

Religious Studies

Curriculum Information



How has our curriculum been designed?

Intent

Our curriculum aims to develop religious literacy in all students. This means that 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.

Our school is located in one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse wards in the country, and we believe that the lives of students are enriched by being exposed to a variety of different religions and cultures. Our curriculum gives the students the chance to think critically about their own beliefs, to reflect on their importance, and consider the impact that beliefs can have on the world. We also aim to give students the opportunity to create and answer fundamental questions about the world; questions like 'why are we here', 'what is the purpose of life', 'what is a good life', 'Is there a God', and 'Why does God allow suffering'. Our curriculum helps give our students the knowledge that they need to succeed in life by giving them the opportunity to study all six world religions but with a particular emphasis on Christian teaching. The study of Christianity makes up at least 50% of curriculum time.

Our curriculum helps give students cultural capital by allowing them to engage with and interpret primary texts, including religious scripture. We also allow students to encounter a range of art from a diverse range of cultures and parts of the world. This includes a variety of mediums including paintings, music and poetry. During their time at St Augustine's they will have the chance to visit a number of significant places of worship in London and beyond.

Implementation

Students have two periods of RS lessons every week at KS3 level (1 in year 7). At St Augustine's all students study GCSE RS, and have three periods of RS a week. In the Sixth Form, all students study Core RS, taught over three days during the year, and many students also choose to study A Level RS.

The KS3 curriculum is designed to build up knowledge of key religious concepts, and to build religious literacy. These key concepts, (for example salvation, atonement, penitence, equality etc) are concepts that apply to all religions and non-religious ideologies studied in the curriculum. The curriculum is sequenced so as to introduce these concepts to students over time. Each unit also relates to one of our school virtues of Faith, Hope and Love. We have a firm belief that students of all abilities benefit from a curriculum that is academically rigorous, and has clear substantive knowledge. Our curriculum recognises that RS is rooted in three disciplines. These are theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences. These three strands are taught simultaneously, and in all of our units.

At KS4, students then use the religious literacy that they have studied at KS3, and start to go into more detail. At KS4, 75% of the GCSE content is Christian. 25% of it is a study of the religion of Christianity, and 50% is a study of Christianity through the study of issues in the themes paper. The other 25% is the study of Islam.

At KS5, students studying A Level RS have a particular focus on Christianity. Component 1 is a study of Christianity, and components 2 and 3 are the study of philosophy and ethics from a Christian perspective.

Impact

Results from RS GCSE indicate that the curriculum has a strong impact on students. A great number of students also choose to go on to study RS A Level at St Augustine's, and we have had a number of students go on to study RS, Philosophy, or Theology at University.

Students were asked 'what is the best thing about religious studies' and some responses included:

- 'learning about other religions beside your own' (Year 7 student)
- I think the best thing about RS is that I get to learn about different religions and cultures and disagree and agree with out there being a problem (Year 7 student)
- "Understanding what you believe or others beliefs but not only understanding but maybe even disagreeing and questioning yourself whilst being respected and respectful" (Year 7 student)
- "You can talk about your religion and learn more about other people's faiths" (Year 7 student)
- "It makes you think about the past and about yourself" (Year 7 student)
- "It makes you express yourself more, and think more about who you actually are" (Year 7 student)

- “I enjoy listening to people’s different points of view on God and religion” (Year 8 student)
- “I like how we learn about a lot of religions and that means the more we know about religions the easier it is to respect that religion” (Year 8 student)
- “I like that I can learn about what my Jewish friends believe in” (year 8 student)
- “I enjoy it as you can learn about other cultures and about other people’s point of view and opinions” (Year 9 student)
- “The best thing about religious studies is that you get to listen to other people’s statements about their beliefs” (Year 9 student)
- “The discussions and debates in the Problem of Suffering unit were engaging” (Year 9 student)
- “I enjoyed learning about why some people may not believe in God, and learning from their perspectives” (Year 9 student)

Research Links/Professional Links

The Religious Studies Department at St Augustine’s has strong links to other RS departments at Church of England schools across London, and staff regularly meet with other RS teachers to discuss good practice. In addition, the department has membership of NATRE (National Association of Teachers of Religious Education). The Subject Leader chairs a local curriculum group for RS teachers in Westminster.

Sequencing

[Justification of what you teach, how and when you teach it, with reference to the skills and knowledge the students are to gain]

At KS3 level, our curriculum is designed to develop religious literacy in our students. These key concepts, (for example salvation, atonement, penitence, equality etc) are concepts that apply to all religions and non-religious ideologies studied in the curriculum. The curriculum is sequenced so as to introduce these concepts to students over time. Each unit also relates to one of our school virtues of Faith, Hope and Love.

In Year 10, students begin their GCSE. They start with an in-depth analysis of the beliefs of Christianity, looking at the history of Christianity, the different denominations, and the key beliefs. This builds on the religious literacy that they have developed in KS3. Students then learn about Christian practices, applying these beliefs into everyday life in the process. Throughout this process, students are taught the significance of biblical teachings and how they support belief and practice. Next, students start the study of their second religion (Islam, Judaism or Buddhism). At this time, comparisons are made with Christianity to deepen understanding. In Year 11, students study Component 2 of the GCSE, which concerns numerous philosophical, ethical, and sociological questions, and how they are answered by religions.

In Sixth Form, students who are taking A Level study three components simultaneously. These are Christianity, Philosophy and Ethics.

Key Stage	Level	Qualifications	Exam Board
KS4	GCSE	Religious Studies GCSE	AQA

KS5	A Level	Religious Studies A Level	EDUQAS