



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together state that RS must be provided for all pupils on the school roll, including those in sixth form, except those withdrawn by their parents under Section 71 of the 1998 Act.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 Newbold 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

Judaism	Introduction to Judaism	Jewish teachings on creation	Genesis 3 - The Fall	Passover: Celebration, Symbolism and Significance	The Ten Commandments	Shabbat and Yom Kippur		
	Sacrifice and Sin	Exiled: The Israelites of Babylon	The Messiah and the Birth of Christianity	Remembering the Holocaust	The Nuremberg Laws	The Hitler Youth		
Christianity	The Birth of Jesus	The Temptations of Jesus	The Miracles of Jesus	The parables of Jesus	The Crucifixion of Jesus			
	The Resurrection of Jesus	A New Creation	The Nature of God	Christian Beliefs about Life after Death				
Islam	Introduction to Islam and the 99 Names of Allah	The Beginnings of Islam	Muhammad's Escape from Mecca	The 5 Pillars of Islam and Shahadah	Salat - Prayer in Islam			
	Zakat - Giving Alms	Sawm - Fasting	Hajj - Pilgrimage to Mecca	Features of Mosques	Angels in Islam	Muslim Beliefs about Life after Death	Festivals - Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha	

Year 8

Hinduism	Introduction to	Avatars -	Hanuman and	Beliefs about	Hindu beliefs	Hindu Beliefs		
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	Hinduism	Krishna and Rama	Ganesh	Birth and Death	Towards the Environment and Animal Rights	about Life after Death		
Buddhism	Siddartha Gautama	Teachings of the Buddha	The Sangha	Buddhist Teachings on Life after Death	Buddhist Beliefs on the Origins of the Universe	Buddhist Beliefs on the Treatment of Animals		
Sikhism	Introduction to Sikhism and Guru Nanak	Guru Granth Sahib	The Khalsa	The 5Ks				
Existence of God	The Problem of Evil	The Design Argument	The Causation Argument	Miracles as Evidence of the Existence of God	Religion Vs Science			
Human Rights and Social Injustice	Living with Rights: How They Help us Thrive	The KKK and the Fight for Human Rights	Racism - Emmett Till	Refugees: Why Human Rights Matter	Freedom of Religion			
Values in Action	Inspirational People: Nicky Cruz	Heroes of the Holocaust	Inspirational People: Dietrich Bonhoeffer	Inspirational People: Harriet Tubman	Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement	Inspirational People: Gandhi	Evaluating Inspirational People	
Year 9								
The Ethics	Choices and	Justice and	Why do we	The Death	Is there a	Forgiveness: A		

of Justice	Circumstance: Exploring crime	Mercy: What do Religions Say?	Punish People?	Penalty: Punishment or Revenge	Purpose to Suffering?	Command or Choice?		
The Value of Life	Abortion: A Moral Dilemma	Euthanasia: Mercy or Murder?	Origins of the Universe: Faith or Fact?	Origins of Human Life: Evolution or Belief?	Body, Soul and Science: Exploring Death and Beyond	Faith Food and Fur: Ethics around Animals		
Conflict and Conscience	Protests: Helpful or Harmful?	War: Beliefs and Motivations	Living Without Violence: Living the Pacifist Way	Holy War: When Religion and Conflict Meet	Just War: Fighting with Morals?			
The Jewish Holocaust	Not Just Victims: Understanding Jewish Life Before the Holocaust	Was Evil Let in, or Always There?	Was Hitler's Hate Unique, or Part of a Bigger History?	How Do You Erase a Person Without Touching Them?	What Made The Camps More Than Just Prisons?			
	Auschwitz: Beyond the Barbed Wire	The Many Faces of Jewish Resistance	Liberation and Loss	Blame and Justice	Modern Antisemitism			
Philosophy	What is Philosophy?	Does God Exist?	Do we have Free Will?	What makes a person?	Is There a Life After Death?	Is There a Life After Death?	Can We Ever Know Anything For Sure?	

KS4

At Key Stage 4 we offer the AQA GCSE Religious Studies (Specification A) course. This qualification encourages students to engage with a wide range of philosophical, ethical, and theological issues, developing their ability to construct well-informed, balanced arguments. Students study Christianity in depth, exploring key beliefs, teachings, and practices. The second religion studied is selected by the individual school and reflects the context and diversity of the local community. At Outwood Academy Newbold we study Islam. Alongside the study of religions, students explore thematic units, Religion, Crime and Punishment, Religion and Life, Relationships and Families, Religion, Peace and Conflict, allowing them to apply religious and secular perspectives to contemporary moral issues. The course not only prepares students for academic success but also supports their personal development and ethical understanding.

If you would like to discuss Religious Studies please contact the academy on 01246 230550 enquiries@newbold.outwood.com

