

Religious Education

Year 9 Curriculum

ASPIRE – ENDEAVOUR - SUCCEED

Purpose of Study statement

High-quality RE will support pupils' religious literacy. In the context of this syllabus, being religiously literate means that pupils will have the ability to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and worldviews. Pupils will be able to make sense of religion and worldviews around them and begin to understand the complex world in which they live. RE is primarily about enabling pupils to become free thinking, critical participants of public discourse, who can make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief which shape the global landscape.

Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019, p4

Threshold concepts (We call them RE's 'Golden Threads')

Nature of God
Belief into action
Sacred text
Inspirational figures
Faith

Sequence of learning

To develop schema in KS3 RE we have 5 'Golden Threads' (Nature of God, Belief into action, Sacred texts, Inspirational figures and Faith). These 'threads' weave through the topics, thus accumulating knowledge on these key concepts throughout the KS3 curriculum.

The NAS (2019) recommends that RE is taught through multi-disciplinary lenses – **Human Social Sciences**, **Philosophy** and **Theology**. Each KS3 topic has an enquiry question to consider from one of the disciplinary lenses.

Y9

KS3 RE will move away from the explicit study of individual religions, as Y9 students will use their religious literacy and maturing personal perspectives to explore philosophical and ethical issues. Through the study of philosophy and ethics students will be challenged to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

The first topic for Y9 will be the **Philosophy of Religion**, which begins in Ancient Greece, the birthplace of Western philosophy. Students will examine how Plato, one of the most influential thinkers ever to live, thought it possible to know what is true. Students will then jump forward 2000 years to find out how René Descartes pondered the same question of how anyone can be sure that any of their beliefs are true. Next, students will consider the arguments of some of the best - known Western philosophers on the question of whether there is a God. We will examine whether there are good reasons to believe in God, whether miracles happen, whether people can communicate with God and even whether God has come to Earth. Students will then consider a range of philosophical challenges to belief in God, from the scientific theory of the Victorian scientist, Charles Darwin, who continues to cause controversy to the arguments against God proposed more recently by the Masters of Suspicion and the New Atheists. Finally, students will examine the wide range of beliefs held by people in the UK today.

Utilising and building upon students' religious literacy in Y7 and Y8 and the philosophical arguments considered in the first topic of Y9, students will study **Ethics** for the rest of the academic year. Students will gain knowledge of the key ideas and arguments that have informed ethical debate through history and continue to influence the

way people think and act in the modern world. Some of the questions raised in this topic are: How should we live our lives? Is there a best way to live? Are some actions always right or wrong, or does it depend on the situation or consequences? What about our human nature? Is it good or bad, or neither? What even are we as humans? Are we simply physical matter and does that affect how we think about right and wrong? If we are just physical matter, could and should we create artificial intelligence like us? If we do, should this artificial intelligence have rights and responsibilities? And what about animals? Are we more important than them, or is to argue that simply speciesism?

Subject knowledge

Philosophy of Religion How do we know what is true? What proof is there for the existence of God?

How did Plato think we can know the truth?

K7.1 The Realm of Forms

K7.2 The Realm of Appearances

K7.3 The analogy of the cave

K7.4 Differences between empiricism (Aristotle) and rationalism (Plato)

Why did Descartes doubt everything?

K7.5 Do our senses deceive us? Are our minds tricked?

K7.6 "I think; therefore I am".

K7.7 Is the idea of God tattooed on our minds? (The trademark argument)

K7.8 Evaluating Descartes' ideas

Was God the first cause of everything?

K7.8 Analysis of the First Cause argument (including fallacy of composition)

K7.9 Analysis of the Design argument (including theory of evolution)

Is God involved in the world?

K7.10 Do religious experiences provide evidence that God exists? Miracles (including critique by Hume), prayer, and seeing God through Jesus

Can you believe in God and evolution?

K7.11 Creationism: Genesis v Evolution

K7.12 Continuing controversy (Darwin, 'yom', Genesis as a myth, and theistic evolution)

Why did Freud think God is all in the mind?

K7.13 Master of Suspicion: Freud's wish-fulfilment hypothesis

K7.14 Criticisms of Freud's wish-fulfilment hypothesis

Why did Marx compare religion to a drug?

K7.15 Marx: Religion creates 'false consciousness', and is the 'opium of the people'

K7.16 The influence of Marx on Lenin and the Soviet Union

Does the idea of God make sense?

K7.17 The paradox of omnipotence

K7.18 Can God be omniscient if humans are free?

K7.19 Why doesn't God stop suffering? (Problem of evil)

K7.20 Apophatic theology

Are the New Atheists right about faith?

