

# Curriculum overview: Religious Studies

## Key Stage 2

Students should be able to:

- Describe and make connections between different features of the religions and worldviews, discovering more about celebrations, worship, pilgrimages and the rituals, which mark important points in life, in order to reflect on their significance.
- Explain, with reasons, the meanings and significance of religions and worldviews to individuals and communities.
- Discuss and present thoughtfully their own and others' views on challenging questions about belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, applying ideas of their own in different forms.
- Describe links between stories and other aspects of the communities, responding thoughtfully to a range of sources of wisdom and to beliefs and teachings that arise from them in different communities.
- Explain the challenges of commitment to a community of faith or belief, suggesting why belonging to a community may be valuable, both in the diverse communities being studied and in their own lives.
- Apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities can live together for the wellbeing of all, responding thoughtfully to ideas about community, values and respect.
- Describe a range of beliefs, symbols and actions so that they can understand different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- Outline similarities and differences within and between different religions and worldviews.
- Discuss and apply their own and others' ideas about ethical questions, including ideas about what is right and wrong and what is just and fair, and express their own ideas clearly in response.

## Key content requirements at GCSE

### The Study of Religions: Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

Christianity & Buddhism:

- Students should be aware that Christianity and Buddhism are two of the diverse religious traditions and beliefs in Great Britain today and that the main religious tradition in Great Britain is Christianity. This knowledge may be applied throughout both **The Study of Religions** as well as **Thematic Studies**.
- Students should show an understanding of the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Buddhism and their basis in Christian and Buddhist sources of wisdom and authority.
- They should be able to refer to scripture and/or sacred texts as appropriate.
- Students should be able to explain the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices of religion on communities and societies.
- Common and divergent views within Christianity and Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.
- Students may refer to a range of Christian and Buddhist perspectives in their answers, for example the perspective of Roman Catholic and Church of England Christians or Theravada, Mahayana, Zen and Pure Land Buddhists.

### Thematic Studies (Themes A, B, E and F)

- Students should be aware of different religious perspectives on the issues studied within and/or between religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.
- Students must also study religious, philosophical and ethical arguments related to the issues raised, and their impact and influence on the modern world.
- Students will be expected to show their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religion and beliefs.
- Students will be expected to make specific references to sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/or sacred texts.
- Students may refer to any relevant religious texts
- Students must demonstrate knowledge and understanding that:
  - the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian
  - the religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse.
- Students may draw upon Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religions and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.

## Key skills requirements at GCSE

Students should be able to demonstrate their ability to:

- apply knowledge and understanding of two religions
- apply knowledge and understanding of key sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/ or sacred texts, where appropriate, which support contemporary religious faith
- understand the influence of religion on individuals, communities and societies
- understand significant common and divergent views between and/or within religions and beliefs
- apply knowledge and understanding in order to analyse questions related to religious beliefs and values
- construct well-informed and balanced arguments on matters concerned with religious beliefs and values set out in the subject content.

## Curriculum overview

Our GCSE covers Buddhism and Christianity and four contemporary ethical themes, ensuring our students have a diverse choice of intriguing subjects to explore. Students will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues. Students will also gain an appreciation of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. They will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills. All these skills will help prepare them for further study.

|                | Term 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Term 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Term 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Portable knowledge                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <b>Year 10</b> | <p><b><u>Buddhist Beliefs and teachings</u></b><br/>To understand key beliefs about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dhamma</li> <li>▪ Dependent arising</li> <li>▪ The Three Marks of Existence</li> <li>▪ The human personality in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions</li> <li>▪ Different ideals in Theravada and Mahayana traditions: Arhat (a 'perfected person') and Bodhisattva ideal</li> <li>▪ Buddhahood and the Pure Land</li> <li>▪ The Buddha and the Four Noble Truths</li> </ul> <p>The Eightfold Path</p> <p><b><u>Christian Beliefs and teachings</u></b><br/>Key beliefs<br/>The nature of God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ God as omnipotent, loving and just, and the problem of evil and suffering</li> <li>▪ the oneness of God and the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</li> <li>▪ Different Christian beliefs about creation including the role of Word and Spirit (John 1:1-3 and Genesis 1:1-3).</li> <li>▪ Different Christian beliefs about the afterlife and their importance, including: resurrection and life after death; judgement, heaven and hell.</li> </ul> | <p><b><u>Christian Beliefs and teachings</u></b><br/>Jesus Christ and salvation - beliefs and teachings about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God</li> <li>▪ the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension</li> <li>▪ sin, including original sin</li> <li>▪ the means of salvation, including law, grace and Spirit</li> <li>▪ the role of Christ in salvation including the idea of atonement.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Theme B: Religion and Life</u></b><br/>To understand Christian and Buddhist beliefs about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The origins of the universe, including scientific views</li> <li>▪ The value of the world</li> <li>▪ The use and abuse of the environment</li> <li>▪ The use and abuse of animals</li> <li>▪ The origins of human life, including scientific views</li> <li>▪ The sanctity of life and quality of life</li> <li>▪ Abortion</li> <li>▪ Euthanasia</li> <li>▪ Death</li> <li>▪ Afterlife</li> </ul> | <p><b><u>Christian practices</u></b><br/>Worship and festivals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Different forms of worship and their significance:</li> <li>▪ Prayer and its significance, including the Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer.</li> <li>▪ The role and meaning of the sacraments</li> <li>▪ The sacrament of baptism</li> <li>▪ the sacrament of Holy Communion/Eucharist</li> <li>▪ The role and importance of pilgrimage</li> <li>▪ The celebrations of Christmas and Easter</li> <li>▪ The role of the church in the local and worldwide community</li> <li>▪ The role of the Church in the local community, including food banks and street pastors</li> <li>▪ The place of mission, evangelism and Church growth</li> <li>▪ The importance of the worldwide Church</li> <li>▪ Reconciliation</li> <li>▪ How Christian churches respond to persecution</li> </ul> <p>Christian charities</p> <p><b><u>Theme A: Relationships and Families</u></b><br/>To understand Christian and Buddhist beliefs about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contraception</li> <li>▪ Sexual relationships before marriage</li> <li>▪ Homosexual relationships</li> <li>▪ Human sexuality including: heterosexual and homosexual relationships</li> </ul> | <p>Knowledge of command words</p> <p>Knowledge of Christian and Buddhist beliefs</p> <p>Knowledge of key terms i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ atheist</li> <li>▪ theist</li> <li>▪ monotheism</li> </ul> <p>Knowledge and application of concepts i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ sanctity of life</li> <li>▪ quality of life</li> <li>▪ dominion</li> <li>▪ stewardship</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Terms: see 100% sheets</b></p> |

