



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies

Religious Studies (RS) plays a vital role in providing students with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to navigate a complex, diverse, and ever-changing world. Through a broad and engaging curriculum, RS enables pupils to explore questions of belief, meaning, identity, morality, and purpose, while also developing the ability to think critically and compassionately.

Our aim is to empower students with a deep understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews, to support personal reflection, and to promote respect for others – all of which are essential for life in modern Britain and beyond.

RS is taught through allocated curriculum time, with flexibility for academies to incorporate additional key learning relevant to their students and local communities. While we are not required to follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus, we draw on its key concepts where appropriate to ensure our provision is rich, inclusive, and locally responsive.

RS fosters a wide range of transferable skills including critical thinking, analysis, empathy, debate, and ethical reasoning. These skills prepare students for success in further education and a wide variety of careers, such as law, healthcare, journalism, public service, and education.

Legislation for Religious Studies in English secondary schools

Religious Studies (RS) is a statutory requirement for all registered pupils in academies, including those without a religious designation, under the terms of the Funding Agreement between academies and the Department for Education. This requirement is rooted in the Education Act 2002 and reinforced by the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, which together state that RS must be provided for all pupils on the school roll, including those in sixth form, except those withdrawn by their parents under Section 71 of the 1998 Act.

While academies are not required to follow the locally agreed syllabus used by maintained schools, they must provide an RS curriculum that is broad and balanced and reflects that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, while also taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in the country (in line with Schedule 19 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

At Outwood Academy Carlton our RS curriculum is designed to meet these legal obligations while also fostering critical thinking, interfaith understanding, and personal reflection. Parents retain the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from RS in whole or in part, and such requests should be made in writing to the Principal.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)

Religious Studies plays a central role in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Through the exploration of a wide range of religious and non-religious worldviews, students are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs, values, and identity, and to consider how others make sense of the world. Lessons provide space for thoughtful discussion about ethical dilemmas, human purpose, and personal responsibility, fostering moral awareness and empathy. RS also helps students understand the beliefs and practices of diverse cultures, building their cultural capital and enabling them to engage respectfully with people from different backgrounds. The subject provides a vital opportunity for students to explore deep questions about meaning, suffering, justice, and human dignity in a safe and respectful environment.

British Values

Religious Studies actively supports the teaching and promotion of fundamental British Values: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Through the study of religious and secular philosophies, students learn to evaluate different perspectives and engage in respectful dialogue and debate. RS helps pupils to understand how beliefs shape actions and communities, and to critically reflect on issues of justice, rights, and responsibilities. By exploring themes such as freedom of belief, religious diversity, equality, and human rights, students develop the knowledge and skills to be active, informed citizens in a pluralistic and democratic society.

Curriculum; Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)

We follow a carefully structured and sequenced RS curriculum that is both academically rigorous and relevant to students' lives. Our curriculum introduces students to a diverse range of beliefs, practices, and worldviews. Topics are designed to build a strong foundation for further study and to encourage curiosity and open-mindedness.

Year 7								
Introduction to Religion and Worldviews	1. What is Religious Studies at OACa?	2. What are the key features of the 6 main world religions?	3. Why are symbols important to us?	4. Why are holy places important?	5. What is Humanism?	6. What attitudes do some non-religious people have towards the idea of Stewardship?	7. What might religion and worldviews look like in the future?	
Spirituality, Expression and Stewardship	1. What might religion and worldviews look like in the future?	2. What is spirituality?	3. Why is art so important in Islam?	4. How do Buddhists create art and why is it so important to them?	5. What is stewardship and why is it important to Christians?	6. Why is the idea of stewardship important to Muslims?	7. Why is the idea of stewardship important to Buddhists?	
Endings and New Beginnings	1. What do Christians believe will happen when we die?	2. What do Muslims believe will happen when we die?	3. What do Buddhists believe will happen when we die?	4. Is there any convincing evidence for reincarnation?	5. What do Humanists believe will happen when we die?	6. What do I believe happens when we die?		
Founders, Leaders and Practices in Religion	1. Why are funerals so important to Christians?	2. What is a religious founder and who is Guru Nanak?	3. Who was Muhammad and why is he important?	4. Who do Christians believe Jesus was?	5. What did Jesus teach and what impact does this have on Christians?			
Sacred Texts,	1. What do we mean by wisdom	2. What is the	3. Abrahamic;	4. Dharmic;	5. What is the	6. Can you have		

