

RE: Our basic intent:

To expand student's knowledge and understanding of a range of religious traditions and belief systems (theological strand of Norfolk Agreed Syllabus)

To get them thinking about the 'big questions' (philosophical strand of Norfolk Agreed Syllabus)

To help them to understand the idea of religion as something that is lived and affects lives (human + social science strand of Norfolk Agreed Syllabus)

We live in a world where religious beliefs + matter to some – and can make a difference, for both good and bad. We want all our students to understand a range of beliefs, and to develop skills of empathy – we want them ready to become good citizens of the UK and beyond....

RE Key Stage 3, 4 + 5 Learning Journey

Evidence from the baseline checks (first lesson of Year 7) shows students have had a very varied experience of RE. While all should have done some Christianity (Norfolk Agreed Syllabus) there are no specific other religions listed now.... Some schools put more stress on RE than others, and give students a good experience, others do not. Our baselines show that Islam is the most commonly studied religion – but many students cannot remember much, and struggle to explain answers. Covid has not improved the situation!

Year 7 – the course is designed to give all students an overview of World Religions / Belief Systems, so that all have a grounding in the 6 major world religions + Humanism. The ‘Island story’ give structure to the learning journey, so we can follow a thematic approach with students perceiving links between religions, but also being aware of links within religious traditions, and of diversity in the way religions can be followed. We focus especially on Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism – but also cover Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Humanism in some topics. By the end of the year all students should be aware of the division between Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions, understanding that religion is a living entity for many, with a profound effect upon lifestyle but a philosophical basis.

Year 8 – we have a focus on Islam, as the second biggest religion in the world + the fastest growing as well as the one that is most likely to hit the news headlines we feel it is important that students have a thorough grounding in this – some have missed out at primary school. While the first half term’s course is a discrete Islam course using the 5 pillars as a basis (although the concepts of the Shahadah are covered in Year 7), and may revisit Key Stage 2 learning for some, we seek to extend knowledge and students should be challenged to explain, and evaluate. Our courses in Prejudice and Discrimination and War and Peace do not focus solely on Islam, but Islam is referenced in some detail in both. These courses also encourage students to revisit Year 7 learning eg the Good Samaritan, and appreciate how it is applied in the context of racism. Other elements eg Caste point forward to Year 9 work on Hinduism. Later on we look at the environment, which draws out some of the difference between eastern and western religious traditions, this springboards into Buddhism – a very different religion as it can be atheistic, and from there we move on to look at some Philosophical arguments eg the design argument for God’s existence / the problem of evil and suffering and the relationship between religion and science.

Year 9 – we begin our GCSE studies with a major focus on Hinduism, giving students the chance to see how all aspects of a religion connect together – we then move into Christianity in the second half of the year. Hinduism was picked as a real contrast to Christianity, we didn’t want to look at two western religions at GCSE, especially as we don’t have a big number of eg Muslims within the school. We do however have a number of southern Indians who are often Roman Catholic, but appreciate the chance to look at the Hindu stories and traditions. AQA course.

Years 10 + 11 – having set the groundwork in Year 9 and lower down the school we focus on Philosophical and Ethical issues, covering Theme B (Religion and Life), Theme A (Relationships and Family) and Theme F (Religion, Prejudice and Social Justice) in Year 10. In Year 11 we cover Theme D (Peace and Conflict), and devote time to revision. Clear links are made to Christianity and Hinduism throughout.

A Level – we keep the balance between Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions with an in-depth study of (Christian) Philosophy and Ethics + Buddhism. Internal candidates benefit from the GCSE work on Hinduism as a base for Buddhism, and from Christianity / Themes as a base for Philosophy and Ethics modules. OCR course.

Year 7 Term 1
Sept: Baseline checks key knowledge on 6 religions, and gives students a chance to think about deeper questions.

Term 1 KO: World Religions + Rules

We use *The Island* to introduce the idea of world religions as things that are lived / followed....
We consider Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Humanism – birth rituals.
We consider Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Humanism +) – rules.
We give an overview of the 6 major world religions.
We consider Judaism, Sikhism, Christianity – festivals.

Term 2 KO: Rites of Passage

We continue to consider the 6 major world religions plus Humanism.
What do different religious traditions say about God – Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, (Sikhism), Humanism, Scientific views, and about leadership – Islam + Sikhism.
We consider Holy Books – Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, and how we ‘know’

World religions + rules, rites of passage.

Term 3 KO: Festivals and Holy Books

We complete the work on the rites of passage, with coming of age ceremonies (Judaism, Christianity) then move on to the idea of change and diversity.
We look at refugees, and the way strangers are welcomed or not – Judaism, Christianity, Humanism.
We consider special places, and the idea of being inclusive or exclusive – and how there can be conflict over special places, Jerusalem is a particular focus.

Term 1 KO: Prejudice and Discrimination

Year 8 Term 1 Sept - Oct
We begin by considering Islam, half a term considering how the Muslim Ummah puts the 5 pillars into action, and refer back to Year 7 work on Allah, Muhammad (pbuh) and the Qur’an. We look at the division of Sunni and Shi’a Islam.

Year 8 Term 1 Nov – Dec
We consider situations and people, with clear links to religion.
Christianity + Martin Luther King, the slave trade, Black Lives Matter, anti-Semitism, caste in India, women in Islam.

Term 2 KO: War and Peace

Year 8 Term 2 Jan – Feb
We build on our work on Prejudice and Discrimination and Islam, considering issues of fighting, violence, forgiveness, protest, terrorism. Pacifism is considered, with Gandhi studied, Just War + Thomas Aquinas, and Greater / Lesser Jihad in Islam.

Prejudice, Discrimination, War and Peace.

Term 3 KO: Environment

Year 8 Term 2 March – April
We consider the Environment – the biggest issue facing people today? Stewardship (Judaism / Christianity / Islam), the relationship between humans and animals (Hinduism, Jainism)

Year 8 Term 3 April – May
We consider Buddhism, a ‘religion’ without a God. We look at the 3 refuges, unpicking all 3 of them and linking to practices such as meditation.

Year 8 Term 3 June – July
We consider Philosophical questions, what is real, and what are the reasons for / against the existence of God. Also the Science / Religion debate.

Term 1 KO: Hinduism Beliefs and Teachings

We begin by considering Hindu beliefs and their understanding of the nature of God, Brahman and deities. Then we consider Hindu worship – festivals of Diwali and Holi, plus Hindu worship at home / the Mandir. Pilgrimage, Shaivism / Vaishnavism may be taught before Christmas or after...

Term 2 KO: Hinduism Practices and Lifestyle

The issue of reincarnation and the implications of karma are considered, and different paths to Moksha. Different duties for eg caste / stage of life are studied, as are different aims of life. Shaivism / Vaishnavism and pilgrimage. consider how Hindus worship – festivals, plus Hindu worship at home / the Mandir.

Hinduism

Term 3 KO: Christianity

Having completed our work on Hinduism we begin the Christianity course – the problems of evil and suffering, the original sin – and then we move into Jesus, God incarnate, the second Adam.

From Jesus we move onto the Nature of God within Christianity, the idea of the Trinity and how Christians see God the Father. Probably after half term we move more onto Christian practices – the sacraments, pilgrimage, different denominations, worship practices. Festivals will be covered, either around Eastertime for Easter or at the end of the term.