



## Subject Philosophy

Religious Education considers the impact of beliefs over time and how it has shaped our culture, our literature, our history, our laws and our lives. Religion provokes heartfelt commitment, eloquent expression, action, and intense debate. For everyone who wants to be informed about the world around them, religion is an intensely curious phenomenon that calls out for better understanding. Religious Education incorporates religion, ethics and philosophy. We explore the world religions, pursue wisdom, spiritual truth, investigate the concept of the ineffable and the ethical foundations of societies. A robust religious education is essential for understanding our multi faith and multi-cultural world. R.E. allows our students to develop curiosity, critical thinking and creativity to explore the cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of our experiences and develop a far greater understanding the world, our role in it and develop the skills needed to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century especially in terms of a sense of self-worth and awareness of the sanctity of human life.

## Intent

We aim to empower all students with religious literacy to enhance their scope for knowledge, understanding, application and skills and more importantly, enable them to develop a sense of community and their place in the world. Religious Studies at Queen Elizabeth's is designed in such a way to allow students to develop their understanding of religion, whilst reflecting meaningfully on what it means to be an ethical, compassionate and kind individual and to have a positive attitude to the search for meaning and purpose in life. Our ambitious curriculum allows students to explore ways in which beliefs influence people in their behaviour, practices and worldviews. Religious Studies also contributes to students' spiritual development and well-being by promoting mutual respect & tolerance as well as offering opportunities for personal reflection and deepening the understanding of the significance of religion individually, communally and multi-culturally. This will in turn foster empathy and understanding. KS3 lays a solid foundation for the upcoming themes at GCSE which in turn feed into the study of Philosophy, Christianity and Ethics at A level.

## Design

In Key Stage 3 students are introduced to the range and diversity of religious beliefs practiced in the UK and worldwide. In Year 7 students will be introduced to the discipline by investigating the six world religions before undertaking a deeper study of the religion of Hinduism. Year 7 culminates in an introduction to myths, legends and religious stories to develop their understanding of the literal and non-literal, cognitive and non-cognitive language and how people have used stories to help them explain their world and share community values. In Year 8 students will focus on world-wide religions by studying Islam & Sikhism echoing the Devon Agreed Syllabus. We complete the year with an exploration into philosophy and philosophical thought to enhance critical thinking. This is a robust foundation for the ethics studied in year 9 and introduces our students to sources of wisdom and authority and the concept of role models. Their analytical skills will be developed further in Year 9 when students are introduced to new ethical grammar & literacy in order to explore contemporary moral issues such as the morality of prisons, capital and corporal punishment and issues concerning animal rights and medical ethics. The study of ethics leads our students to develop skills in articulating their own values. Ethics prepares our students for life beyond QE and introduces them to concepts of authenticity, integrity & what makes a meaningful life. It is an essential aspect of our curriculum because ethics is a central component of any happy, healthy, and mature life. At GCSE students investigate two contrasting religions of Christianity and Buddhism. Students get a chance to develop their rhetoric on challenging issues and debate is a key aspect of their learning in Year 9, 10 and 11. In the thematic aspect of the course we look at modern ethical issues from a secular and religious perspective. Students will engage in topics such as sexual ethics, marriage, divorce and family life as well as topics connected to war, peace, nuclear war, pacifism, forgiveness and the ethics of using weapons of mass destruction. This allows students to develop their ability to formulate rational, coherent, well-informed arguments as well as know religious attitudes to these moral issues.

## Delivery

Lessons are delivered in line with the school's teaching and learning policy. It encompasses low stakes knowledge retrieval, teacher instruction and explanation, use of PowerPoints, extended writing, ethical, philosophical, and religious texts, discussion and debate (both in pairs, groups and as a class) and examination style questions ensuring spaced repetition. We use scaffolding techniques and writing frames as well as model answers, always with a focus on literacy. Homework is based on knowledge recall from knowledge organisers at KS3 to ensure that students build their ability to retain key information. GCSE homework includes research, flipped learning tasks, explicit skills consolidation, practice examination questions and revision tasks.

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