Wisdom and Authority	and authority?	influence and value of religious texts today?	What are Jewish Sources of Wisdom and Authority?	What are Hindu Dharma Sources of Wisdom and Authority?	role of divine inspiration in sacred texts?	authority without God?		
Religion in Britain: Past, Present and Future	1. What are secularisation, pluralism and multi faith?	2. What is the history of faith in Britain?	3. What was the Reformation and how did it impact Britain?	4. What does faith look like today in Britain?	5. What does faith look like in my local area?	6. What is the future of faith predicted to be?	7. What is my worldview and how does it influence my life?	
Year 8								
Approaches to the Academic Study of Religion	1. What does it mean to study religion academically?	2. What can anthropology tell us about religion?	3. What can we learn about religion through history?	4. What can we learn about religion through politics and the law?	5. What can we learn about religion through sociology?	6. What is theology and what can it teach us about religion?	7. What can we learn about religion through psychology?	
Exploring Hindu Traditions	1. What are the origins of Hindu traditions?	2. Who are the early teachers and what are the sacred stories in Hindu traditions?	3. What are the key texts and teachings in Hindu traditions?	4. How have Hindu traditions spread beyond its point of origin?	5. What are the key rituals in Hindu traditions, how have these developed and where do they happen?	6. What are the sources of division and diversity in Hindu traditions?	7. What do Hindu traditions look like today?	

Exploring Buddhist Traditions	1. What are the foundational stories or narratives of Buddhist traditions?	2. How do Buddhist traditions view the divine?	3. How are the (scriptures) foundational for Buddhist traditions?	4. What are the key moral principles of Buddhist traditions?	5. What is the history of Buddhist traditions?	6. What do Buddhist traditions believe about the nature of the afterlife?		
Exploring Jewish Traditions	1. How diverse is Judaism?	2. What is the Jewish diaspora?	3. What is the Jewish identity?	4. What are the Jewish marks of faith?	5. What is antisemitism and how is it seen throughout history?			
Exploring Christianity in the USA	1. How diverse is Christianity in the USA?	2. What are the largest Christian groups in the USA?	3. What is the history and development of Mormonism?	4. What is the history and development of the Amish?	5. Why is the Prosperity Gospel controversial?	6. What do Fundamental Christians believe about Creation?		
Exploring Islam in Britain	1. What is the history of Islam in Britain?	2. What are the key differences between Shia and Sunni Muslims?	3. What does it mean to grow up Muslim and British?	4. What is the role of the Mosque in the community?	5. Is Islamophobia an issue in Britain?	6. Does Islam align with British Values?		
Year 9								

Religion, Belief, and Moral Questions	1. Does being Humanist make it easier to behave morally?	1. Does being Humanist make it easier to behave morally?	3. To what extent has religion been used to justify evil?	4. How does Judaism respond to evil?	5. How does belief in Ahimsa affect people's lives?	6. How does a belief in Atonement affect people's lives?	7. What is 'The Messiah' and what is the importance of it?	
Life's Ultimate Questions	1. Are there some questions we will never be able to answer?	2. Can we ever have proof God exists?	3. What is the purpose of life?	4. Is morality the same for everyone?	5. What happens when we die?	6. Can we trust those who claim to have had a religious experience?	7. Are some lives more valuable than others?	
Evil, Suffering, and Faith	1. What is evil and suffering and why is it a problem?	2. Why is evil and suffering a problem?	3. What if we all go to heaven?	4. Is free will worth the price?	5. How does Liberation theology respond to evil and suffering?	6. Are pandemics a test of faith or evidence against a loving God?		
Jewish Identity and the Holocaust	1. Who are the Jewish people and what is the history of antisemitism?	2. What was life like in Europe before 1933?	3. Who were the victims of Nazi persecution?	4. What was the Final Solution?	5. How have people rebuilt and remembered?			

Exploring Philosophy and Religion	1. How did Ancient Greece give birth to philosophy?	2. How did medieval philosophers shape the relationship between philosophy and religion?	3. What can Eastern philosophy teach us about life and society?	4. Is religion a force for good or a tool of oppression?	5. Can we ever truly know what words mean?	6. Is pacifism the most powerful tool of resistance?		
Women and Gender in Christianity	1. Who are the women in the Bible?	2. How does the Bible portray women?	3. How have women led the movement towards equality in Christianity?	4. Should men and women have different roles in Christianity?	5. How does the role of women in Christianity vary across the global Church?	6. Is love really all around us?		

If you would like to discuss Religious Studies please contact the academy on 01226 728494 / enquiries@carlton.outwood.com