



PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION & ETHICS

We believe that the study of Philosophy, Religion and Ethics should be challenging and exciting. We have chosen topics and exam syllabuses that offer our students not only the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding but that also encourage them to offer some personal response, regardless of their religious or non-religious conviction. We encourage our students to think for themselves and develop a questioning and inquisitive approach to ideas and beliefs as well as listening and considering the views of others.

KEY STAGE 3

Students study Philosophy, Religion and Ethics in for one hour a week or the equivalent.

We currently study material relating to the following:

- **Reality and Truth.**
- **Is religion a force for good in the world or a cause of conflict?** *This included religious and non-religious views of religion as well as a focus on Islamophobia, addressing some of the misconceptions.*
- **Arguments for the existence of God and their challenges, the question of Miracles**
- **Crime and Punishment**
- **Our 'Super Curriculum' - *responses to the Holocaust.***

Pandemic Alterations

- During the pandemic we have made changes to what we have taught to make material more accessible to remote learning. In both 2020 and 2021 we did not teach the unit '*Is religion a force for good in the world or a cause of conflict?*' and '*Arguments for the existence of God*' and '*the question of Miracles.*'
- We felt that this would be too difficult to complete remotely and introduced a unit on Crime + Punishment instead. We were able to expand our 'Super Curriculum' to include an introduction to Judaism as well as looking at responses of those caught up in the Holocaust.

Curriculum 2021-2022

- We are currently making some changes to our Key Stage 3 curriculum due to access of materials.
- As part of this year's work on Reality and Truth we have done lessons on 'World Views'; thinking about what it means to have a world view and what our world views are. This has been really successful and ***next year we will look to expand this to include more Islam and ideas about values.***

KEY STAGE 4

All students have the opportunity to do Religious Studies at GCSE Level as an option. The course followed is the AQA A syllabus, which is examined with two papers, each one lasting one hour 45 minutes.

Paper 1

- **Christianity** (beliefs, teachings and practices)
- **Judaism** (beliefs, teachings and practices)

Paper 2

- **Religion and Life:** the origin and value of the Universe and Life - including Scientific and Religious beliefs about the origin of human life, the sanctity of life, abortion, euthanasia and death and the afterlife
- **Religion, Crime and Punishment:** causes of crime, the aims of punishment, the treatment of criminals and capital punishment - the principle of utility and the sanctity of life
- **Religion, peace and conflict:** including different religious attitudes towards violence, terrorism and war. Responses such as forgiveness, reconciliation and justice
- **The existence of God and Revelation:** here students revisit aspects of religious belief concerning the reasons people believe in God as well as what they believe about God

KEY STAGE 5

A Level RS remains a popular choice in Year 12 and Year 13.

We welcome students who have studied GCSE but also those who are new to the subject. The subject appeals to those who have faith and those with none. The approach we have is an open quest to explore the ideas within the syllabus and consider their validity. We see overlaps with many other areas of study and a willingness to question and listen to others is essential.

The content is divided into three sections, **Philosophy of Religion, Religious & Practical Ethics and Development of Christian Theology.**

Year 12

Three papers are studied:

- **Philosophy of Religion** - which includes: arguments for the existence of God, questions to do with body, mind and soul, the influence of ancient Greek philosophers, religious experience as well as the problem of evil and arguments for the existence of God.
- **Religion and Ethics** - which includes: different approaches to deciding on right and wrong (deontological and teleological, religious and non-religious) as well as applying these to the issues of Euthanasia and Business Ethics.
- **Developments in Christian Thought** - which includes: Christian teaching on human nature and the afterlife, their sources of authority, the person of Jesus and how these beliefs shape Christian's moral lives.

Year 13

- **Philosophy of Religion** - Issues concerning the Nature of God and Religious Language.
- **Religion and Ethics** - debates surrounding the significant idea of conscience, sexual ethics and the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious beliefs.
- **Developments in Christian Thought** - Religious pluralism, society and theology, gender, society and theology, the challenge of secularism and liberation theology and Marx.

SUPER CURRICULUM

As part of the 'Super Curriculum', we work closely with the History department looking at different aspects of the Holocaust. In September 2019, we were delighted to welcome Ivan Shaw, who as a Jewish 5-year old, was caught up in the Holocaust that killed his parents. He spoke most movingly to a variety of students and his visit became one of the highlights of the school year. We hope to invite him back.