

# 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*

Document Owner	Head of Religious Studies
Date Reviewed	May 2020
Approved by AAB	May 2020

## 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 Statement of Practice document is intended to outline how the Religious Studies department at Bluecoat Wollaton Academy meets the requirements of SIAMS of being two-thirds 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.

## Statement of Practice

As a **faith** school, our wider aim 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, as well as to explore moral issues using ethical theories and be able to articulate a personal response to these issues.

## How Religious Studies is organised

Our Religious Studies department is made up of a team of specialists, led by the Head of RS. The Head of RS is line-managed by our Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning (implementation), showing the value of this subject as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and that it is very much at the heart of our learning experience in both the formal and extended curriculum (see our school's Curriculum Intent [HERE](#) for these definitions).

### **All students at Bluecoat Wollaton study Religious Studies.**

- At KS3, students have one hour per week in Years 7 and 8 to study a diverse and engaging curriculum (see below) which includes elements of theology, philosophy, ethics and sociology. We have used the Locally Agreed Syllabus: Religious Education for All (2021) alongside the Church of England's Understanding Christianity to inform and underpin our curriculum choices. In Year 9, this rises to two hours a week.
- At KS4, students again have two hours per week and study GCSE RS - Edexcel (9-1) Spec. B. As part of the GCSE, students will explore: Christianity, Islam and Humanism, looking at these from theological, philosophical, sociological and ethical angles.

# The Curriculum

The Intent of the Curriculum for our school as a whole can be found by clicking [HERE](#): This covers connected parts, links to subject timelines, our school intent, the curriculum design itself and our models of delivery across the academy.

In RS, the KS3 curriculum is two-thirds 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.

## **The curriculum Intent for Religious Studies at Bluecoat Wollaton:**

You can view this Intent statement by clicking [HERE](#). This will also take you to the Religious Studies page on our website.

## **Our Religious Studies curriculum intends to:**

Enable pupils to explore their own beliefs, the beliefs of others and ultimately their belief in God. This underpins our desire to encourage morally upright citizens within our community where understanding, empathy, respect and love are paramount. We also encourage the building of faith in themselves through confidence, independence, resilience, and hope to achieve their full potential in pursuing their purpose in life. Central to our knowledge-rich curriculum is the understanding of Christianity as a living and diverse faith in the twenty-first century, allowing students to explore, interpret and evaluate key beliefs and texts. This exploration enables the understanding of historical context as well as the impact these teachings can have in society today. In order to support pupils' evaluation of key beliefs and texts, we ensure that we support the development of religious literacy through reading a range of interpretations, deliberately practising how to constructively argue, how to provide evidence to substantiate claims, and evaluate how convincing these arguments are.

To ensure breadth of understanding, we provide a diverse range of religions and worldviews to be investigated, including the Abrahamic traditions, the Dharmic faiths and Humanism. These reflect the student beliefs of our school community as well as fostering a deeper understanding and respect for diversity of opinion across cultures. The building of cultural capital is intertwined throughout all our topics to promote the relevance of Religious Studies in everyday life, from understanding of career paths, development of decision-making and debating skills to reflecting on the individual impact we can have on our local community and the wider world.

The best, and latest view of our curriculum, is found online in our “Curriculum Journey” for this subject. Please ensure that you view this [HERE](#).

These are best viewed electronically to demonstrate the progression and deliberate sequencing that is enabling our students to flourish academically and in their understanding of the world around them. However, a very simple and more limited overview of topics is here:

## Year 7

**What does it mean to be a Christian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?** – Students will look at reasons why being a part of a Church school, and learning about faith, is so vital within our society today. Students explore key Christian beliefs and practices, specifically focusing on the characteristics of God, why events such as Christmas, Easter and Holy Communion are remembered and celebrated, as well as the impact these beliefs have on the everyday life of a Christian.

**What is Judaism?** – This unit is an introduction to Judaism. Pupils will look at the founding fathers of Judaism, Abraham and Moses, and explore the impact their lives had and still have on the Jewish and Christian faith today. Pupils will develop their understanding of the history of Pesach (Passover) and how this ties in with the Last Supper, as well as developing their understanding of the Jewish moral code and its influence on society today. We will also study how Judaism provides the foundation for belief in Christianity.

**Who is Jesus?** – Students examine who Jesus is believed to be from a Christian perspective and reflect upon their own personal beliefs about who Jesus is. Students also study key events from his life, including baptism, the miracles he carried out and Holy Week.

**People of Faith** – Students learn about inspirational people of faith, including Lord Alfred Dubs, Greta Thunberg, Malala and Martin Luther King. They will study what these individuals are passionate about and how they live out their values in everyday life. Students will also explore the impact each person of faith has had on others and the world around us.

**What is Sikhism?** - You will learn about the origins of Sikhism, explore a Sikh place of worship (Gurdwara) and take a virtual tour round the famous Golden Temple of Amritsar in India. You will also identify the importance of sewa (serving others) in Sikhism and examine Sikh identity today within the UK.

## Year 8

**Philosophy: Does God exist?** – In this unit, students study the philosophical arguments for and against belief in God, enabling them to discuss and reflect upon their own views. It will create an understanding of the problems caused for theists by the existence of evil and suffering, and will provide an introduction to both Christian and non-religious responses to this. The unit will also introduce students to key Humanist beliefs on the meaning and purpose of life, as well as explore the influences on the ethical of Humanists.

