism

Key characters

Martin Luther King (MLK). Rosa Parks.

Key knowledge

Buses were segregated in the USA as were other things. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man. Bus Boycott. Key pieces of racism of MLK's childhood. I have a dream speech.

Key understanding

Why did Rosa Parks refuse to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955? Why did MLK start up the Civil Rights movement? Why did Christianity motivate both Rosa Parks and MLK?

Key evaluation

“You should always fight for what is right”

Key concepts

Racism. Forgiveness. Violence. Peace.

Year 9-Start of GCSE course

Relationships and families

Key knowledge

Key Christian and Buddhist views about sex and sexuality, contraception and family planning, marriage, divorce and gender equality. Key evidence about what people do in modern Britain concerning these issues.

Key understanding

Explain two different religious beliefs about sexuality. Explain two different religious views about the use of contraception. Explain two different religious views about whether people should get married. Explain two different religious views about whether divorce is right. Explain two different

Key evaluation/discussion

“Marriage is for life”

Key concepts

Adultery. Annulment. Celibacy. Chastity. Gender prejudice. Traditional views vs. Modern views.

Religion and life

Key knowledge

Key Christian and Buddhist views about what scientific and religious truth are. Bible creation story. Big Bang. Evolution. Key Catholic and Church of England views about abortion. Key Christian and Buddhist views about euthanasia. What a hospice is. Christian and Buddhist views about the environment and how it should be treated. Key Christian views about the treatment of animals.

Key understanding

Explain two different religious views about creation. Explain two different religious views about abortion. Explain two different religious views about euthanasia. Explain two different religious views about how humans should treat the environment. Explain two different religious views about the treatment of animals.

Key evaluation/discussion

“Only God should give and take life”

Key concepts

Creation. Resurrection. Heaven. Hell. Reincarnation. Sanctity. Rights. Stewardship. Dominion.

MWa 7-19