



# Nether Stowe School

## Religious Education Curriculum

### Curriculum intent: our aims and values

The Religious Education department gives students the opportunities to learn not only about themselves but to be able to show respect for other people. This supports the whole school vision about ensuring every student shows respect and develops independence as part of our growing community enhancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is sequenced to help support students in being able to develop, be inspired, challenged and encouraged. This equips them with the 'right' knowledge and skills to answer challenging questions. RE contributes significantly to the Christian character of the school and its local area. It enables students to ask deep and often searching questions about their own faith or beliefs, and the recognition of others that have different views to theirs, further allowing discussion of pertinent contemporary moral issues and allow students to deepen their understanding of God and of non-religious views. The teaching of RE makes links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of a range of faiths and worldviews studied. The RE curriculum will help to develop responsibility and respect for all aspects of diversity, whether it be social, cultural and religious, and prepare students well for life in modern Britain.

Religious Education within the ATLP provides students with an opportunity to learn about and learn from religious practice. This is something that is already at the heart of the curriculum plan in place with the new curriculum plans.

Our curriculum is based on five key principals: **PULSE**

- **People matter. Exploring humanity.**

At the heart of RE we explore our unique individuality, expression of who we are and the different identities we have whilst being able to articulate justified personal responses to issues as they arise. Where we get our morals from, how this has developed and what we learn in society and how this links to the teachings from specific faiths and sets of rules and moral laws.

- **Ultimate Questions.**

Asking pertinent questions and being able to formulate a range of response to these questions is very important. This is not just a skill we develop in RE but across the school. In RE we get to dig deeper into big life questions that we all seek the answers to and be able to develop clear and concise responses to these. Expressing views and having the confidence to do this is important as those verbal contributions then help to deepen the understanding of arguments and allows students to question with ease. Developing personal views is also about offering potential ideas so the students can reflect upon these ideas.

- **Local community and wider society.**

Having consideration for the local and wider community is important. This is thinking about the diversity we have in society and showing respect and a tolerance for the differences we have. We therefore look at a range of faiths alongside Christianity to fully prepare students for the differences they will see in society. Having respect for the environment around us and an understanding that we have a duty to care for the world we live in.

- **Spirituality and reflection.**

We allow students to start to question about the world and develop their own sense of spirituality, asking thought provoking questions. This starts in Year 7 and the development of personal reflection. Reflection is a theme that runs through the department. What is the point in the things we do and what impact will they have on the people around the world and us when we move on. It is vital that students are just giving the answers that they think are right but having the ability to question the things they do not agree with and dig deeper into the WHY.

- **Encouraging enquiry beyond their own experience.**

Giving students both the opportunities and the confidence to enquire about the world and how and why we behave in the way we do. It is vital that they learn about other cultures and ways of life different from their own. We look back at previous learning through a schematic approach to enable students to make links and develop a deep foundation and understanding of the faiths, philosophy and meaning behind the curriculum we teach. Living in a diverse society it is important to learn about and from the ways of life from different perspectives. This enhances us as individuals as we can then make informed decisions. This is important to understand and not make uninformed judgments about groups of people.

### **Curriculum Implementation**

Learning is embedded through the development of teaching the 'right' knowledge and skills over time. In KS3, the curriculum breadth supports learners' knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs. Assessments are given part way through a topic and at the end of each topic. Regular extended questions are given from year 7-11. Throughout each key stage, the learning deepens their understanding of Christianity and students are given opportunities to identify with teachings and see the impact these may have on their own lives. Progression is mapped coherently. The progression allows for effective differentiation, marking and feedback, and stretch for all. Students have access to key terminology and sources of wisdom. Regular extended writing allows students to develop their language and vocabulary through the sequence of the curriculum and spaced practice. The use of reading is encouraged within lessons and as part of home learning using extended project booklets which link directly to knowledge organisers with a particular emphasis on devising effective revision strategies. Understanding frameworks and decode it activities are also used to help support this further.

In Key Stage 4 the learning is built on from KS3 to deepen their understanding of the relationship between people and about common and divergent views within traditions in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed. Students follow the AQA Religious Studies Course for GCSE. Students are given opportunities to explore the fact that religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main are Christian but that they are also diverse and including the study of Islam as well as non-religious beliefs, such as atheism. Students are also exposed to Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World, looking at current real-world issues. There is scope to develop their ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of the subject. Students are given opportunities to actively reflect, investigate and make meaning of relationships, the world and God. Sensitive and controversial topics are often taught in RE so these are sequenced accordingly to the year group and maturity. Clips and resources that are used are also adapted to suit the needs of the cohort being taught. This also allows for any misconceptions to be dealt with and also covers any other related SMSC issues.

Teachers also use low stakes testing through 'Fact checks' in order to check the understanding of the students which they teach. This is done through DNA and helps to support with knowledge retrieval and spaced practice. Exam questions from previous topics are used and this enables students to recall previous learning and inform future teaching and revision. The key learning points have been positioned within the scheme of work so that there is a common understanding of the learning that precedes and follows what is currently being delivered within the classroom so this is sequenced well to suit the needs of the students.