**What is Ethics?** – Students will study main ethical theories within Western Philosophy and the Christian tradition, as well as how these may be used to inform ethical decision-making on issues such as medical ethics and social justice.

**Who was the Prophet Muhammad?** – An introduction to the key events in the Prophet Muhammad's life, and how these inform Muslim beliefs and practices today.

**Spirited Arts** – In this topic, students will discover how spirituality and faith can be expressed through art, music and meditation. The focus will be on Christian, Muslim and Buddhist expressions of faith as well as non-religious ideas of mindfulness and meditation for spiritual well-being. Students will also be invited to create their own piece of 'art' (for example music, drama, drawing, dance, sculpture, photography, poetry) that can be entered in the International Spirited Arts Competition run by NATRE. This unit of study requires an open and imaginative mind.

**GCSE – Whilst GCSE begins later at the end of Year 9 just before Year 10, we begin to move to a deeper understanding of the two faiths that underpin this.**

**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, this enables the emphasis of the similarities between the two faiths both in terms of beliefs and practice

## Year 9

**Christian Beliefs (Christianity)** – Students will study:

- The nature of God within Christianity
- The Trinity
- Creation and different Christian views on how the world was created
- The Incarnation
- The last days of Jesus' life
- Christian eschatology
- The problem of evil
- Divergent solutions to the problem of evil

**Muslim Beliefs (Islam)** – Students will study:

- The Six beliefs of Sunni Islam
- The Five Roots of 'Usul-ad-Din in Shia' Islam
- The nature of Allah
- Risalah (Prophethood)
- Muslim holy books
- Malaikah (angels)
- Al-Qadr (predestination)
- Akhirah (life after death)

**Marriage and the Family (Christianity)** – Students will study:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Sexual relationships
- Contraception
- Families
- Support for the family in the local parish church
- Equality of men and women in the family
- Gender prejudice and discrimination

**Crime and Punishment (Islam)** – Students will study Muslim, humanist and atheist views on:

- Attitudes towards crime and justice
- Actions to end the causes of crime
- Teachings about good, evil and suffering
- Attitudes towards punishment
- Attitudes towards the aims of punishments
- Teachings about forgiveness
- Teachings about the treatment of criminals
- Attitudes towards the death penalty

## Year 10

### **Living the Christian Life (Christianity)** – Students will study:

- Christian worship; liturgical and non-liturgical forms of worship
- The role of the sacraments in Christian life
- The nature and purpose of prayer
- Pilgrimage: the nature, history and purpose of pilgrimage
- Christian religious celebrations
- The future of the Christian Church
- The role and importance of the local church in the local community
- The role and importance of the Church in the worldwide community

### **Living the Muslim Life (Islam)** – Students will study:

- The Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam
- Shahadah as one of the Five Pillars
- Salah as one of the Five Pillars
- Sawm as one of the Five Pillars
- Zakah as one of the Five Pillars and Khums
- Hajj as one of the Five Pillars
- Jihad: the origins, meaning and significance of Jihad in Islam
- Religious celebrations, including Id-ul-Adha and Id-ul-Fitr in Sunni Islam, and Id-ul-Ghadeer and Ashura in Shi'a Islam

### **Matters of Life and Death (Christianity)** – Students will study:

- Sanctity of life
- Abortion
- Euthanasia
- Life after Death (Christian views)
- Life after Death (Atheist and Humanist views)
- Christian responses on life after death to Atheist and Humanist views
- Scientific origins of the universe, including the Big Bang Theory and Theory of Evolution
- Christian responses to scientific theories (Genesis 1)
- The Natural World, including climate change and animal rights

### **Peace and Conflict (Islam)** – Students will study:

- Muslim attitudes towards peace
- The role of Muslims in peace making, forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Muslim attitudes to conflict
- Pacifism
- Just War theory in Sunni and Shi'a Islam
- Just War
- Situation Ethics
- Holy War: the nature of a holy war (Harb al-Maqadis) within Islam
- Weapons of mass destruction (WMD)
- Muslim views on Terrorism
- Non-religious views on Terrorism.

## Year 11

Learning focuses 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. As well as revisiting the content outlined above students will continue to develop:

- Exam answer structure for each style of question
- Use of sources of wisdom and authority in exam questions
- Evaluation technique
- Conclusion writing

## Monitoring Standards of RS

As part of a rigorous quality assurance schedule, school leaders along with the Head of RS and Teachers of RS, are responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning taking place in this subject. The analysis of assessment data and pupil voice is central to this process in order to ensure that all students can achieve their full potential in this subject.

The Head of RS is responsible for contributing to our whole school, SIAMS Self Evaluation document. This is an ongoing reflection that happens alongside our faculty improvement plan and ongoing dialogue with school leaders.

As well as this, all staff engage in regular professional development through a CPL programme at both a school and Trust level. Moreover, RS teachers are constantly engaging with up-to-date pedagogical research, Diocesan meetings and exam board training. Our RS teachers also regularly mark summer exams for the exam boards.

## Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

As part of our RS curriculum, we take SMSC very seriously. All students have the opportunity to explore their own spirituality and that of others. We ask them big questions to get them to think deeply about their own belief systems and identity. All of our modules include elements of morality as a core part of our courses in evaluating the impact of religions and the moral decisions that are made by people of faith and others. We look at how religion shapes the world that we live in, the impact of this on society and the way religion shapes different cultures around the world. In promoting SMSC, we promote a respect for all and engage in global learning, teaching our students the value of living well together.