



Religious Studies Department Overview

The role and importance of Religious Studies at Saint Cecilia's

Religious Studies is an important and valued subject at Saint Cecilia's because it is a unique academic subject that provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, allows learners to explore beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality. It encourages young people to reflect on the issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops students' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions and worldviews. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development.

This approach to Religious Studies finds its foundation in the verse John 10:10. This scripture motivates RS teachers in their commitment to equipping learners with skills and creating opportunities to live abundant lives not only during their time at St Cecilia's but also well beyond their graduation day. Aligned with the school's overarching vision, the RS department strives to fulfil this objective through a dedicated focus on nurturing the love of learning, aspiration, integrity, compassion and appreciation of different cultures, religions and worldviews. This approach ensures that Religious Studies is accessible to learners from diverse backgrounds and provides support for individuals with varying needs.

Religious Studies is a valued core subject across Key Stages. Religious Studies contributes to breadth and depth of understanding of other subjects, particularly English, History, Science and Geography as it provides cultural and religious context and prompts learners to explore philosophical and ethical dimensions of the subjects they study. Moreover, it encourages learners to develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

Religious Education is a core subject which all students pursue at GCSE level. Students can continue to study religious, philosophical and ethical issues and theories in the A Level Religious Studies (Philosophy, Ethics and Theology).

Curriculum Key Stage 3

Key Stage 3 curriculum is planned to provide learners with a strong foundation as they advance in their education and to develop curiosity, love of learning and appreciation of different religions and worldviews. This goal is achieved by following the principles outlined in ['Religious Education in Church of England A: Statement of Entitlement'](#) and Southwark Diocese Educational Board guidance on balanced curriculum. Such an approach reflects the complex nature of RS as an academic subject and encourages learners to engage with religions through philosophy, theology and sociology. Majority of the curriculum time is spent studying Christianity and units were developed using high quality resources such as Understanding Christianity and Critical RE pedagogy.

In Year 7 and 9, pupils have four lessons per fortnight and three lessons per fortnight in Year 8. Pupils study the following topics:

Key Stage 3			
	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Year 7	<p>Religions and Worldviews in modern Britain ^ What does it mean to be a young religious or non-religious person in Britain? In this unit pupils explore different religions and worldviews and practices associated with them. Pupils explore the impact of beliefs on everyday life practices of young people in modern Britain. The unit ends with exploring how being a young Christian in Britain differs to being a Christian around the world.</p> <p>Ultimate Questions: Can we know the truth? ^ This unit introduces pupils to the study of philosophy and allows them to explore ways of approaching different truth claims.</p>	<p>What does it mean to be human?* In this unit, pupils explore the question of what it means to be human and what makes us unique. Pupils learn about rights and responsibilities and justification for them offered by religious and non-religious approaches.</p> <p>Who was Jesus?* In this unit, pupils consider the life of biblical and historical Jesus. Pupils study significant events in Jesus' life and investigate whether he is best understood as a Son of God, teacher of wisdom or a revolutionary.</p>	<p>Spirited Arts: God's Good Earth? ^ In this unit, pupils consider different religious beliefs about God's creation. Pupils create final pieces that express their worldview in response to the theme of the unit. The best entries are entered into Spirited Arts competition organised by NATRE.</p> <p>How do the core beliefs of Islam impact everyday life? In this unit, pupils learn about key religious beliefs within Islam and explore the impact of beliefs on everyday life.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Year 8</p>	<p>Is it possible to prove that God exists?* In this unit, pupils study religious arguments for God's existence, such as design argument, cosmological argument and argument from religious experience. They also examine non-religious responses to the arguments and are encouraged to form their own responses to the question whether we can prove the existence of God.</p> <p>Can Buddhist teachings explain why we suffer? This unit gives pupils an opportunity to explore a religious response to the question of why people suffer. Pupils consider Buddha philosophy and teachings about suffering and evaluate how helpful they are to people living in a modern-day Britain.</p>	<p>How do we make moral decisions?* This unit introduces pupils to ethics and different ways to make moral decisions. In this unit, learners explore different religious teachings as well as ethical approaches that some people use to solve moral dilemmas.</p>	<p>What does Islam teach about life in society? This unit builds on the knowledge acquired in Year 7, which focused on the core beliefs in Islam. In this unit, pupils explore different groups within Islam and are encouraged to recognise the impact of history and context on these groups and study the legal systems and beliefs underpinning Shari'ah law.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Year 9</p>	<p>Marriage and the Family* This unit allows pupils to study key Christian beliefs about the value of the family. It explores religious and non-religious responses to the questions surrounding the importance of marriage, sexual relationship, divorce. Pupils also are given the opportunity to explore how the local church supports families.</p>	<p>Christian Beliefs* In this unit, pupils study key theological topics that include the Trinity, Creation and Salvation. They also explore the philosophical problem of evil and evaluate different solutions offered to it.</p>	<p>Living the Jewish Life In this unit, pupils are introduced to the key religious practices and traditions within Judaism. Pupils learn about the history and traditions of key Jewish festivals. This unit aims to introduce pupils to the Jewish culture through real-life examples and religious artefacts.</p>
<p>* Units taught from Christian perspective ^ Units that feature Christianity</p>			