### **KS3 RE**

We follow Staffordshire agreed syllabus within RE, this gives a broad range of skills to help develop and equip all students for life and citizenship within today's diverse society. The three main threads which have been incorporated into the Intent PULSE are; exploring, engaging and reflection. These are still important as they help to allow students to explore religious beliefs teachings and practices that may be different to their own. This in turn helps to develop their sense of personal identity and values. Having an understanding about our local and wider community is vital in being able to ensure that we send students out into the world being considerate, moral and respectful young people.

In addition, we take into account some of the skills taught in KS2 such as making links between belief and action, reflection and questioning. The local area feeder schools have a mix of faith and non- faith schools so there may be a varied approach to the syllabus alongside the curriculum time allocated to RE lessons. As

soon as students arrive a presentation about themselves linking the RE skills such as explain, application of knowledge and evaluation is assessed. This gives an indication of their conceptual understanding of the skills and the subject knowledge can then be applied to this as we move through the key stages. Through the work with the ATLP we have discussed key terminology taught to students in the partnership primary schools. In Lichfield, we also draw from some non ATLP schools so consideration of this has been taken into account when teaching the first modules in the year 7 SOW.

In year 9, we start a bridging curriculum which allows students to cover some controversial issues such as abortion, euthanasia, animal rights and welfare as well as arguments for and against the existence of God. This allows them to deeper question and respond from a range of views and opinions having deeper discussions around consent and freedom of choice.

### **Year 10**

We cover unit choices from the AQA RS GCSE. We adopt a 'knowledge engaged' curriculum approach where students are given regular opportunities to apply their knowledge to exam style questions. From these assessment opportunities, the curriculum can then be refined to meet the needs of the students. We look at Christianity and Islam as our two faiths. Students were asked on their preference when the new specification began, and their view was it would equip them with the correct knowledge of the faith to combat media stereotypes. This is also covered under religious tolerance in year 8 so all students get the chance to explore current issues.

### **Year 11**

Students sit trial examinations during the summer term. Class teachers then analyse the responses to the question papers and adapt the curriculum to include elements of re-teaching. Final units of content are also delivered to students during this year.

Throughout both year 10 and 11, the curriculum incorporates spaced retrieval throughout, DNAs refer to previous content taught to help support spaced practice. Tests look at questions on modules previously taught and continually retested throughout the two years.

## **How do we monitor and evaluate the impact of the curriculum?**

**By the end of Key Stage 3** students will be familiar with the origins and history of Christianity as well as some of the other major world religions. Students will be able to describe a range of religious concepts including the practices of prayer and worship as well as Christian sacraments such as Holy Communion and how they are performed. Students will understand the significance of religious rules such as The Ten Commandments and The Five Pillars of Islam and their lasting importance in contemporary society. Students will develop confidence in becoming courageous advocates, challenging injustice and suffering in the world and through personal experience, foster empathy and tolerance within a diverse world. Through the teaching of Stewardship, students will develop care and respect for each other and the world in which they live. Teaching of the Golden Rule which is upheld by all religions, and other religious stories, parables and a range of scriptural evidence to support viewpoints will instil and reinforce the qualities of kindness and tolerance and support the need for equality for all.

**By the end of Key Stage 4** students will demonstrate a deeper understanding of Christian and Islamic beliefs, teachings and practices and how these can differ depending on denomination. Students will identify places of religious significance around the world and the importance of those historically and as places of pilgrimage. Students will confidently articulate justified opinions on ethical issues, giving religious, non-religious and personal views. Students will be able to explain in detail how religious teachings in Christianity can be applied to contemporary moral issues such as euthanasia, abortion, abuse of the world and the application of social justice. They will know how religious organisations support the global problems of injustice and poverty and link religious teachings to these issues. Students will be able to confidently articulate justified opinions on issues giving personal, religious and non-religious views.

Assessment takes place on a regular basis across the department in relation to a whole school policy of progress checks and milestones. Progress checks assess learning which has recently been undertaken within the classroom, whilst milestones assess both new learning and prior learning so that teachers and students know whether what has been taught has been remembered. Following the completion of progress checks

and milestones, students will upgrade their work using WAGOLs and informed class feedback to upgrade their work. Common misconceptions are also revisited as a class at this point. Assessment evidence also allows teachers to decide on whether any key content needs to be covered again in class, perhaps using a different approach to ensure that all students have understood the key information or concept which has been delivered.

'Do Now' activities are used as retrieval practice and to assess the impact of home learning. In RE, DNAs are varied but usually are based on past exam questions. In some lessons 4- and 5-mark questions are retested especially from previous topics taught. If it is evident that common knowledge has not been retained, the teacher can then arrange a time to re-deliver the information in a different way so that this gap in key content can be addressed.

'Red Zone' activities are used every lesson across all year groups in order to give the students the opportunity to complete independent practice and this also gives teachers the opportunity to assess whether or not the learning over the most recent lessons has had the desired impact with the class. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on the work produced by students during Red Zone tasks in order to potentially make changes to future lessons which are delivered to further increase the impact of the learning taking place. During red zone activities students will have both misconceptions addressed and 'show call' of good examples to help support the upgrade of their work and also as a celebration of success. Within lessons, teachers regularly use questioning in order to assess the impact of the learning upon the class. This allows for another opportunity for students to check the understanding of students and to allow lessons to be reflected on or altered in the future to further improve the learning experience.