

Curriculum Principles

By the end of their all-through education, a student of RS at Dixons Newall Green will:

- know the key beliefs and values of world faiths and other beliefs and their influence upon individuals, communities and cultures. Students will know how to interpret, analyse and evaluate religious, philosophical and ethical thinking.
- understand how to reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions. Students will understand and respect the commonality and diversity among world faiths and other beliefs.

Our unifying 'sentence' is: "The RS department enabled students to respectfully express their ideas and insight about religious, ethical and philosophical concepts because the students understood about the key beliefs of world faiths and other beliefs and their impact upon society."

In order to achieve a true understanding of RS topics have been intelligently sequenced based on the following rationale:

- following the Local agreed syllabus, the level of rigour and challenge develops through the key stages and it has been coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulative knowledge. This has been done through careful scheme planning for example, building on primary school knowledge students extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and other world views throughout the key stages. For example, in Y7 students discuss whether Jesus is the saviour for Christians. This is then developed in Y8 when students discuss why Christians believe that Jesus is God on Earth; in Y9, this understanding is then extended even further when the objective of the scheme is to know the significance and meaning behind the incarnation.
- the RE curriculum is built upon developing religious literacy. Students are introduced to key vocabulary on their knowledge organisers. This knowledge is revisited and reinforced on a daily basis, in every single lesson, through continuous 'low-stakes' flexible quizzing. It is then applied in a variety of different contexts (topics) in order to increase retention and flexibility of application. It is highlighted to students when key vocabulary is relevant in another religion and on later knowledge organisers, connections are highlighted to students in order to prevent common misconceptions occurring. This allows students to produce oral and written responses which use high order thinking skills, such as analysis, evaluation and interpretation.
- we agree with Christine Counsell, who states that 'curriculum is content over time'. It is believed students can only begin to reflect critically and responsibly upon philosophical and ethical thinking when they have an excellent understanding of the key beliefs and values of world faiths and other views. Therefore as part of their GCSE study, the students will study the beliefs and practices of Christians and Muslims first before they are introduced to thematic studies, in which personal and religious perspectives of ethical dilemmas are considered.
- furthermore, the middle peak curriculum is centred around three broad themes: belief about god, life after death; influence upon beliefs and actions. Firstly, this is because it is believed that understanding is gained through connecting knowledge and by organising the curriculum in this way this narrative will help to support the development of schema and ultimately, enable the students to retain this knowledge within their long term memory. Secondly, it supports the idea that there is a commonality towards all religions. Finally, there are often common misconceptions surrounding these key ideas. By intelligently sequencing the curriculum in this way, it provides optimum interleaving opportunities and allows the teacher to effectively address any gaps that may appear.

The RS curriculum will address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in students' knowledge and skills:

- the RS curriculum will expose students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds to religious and non-religious traditions other than their own. By studying a wide range of world faiths and worldviews, it provides students with the knowledge and skills to flourish both within their own community and as members of a diverse and global society. They will also encounter events such as the Holocaust to address any misconceptions that they may have surrounding the events that occurred.
- The first unit in Y7 ('why are beliefs and values important to me and others') will address any gaps in the students' knowledge and skills, by exposing the students to the four main religions studied by Y6 and providing them with the core knowledge that is needed in order for them to progress further.
- the RS curriculum will give students a safe space to discuss their own beliefs and values which they may not have at home. This in turn, means that the teacher and other students can address misconceptions through a meaningful and informed dialogue. For example, in base camp, students explore what we can learn from holy books and in upper peak, students explore religious attitudes to relationships, which may be different to their own.
- disadvantaged students and those from identified underrepresented groups, receive priority for extra intervention sessions so that every opportunity to close the advantage gap is capitalised on. For example, students have the opportunity to receive extra guidance and tutoring which closes their specific gaps in understanding during 'Morning Mastery' and 'Prep' sessions.



We fully believe RS can contribute to the personal development of students at DNG:

- it provides opportunities for students within each scheme of work to discuss and critically reflect upon key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death and beliefs about God. This can be done through 'turn and talk' activities or through written responses. It is believed that this can only be done effectively through a knowledge rich curriculum.
- it will allow students to consider the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices in Manchester and the wider community. The teacher will always make the class aware of the diversity as well as sensitivity to the questions and challenges that different views and cultures can present. By learning about a wide range of world faiths and world views, this will promote racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all; combat prejudice and discrimination and promote awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.
- it will provide opportunities for social development. The RS curriculum allows students to investigate social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions as well as the common ground between religions. For example, when Y7 study Hinduism, they will consider how Hindus from all over the world may view the caste system; connections will be made on what other religions may believe.
- it will allow students to consider what is important to them through studying key religious and philosophical beliefs about values and ethical codes of practice.

At DNG our belief is that homework should be interleaved-revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of low-stakes quizzing and practice.

