

# Religious Studies teaching Statement of Practice



## **Bluecoat Wollaton**

believe in yourself, in others, in God

### **Our Christian Vision is:**

*Through believing in ourselves, in others, in God, we trust that our hard work will result in the transformation of our lives and the lives of those around us.*

### **Our Christian Values are:**

*Faith, Hope and Love*

### **Our Bluecoat Family is:**

*Inclusive  
Committed to Staff  
Highly Literate  
Grounded in Faith  
Knowledgeable  
Rooted in Respect  
Dedicated to Character Development*

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## Introduction

The introduction of the National Curriculum has facilitated the need for all SACREs (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) and therefore Religious Education (RE) departments to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, which promotes “their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for adult life”.

This policy document is intended to outline how the Religious Studies department at Bluecoat Wollaton Academy meets the requirements of SIAMS of being 2/3 focused on Christianity as well as meeting the aims of the Nottingham City Agreed Syllabus for Religious Studies. It seeks not only to give a rationale for development, but also to give clear and detailed guidelines for effective implementation of RE for all pupils. The Head of Religious Studies and all members of the department have the responsibility to implement the policies enshrined here to the best of their ability.

## Related Policies, Statements of Practice and procedures

- **SMSC**
- **Teaching & Learning**

## Statement of Practice

As a **faith** school, our intent is for pupils at Bluecoat Wollaton Academy is to value the centrality of **belief** and spirituality for a well-balanced life. As an **inclusive** academy we aim to provide varied and enriching lessons that can engage all pupils. Our **hope** is that pupils develop an understanding of how beliefs inform practice and ways of living in a way that promotes mutual **respect**, tolerance and understanding across different cultures and communities. As a Christian foundation, the curriculum at KS3 is two thirds Christianity ensuring that all pupils have a **grounding** in the fundamentals of the Christian **faith**. Alongside this, pupils gain exposure to the diversity of faith and practice to effectively prepare our pupils for life in a culturally diverse modern world. The RS curriculum aims to give pupils a breadth of **knowledge** of a range of both religious and non-religious worldviews and to understand the diversity of interpretation within any one tradition. By engaging with the Bible and other sacred texts, pupils become **highly literate** in understanding how these teachings have been interpreted and give meaning to the lives of people of faith. Pupils also develop skills of analysis and evaluation to enable them to discuss religious and philosophical beliefs and concepts and to be able to critically evaluate different views. RS also plays an integral role in **developing character** in allowing pupils the space and time to reflect upon their own beliefs and spirituality and to explore moral issues using ethical theories and be able to articulate a personal response to these issues.

## The Curriculum

The KS3 curriculum is 2/3 Christianity as required by SIAMS. Concepts and resources from the Understanding Christianity initiative are embedded throughout the Year 7 units to ensure a deeper understanding of the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. The other units are designed to meet the requirements of the Nottingham City Agreed Syllabus. Throughout these students gain knowledge of the key beliefs of Islam and Christianity and are given opportunities to develop skills of knowledge, understanding, analysis and evaluation in preparation for GCSE.

### Year 7

**Life in a Church School** – to support transition and Belief Days, the first few lessons consider what it means to be part of a Church of England Academy, exploring the meaning of Holy Communion before their first Holy Communion service in Act of Worship. The rest of the unit focuses on the belief in the Trinity and the nature of God, laying foundations for the GCSE Belief in God unit.

**The Bible** – coinciding with yr 7 students receiving their Braithwaite Bibles at Founders Day, a unit exploring what it means for the Bible to be the Word of God and how this influences Christians today. Students are also introduced to the diverse ways Christians interpret the Bible

**The Life of Jesus** – Using key questions and works of art, a unit looking at the key events in Jesus life, how these inform key Christian beliefs such as incarnation and salvation and how these events may be interpreted in different ways by Christians. This unit also lays important foundations for the study of Christian beliefs and practises at GCSE,

**People of Faith** – using the lives of inspirational people such as Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Malala Yousafzai and considering how they have used their faith to inspire others and bring about social justice. As part of this unit students consider how specific religious teachings have led to particular actions in preparation for GCSE when they need to make links between belief and action

**Sikhism** –As the GCSE spec only allows for study of 2 religions, a unit focusing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> faith representing within the school community, looking at Sikh beliefs in equality and sewa and how this are demonstrated within the Sikh community within the UK

### Year 8

**Philosophy** – Having studied the foundational beliefs of Christianity, in Year 8 we begin by examining some of the arguments Christian philosophers have developed to prove the existence of God and how these have been challenged by Atheists. This leads into a consideration of the problems the existence of evil and suffering raises for theists and an introduction to both Muslim and Christian responses to this, in preparation for these topics at GCSE.