K7.21 Key beliefs of New Atheists (religious beliefs should not be shown respect or tolerance)

K7.22 Can Science answer the question of God's existence?

K7.23 Analysis of Richard Dawkin's claim that 'Faith is the great cop out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence'.

K7.24 Pascal's wager

What do people in the UK believe?

K7.25 How religious people in the UK are today, according to 2011 census data

K7.26 Alternatives to religious belief in the UK: 'Nones', atheists, agnostics, SBNR and Humanists

Ethics Is there any law that should not be broken? Has religion passed its sell-by date?

What is ethics?

K8.1 Definition of ethics

K8.2 How do we know what is right and wrong? Where does morality come from?

K8.3 Altruism, absolutism and relativism

Is there any law that should not be broken?

K8.4 Reasons why people keep the law

K8.5 Different religious beliefs about keeping the law (Christianity – St Paul, Islam - ‘fight oppression’ and Sikhism – ‘fight injustice’)

Environmental ethics

K8.6 Concepts of dominion and stewardship

K8.7 How does religion inspire environmental action?

K8.8 Case study of Vrindavan (site of Vaishnavite Hindu pilgrimage)

Are animals as important as humans?

K8.9 Peter Singer’s Utilitarian views on the importance of animals

K8.10 Evaluation of Singer’s concept of speciesism (with reference to the superiority of humankind, as suggested by Genesis)

Medical ethics

K8.11 Definition of medical ethics

K8.12 Argument that medical knowledge may be seen as a gift from God

K8.13 Reflect on whether humans have gone too far with medicine

Attitudes to poverty and wealth

K8.14 Defining poverty: absolute and relative

K8.15 Christian beliefs about poverty and wealth

Attitudes to victims of natural disasters (Careers in the curriculum link)

K8.16 The Golden Rule

K8.17 How religious beliefs influence human action in response to natural disasters

Has religion passed its sell-by date?

K8.18 Arguments for and against the view that religion is no longer relevant in the modern world

K8.19 Evaluate the view that ‘Religion has passed its sell-by date’.

Is sport like a religion?

K8.20 The idea that sport is ‘the new religion’

K8.21 Evaluation of the place of religion in comparison with the place of sport in society today

How should we live if God is dead?

K8.22 Nietzsche: ‘God is dead, and we have killed him’, the death of morality, the will to power, and the enemy of life, the doctrine of eternal recurrence

K8.23 Evaluation of Nietzsche’s arguments

Are goodness and pleasure the same?

K8.24 Utilitarianism: Bentham and the hedonic calculus

K8.25 Evaluation of Utilitarianism (John Stuart Mill and Robert Nozick’s experience machine)

What should we do with the runaway train?

K8.26 Philippa Foot’s runaway train thought experiment

K8.27 Applying the runaway train thought experiment: the ethics of programming driverless cars

What is the banality of evil?

K8.28 Contextualising Hannah Adrendt’s phrase ‘banality of evil’

K8.29 Analysing the concept of the ‘banality of evil’

Are we more than mere matter?

K8.30 Dualism and materialism

How ethical is artificial intelligence?

K8.31 Do computers think? The Turing Test and the Chinese room thought experiment

K8.32 Would AI improve life? Should we create superintelligence?

Curriculum links to careers

During the Ethics topic, students will study 'Attitudes to victims of natural disasters'. Students will encounter the work of religious people who work for charitable organisations, such as Christian Aid. This is an opportunity for students to recognise not only how a religious person's belief is shown in action, but also the broader connection with how personal beliefs, interests and passions influence and motivate career choice. Students will make a written response to stimulus to show how a person's beliefs (religious or not) influence career choice.

- ✓ Lesson on the ethics of artificial intelligence: Students will consider and discuss the use of the possible invention of artificial superintelligence. For example, how would ASI impact on the labour market?
- ✓ Working with others: having respect for people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- ✓ Working with others: having respect for religious/non-religious belief
- ✓ Working with others: having respect for other people's beliefs/points of view
- ✓ Working with others: recognising the impact religious faith can have on working life

Procedural knowledge

- S1 How to apply keywords (from the knowledge organiser) accurately in verbal and written work
- S2 How to recall religious belief/practice
- S3 How to recount religious stories
- S4 How to interpret religious text.
- S5 How to compare different interpretations of religious text (eg literal and liberal interpretations)
- S6 How to interpret religious symbolism
- S7 How to apply religious text as evidence to support an argument
- S8 How to apply religious text as evidence to critique an argument
- S9 How to identify similarities and differences of belief and practice within a religion (eg sects)
- S10 How to identify similarities and differences of belief and practice between religions
- S11 How to evaluate controversial religious statements
- S12 How to debate ethical and philosophical arguments