Opportunities are built in to make links to the world of work to enhance the careers, advice and guidance that students are exposed to:

- students will understand how we should treat everyone respectfully e.g. in Y7, they explore religious teachings on equality in the introductory unit: Beliefs and Values. Staff will make it clear to students that by showing respect to all, we are preparing them for the world of work.
- students will understand the purpose behind why they learn about a range of religions and philosophical concepts in middle peak. For example, they will be informed that there is a need for writers, journalists, people working in public service e.g. police officers, doctors, nurses to have a good understanding of the religious beliefs of the communities they serve. This is explicitly made clear to students during careers week, in which their teacher will explain to them how studying RE could help them in their future careers.
- as part of their RS curriculum, students will acquire cross curricular skills such as the ability to analyse, problem solve, write and speak eloquently. These skills run throughout the primary and secondary phase. By giving students the opportunity to practise such skills it supports their pursuit of getting to university, thriving in a top job and having a great life.
- every cycle at middle and upper peak, there will be a 'careers spotlight', where students will explore a profession that is linked to that unit of work. For example, when students study the Y8 topic what do we do when life gets hard, they will learn about careers in publishing.

A true love of RS involves learning about various cultural domains. We teach beyond the specification requirements, but do ensure students are well prepared to be successful in GCSE examinations:

- the GCSE RS specification is centred around two religions: Christianity and Islam. Therefore, it is important that the curriculum provides the building blocks for the students to be successful in their GCSE. This is done through not only revisiting key concepts of the religion i.e. the concept of the Trinity but also allowing students to learn outside of the GCSE specification requirements for example, they explore how the belief in Jesus is represented through art in Christianity. This allows students to see each religion as a living, diverse faith.
- according to the RS commission in 2018, RE 'should explore the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews play in all human life'. RE is designed to nurture SMSC development. Therefore, students at Dixons Newall Green will learn about a wide range of faiths and other worldviews. By the end of Y8, all students will have learnt about the six world religions in some form and they will reflect upon ethical and philosophical views. By doing so, the RE curriculum is also following the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In addition, students will study philosophy in middle peak. This is important because they will not have the opportunity to do this as part of their GCSE. By doing so, it means that students will be able to articulate reasoned and critical responses to the wider issues in society.
- one of the key roles of RS in schools is to support community cohesion and the development of SMSC and Fundamental British Values. This is evidenced in the schemes of work as each lesson is connected to encouraging the development of at least one aspect of SMSC, for example in Y7, so they fully understand that for many, religion is an integral part of their identity and culture, they explore the British values under the context of how religious teachings support and uphold them.

Curriculum Overview

All children are entitled to a curriculum and to the powerful knowledge which will open doors and maximise their life chances. Below is a high-level overview of the critical knowledge children will learn in this particular subject, at each key stage from Reception through



to Year 11, in order to equip students with the cultural capital they need to succeed in life. The curriculum is planned vertically and horizontally giving thought to the optimum knowledge sequence for building secure schema.

		Knowledge, skills and understanding to be gained at each stage*		
		Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
YEAR 7	Study of religion/Philosophy and Ethics	Why are beliefs and values important to me and others? To be clear about what our key beliefs and values are (religious or otherwise), so we can do the right thing	How and why do Hindu teachings still have meaning today? Showing respect to people's beliefs often involves finding out about where ideas and teachings have come from Are all Muslims the same? Understanding the key beliefs of all major world faiths is an important part of living in a multicultural society We all have different rules and codes that we follow in life	What do we do when life gets hard? To assess how religious teachings can be used to improve our lives regardless of whether we are religious or not
	CEIAG	Careers in social care and mediation	Careers in travel	Careers in education and training
YEAR 8	Study of religion/Philosophy and Ethics	Why do Christians believe that Jesus is God on Earth? To be clear that Christians believe that Jesus is God incarnate and this means that Jesus' life offers a pattern for humans and models the way that humans should be	How and why do Buddhist teachings still have meaning today? Showing respect to people's beliefs often involves finding out about where ideas and teachings have come from Does God exist? Examining proofs that theists would use to support the idea that God exists and discuss how atheists would view the material differently.	Does God exist? Examining proofs that theists would use to support the idea that God exists and discuss how atheists would view the material differently. Is it ever right to kill someone? Matters surrounding life and death are important and we all need time to think about these issues
	CEAIG	Careers in investigation	Careers in research	Careers in ethics and social justice
YEAR 9	Study of religion	Christian beliefs To provide a clear understanding of the key teachings of Christianity	Islamic beliefs To develop understanding of key tenets of Islam and to identify key similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam	Christian practices We should understand Christian practices in order to be respectful individuals
	CEAIG	Careers in interpreting	Careers in public relations	Careers in journalism
YEAR 10	Study of religion	Christian practices We should understand Christian practices in order to be respectful individuals Islamic practices To understand similarities and differences between key practices within Islam		
	Philosophy and Ethics		Religion and Life To be able to evaluate our own and others' beliefs about the value of life	Relationships and Families To be able to evaluate our own and others' beliefs about relationships
	CEAIG	Careers in project management	Careers in medicine	Careers in law
YEAR 11	Philosophy and Ethics	Crime and Punishment To consider the impact that crime and punishments have upon society, using religious teachings Peace and Conflict To be able to articulate and evaluate our own and others' beliefs about war and peace		
	CEAIG	Careers in uniformed public services		

*A powerful, knowledge-rich curriculum teaches both **substantive knowledge** (facts; knowing that something is the case; what we think about) and non-declarative or **procedural knowledge** (skills and processes; knowing how to do something; what we think with). There are no skills without bodies of knowledge to underpin them. In some subjects, a further distinction can be made between substantive knowledge (the domain specific knowledge accrued e.g. knowledge of the past) and disciplinary knowledge (how the



knowledge is accrued e.g. historical reasoning). Please refer to the DAT Curriculum Principles, published on our website, for further information about how we have designed our all-through curriculum.