**Humanism** - As all GCSE specs require study of a non-religious worldview, an introduction to the main Humanist beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life and ethical decision making.

**Ethics** - Several GCSE units include ethical issues. To enable students to engage with these in an informed way, an introduction to the main ethical theories within Western Philosophy and the Christian tradition and then how these may be used to inform ethical decision making on issues of medical ethics and social justice

**The Life of Muhammad** – An introduction to the key events in Muhammad's life and how these inform Muslim beliefs and practices, laying foundations for the units covered at GCSE

**NATRE spirited Arts competition-** An exploration of what spirituality is and how it can be conveyed in art before students have the opportunity to create their own piece of art on a spiritual theme, the best of which are entered into a national competition.

## **GCSE**

**Exam Board: Edexcel B**

**Paper 1B Religion and Ethics: Christianity: (1hour 45 mins 50%)**

**Paper 2C: Religion, Peace and Justice: Islam (1 hour 45 mins 50%)**

GCSE requires study of two religious traditions, Christianity and Islam are studied to reflect the demographic of the Academy. The teaching of topics for GCSE alternates between Christianity and Islam. This interleaving helps us to embed and revisit key knowledge as well as being able to make points of comparison between the two faiths. As well as being a requirement of the specification, these enables the emphasis of the similarities between the two faiths both in terms of beliefs and practice

## **Year 9**

Students build on their knowledge through an in depth study of the main theological beliefs of both Christianity and Islam before exploring the impact of beliefs on ethical issues.

**Belief in God** – this unit explores the fundamental beliefs of Christianity as found in the Nicene Creed – God as Creator, Trinity, Incarnation and Salvation. It also includes an opportunity to engage with different Christian responses towards Eschatology (Life after Death) and Theodicy (solutions to the Problem of Evil)

**Belief in Allah** unit looks at both the Sunni 6 Beliefs and the 5 Shi'a Roots, including Tawheed (Belief in the oneness of God), Divine Justice and attitudes towards predestination, judgement and life after death.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Year 9 looks and ethical issues from the perspective of these faiths as well as considering non-religious responses.

**Marriage and Family** -Christian attitudes toward marriage and family life are explored as well as issues around gender equality both in the home, the church and the world of work.

**Crime and Punishment** - Within the Islam unit, beliefs towards crime, punishment and forgiveness are studied as well as differing Muslim attitudes towards Capital Punishment.

## **Year 10**

Having studied the key theological beliefs of Christianity and Islam in Year 9, students then focus on how these beliefs are demonstrated through Worship and Practice.

**Living the Christian Life** explores contemporary worship and prayer, the centrality of the Eucharist, the role of the local and worldwide church as well as considering contrasting Christian views on evangelism and missionary work.

**Living the Muslim Life** - The Islam unit focuses on how Muslim beliefs are lived out through the 5 Pillars of Sunni and the 10 Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam. This includes an exploration of the actual meaning of Jihad.

This is then followed by the study of further ethical issues.

**Life and Death** – This unit focus on the moral and philosophical issues around life and death – the meaning of the sanctity of life, abortion, euthanasia and considers Christian and Humanists

responses. As well as studying the differing views of both science and faith to the origins of the universe and humanity.

### **Year 11**

**Peace and Conflict** - This Islam unit explores issues around Justice, Peace and conflict including a consideration of Just War and Holy War and how these beliefs can be applied in a world that has nuclear weapons and terrorist attacks.

The rest of the focus of Year 11 is on consolidation of knowledge and exam technique, The GCSE exam content is revisited with a particular focus on the ability to use this to answer exam questions. Students learn skills so that they are able to write essays that are able to discuss and evaluate a range of beliefs, attitudes and practises. Students develop how to appraise evidence, being able to explain differing interpretations of the same teachings and then consider which is more cohesive with their understanding of the faith tradition.

### **How Religious Studies Supports Social, Moral Spiritual and Cultural development**

The development of a broad understanding of spirituality in Religious Studies is a key aim. Lessons, activities and visits provides opportunities for pupils to:

- Develop an awareness of the human quest to make sense of the world and the human predicament and to seek an ultimate meaning and purpose;
- Become aware of ultimate questions and learn about and be challenged by different questions offered by Christianity and other religions to these questions;
- Learn about beliefs and values and different understandings of the spiritual life, spiritual development and practices in religious and other traditions;
- Evaluate for themselves the truth claims made by religious and spiritual traditions;
- Encourage an understanding and respect for those who hold views different from their own;
- Develop their own beliefs and values;
- Respond to religious stories, artefacts and places of worship.