



RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEW INTAKE 2014

**Subject Leader:
Ms K Eldridge**



Academic excellence Shared values Outstanding education



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The importance of Religious Studies

The aim of Religious Studies is to encourage students to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It encourages students to develop their sense of identity and belonging and enables them to flourish individually within their community and as citizens within a pluralistic society and global community. Religious Studies has an important role in preparing students for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables students to develop respect for, and sensitivity to, others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.

Year 9

Key Stage 3 Course Details

Students in Year 9 study a course which is based on the recommendations of the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus for Religious Studies. The skills base they develop of critical thinking and evaluation, aims to prepare the students for the Philosophy and Ethics GCSE.

Prejudice and discrimination in Britain today

Students begin Year 9 exploring questions about the causes of prejudice and discrimination in the world around us. Case studies relating to homophobia, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are explored (amongst others) in the context of the UN charter of Human Rights and current UK legislation. Students are encouraged to discuss the issues and formulate their own opinions whilst evaluating the views of their peers, the world of media and politics and those of different faiths.

Assessment

Regular homework will be set after alternate lessons and all students will be expected to write an essay evaluating the impact of prejudice and discrimination with a focus on Islamophobia. This will be graded according to Key Stage 3 levels. This will encourage students to develop their analytical and evaluation skills as well as testing their knowledge.

War and Peace - Is religion the cause or the solution?

Here, more demanding questions about the implications of prejudice and discrimination are posed, using the Holocaust and the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides as case studies. Students will study the response of religion to these events and consider what or indeed if, lessons have been learned. Students are expected to evaluate the concept of forgiveness and consider how different faiths respond to such atrocities. As part of the course there is an opportunity for students to visit the Beth Shalom Holocaust centre in

Nottingham where they will see the exhibition, memorial gardens and listen to a Holocaust survivor talk about his/her experiences of prejudice and discrimination during World War Two. We also invite a Holocaust survivor to come into school to speak to every member of the year group. We also take a look at the current situation in Darfur and explore the role of organisations such as Amnesty international.

Assessment

Students are required to produce an essay of at least 500 words in length discussing the background to and impact of one of the cases of genocide they have studied. They must also evaluate the importance of memorials and the impact of their chosen case study on the lives of humans since. Reference must be made to the responses from different faiths. Students must show they can discuss ways to prevent such atrocities in the future and evaluate the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Rights and responsibilities – Are we all born equal?

Students will complete their Key Stage 3 by revisiting themes from the start of the year with an evaluation of the need for rules in society (are they there to protect or limit us?) and a study of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Do we need rules to know what the right way to behave is? Where does our sense of morality come from? This leads into the Ethical Thinking Key Stage 4 course which all students will follow for 1 hour a fortnight from the last summer half term to the end of Year 11.

Years 10 and 11

Philosophy and Ethics GCSE Option

Students can opt to follow the OCR Religious Studies GCSE specification B. 'Philosophy and Applied Ethics' - this GCSE provides an opportunity for students to build upon the foundation laid by following the Locally Agreed Syllabus in Religious Education (where applicable) and to continue their study of religious values from earlier key stages, although it does not require or assume any prior knowledge in the area of the philosophy of religion and ethics. This GCSE offers all students equal opportunities to demonstrate their attainment, regardless of gender, religion and ethnic and social background; it is accessible to students of any religious persuasion or none.

Course Content

This specification covers topics such as the nature of God, life after death, good and evil and religion and science in the philosophy units and medical ethics, relationships, war, peace and justice and equality in the ethics units.

Assessment

Four 1 hour examinations at the end of Year 11.

Homework

Homework will be set as appropriate and include follow up work from lessons. The time allowed for the completion of the work will depend on the nature of the task.

Ethical Thinking

Ethical Thinking is taught to all students in Years 10 and 11 and aims to encourage students to engage with the big issues affecting them and the world in which they live. This course fulfils the statutory requirements of the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for 14-19 year olds.

These lessons also support the schools aims:

- To develop both individual and group skills, powers of clear, creative, critical and reflective thinking, and the capacity to make informed and responsible decisions.
- To develop a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs, combined with an open-minded and sensitive attitude towards the ideas and views of others.
- To encourage an awareness and understanding of the variety of the world's beliefs and cultures and of the interdependence of people.

AS and A2

In the sixth form students have the option of taking the OCR Religious Studies AS and A2 courses studying The Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics. This will build on the themes of the GCSE course. For AS and A2 students are required to sit 2, 1½ hour exams in the Summer at the end of that year, answering 4 questions on the themes they have covered.

All students in the 6th form will explore issues pertaining to religion, philosophy and ethics through their General Studies sessions.