



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together state that RS must be provided for all pupils on the school roll, including those in sixth form, except those withdrawn by their parents under Section 71 of the 1998 Act.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

Complete and adapt the below as follows to outline the topic and lesson names for each year group.

Year 7								
Year 8								
Year 9								

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 *** we study *****. Alongside the study of religions, students explore thematic units ****Insert 4 studied**** 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 **number/email**