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| <b>Year 11</b> | <p><b><u>Buddhist Practices</u></b></p> <p>To understand the significance of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Places of worship</li> <li>▪ How Buddhists worship</li> <li>▪ Meditation; Samatha, Vipassana and Zen</li> <li>▪ The visualisation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas</li> <li>▪ Ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning</li> <li>▪ Wesak and Parinirvana Day</li> <li>▪ Kamma and rebirth</li> <li>▪ Compassion (karuna)</li> <li>▪ Loving-kindness (metta)</li> <li>▪ The five moral precepts</li> <li>▪ The six perfections</li> </ul> | <p><b><u>Theme F: Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice</u></b></p> <p>To understand Christian and Buddhist beliefs about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prejudice and discrimination</li> <li>▪ Equality, freedom of religion and belief</li> <li>▪ Human rights and responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Social justice</li> <li>▪ Uses of wealth</li> <li>▪ The responsibilities of wealth</li> <li>▪ Exploitation of the poor</li> <li>▪ The responsibilities of those living in poverty</li> <li>▪ Charity</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment</u></b></p> <p>To understand Christian and Buddhist attitudes to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reasons for crime</li> <li>▪ Law breakers</li> <li>▪ Aims of punishment</li> <li>▪ The treatment of criminals</li> <li>▪ Forgiveness</li> <li>▪ The death penalty</li> <li>▪ Suffering</li> </ul> | <p><b><u>Revision and preparation for GCSE exam</u></b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Knowledge of command words</p> <p>Knowledge of Christian and Buddhist beliefs and practices</p> <p>Knowledge and application of concepts i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ sanctity of life</li> <li>▪ justice</li> <li>▪ human rights</li> <li>▪ harmony</li> <li>▪ tolerance</li> <li>▪ prejudice</li> <li>▪ discrimination</li> <li>▪ equality</li> <li>▪ freedom of religious expression</li> <li>▪ forgiveness</li> <li>▪ compassion</li> <li>▪ deterrence</li> <li>▪ reformation</li> <li>▪ retribution</li> <li>▪ conscience</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Terms: see 100% sheets</b></p> |

## **GCSE external assessment:**

Religious education uses the GCSE 1-9 grading system, where 9 is the best grade. Religious education is assessed by examination only. All examinations are terminal (at the end of Year 11). The assessments are comprised of the following components:

There are two written papers, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes. Both papers are worth 50% of the final grade.

- Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices
- Component 2: Thematic studies

## **SMSC in religious education**

Religious education enables pupils to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues in depth. We aim to help pupils to grow and develop as people by preparing them for the adult world and allowing pupils to make sense of the world. In keeping with the ethos of the school, SMSC is embedded across the key stages to allow students to engage with meaning and promote personal development.

### **Spiritual development in religious education**

Education in religious education enables students to search for meaning in the purpose of life and the values by which we live. Students are able to interpret their own spirituality and their lives and discuss and debate ultimate questions. They are given opportunities to explore the beliefs and values of others and develop an understanding of, and respect for these. We encourage imagination and creativity in lessons and as part of independent learning. We aim to deliver the curriculum in a way that engages the students and gives them a sense of awe and wonder about themselves, others around them and the world in which we live.

### **Moral development in religious education**

The courses taught at all key stages and especially at KS4 and KS5 have ethical dilemmas embedded in the schemes of work. Students frequently question, justify and challenge moral dilemmas about right and wrong, good and bad and consider the ethical implications of choices we make as a human race, such as abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering and business ethics. They are expected to critically analyse and assess ethical issues and reflect on this in relation to their own lives and of those around them.

### **Social development in religious education**

In religious education, students have opportunities to work with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. They frequently partake in group work, allowing them to learn to cooperate with others and resolve conflicts effectively. They are encouraged to understand the importance of taking an interest in the way different communities and societies operate. Frequent participation in group work allows students to become accustomed to working as part of a team to achieve mutual goals and developing this skill will in turn enable them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

### **Cultural development in religious education**

Within this subject, students are provided with opportunities to explore different cultures through visits to places of worship and exposure to speakers with a different cultural heritage. Living in a multi-cultural society, they are encouraged to demonstrate respect and show tolerance towards people from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. They are taught topics which centre on tolerance, respect and celebration of diversity throughout KS3 and KS4 with the intention to combat discrimination of any sort.