Curriculum Key Stage 4

Year 10 and Year 11 students receive three lessons per fortnight in RS. During Key Stage 4 pupils study Edexcel Religious Studies B syllabus. The GCSE is assessed by two 1 hour 45-minute exams at the end of Year 11. The course consists of theological and thematic studies from a Christian and Jewish perspective.

Key Stage 4			
Year 10	Matters of Life and Death* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins and value of the universe • Sanctity of Life • The origins and value of human life • The issue of abortion • Death and the afterlife • Non-religious arguments against life after death • Euthanasia • The natural world 	Jewish Beliefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the Almighty • Shekhinah • Messiah • The covenant at Sinai • The covenant with Abraham • Sanctity of Life • Moral principles and the mitzvot • Jewish beliefs about life after death 	Crime and Punishment** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice • Crime • Jewish attitudes to good, evil and suffering • Attitudes to punishment • The aims of punishment • Forgiveness • Treatment of criminals • The death penalty
Year 11	Peace and Conflict** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish attitudes towards peace • The role of Jews in peacemaking • Attitudes to conflict • Pacifism • Just War theory • Holy War • Weapons of mass destruction • Issues surrounding conflict 	Living the Christian Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship • The role of sacraments in Christian life • The nature and purpose of prayer • Pilgrimage • Christian religious celebrations • The future of the Church • The importance of the local church • The worldwide Church 	Revision and Exams
<p>* Units taught from Christian perspective ** Units taught from Jewish perspective</p>			

Curriculum Key Stage 5

Core Religious Studies

Core Key Stage 5 Religious Studies provision is delivered as an explicit part of PSHE curriculum. In Year 12, students complete an EPQ-style research project relating to their interests during which they explore a philosophical, ethical or theological dimension of their chosen topic. In Year 13, students examine the influence of Christianity on culture on religious practice around the world.

A Level Course

Students who choose to pursue A Level Religious Studies (Philosophy, Ethics and Theology) study the OCR Religious Studies course. This course is split into three units, Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and Developments in Christian Thought. It is examined by three essay-based exams at the end of Year 13.

Key Stage 5			
Year 12	Philosophy of Religion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ancient philosophical influences• Soul, mind and body• Arguments based on observation• Arguments based on reason• Religious experience• The problem of evil	Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural law• Situation ethics• Kantian ethics• Utilitarianism• Euthanasia• Business ethics	Developments in Christian Thought <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Augustine's teaching on human nature• Death and the afterlife• Knowledge of God's existence• The person of Jesus Christ• Christian moral principles• Christian moral action
Year 13	Philosophy of Religion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The nature or attributes of God• Religious language: negative, analogical or symbolic• Religious language: twentieth-century perspectives	Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meta-ethics• Conscience• Sexual ethics	Developments in Christian Thought <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religious pluralism and theology• Religious pluralism and society• Gender and society• Gender and theology• The challenge of secularism• Liberation theology and Marx

Enrichment and extra-curricular

We invite pupils to take part in a range of enriching experiences at our school. Key Stage 3 pupils are encouraged to engage in deep philosophical conversations by attending our fortnightly Philosophy Club. They can explore thought-provoking films and documentaries in our weekly Lunchtime Documentary and Film Club. Beyond the classroom, we offer educational trips that complement your in-class learning. For example, Year 8 students explore the Buddhapadipa Temple, Year 9s engage with the Wimbledon Synagogue, and A Level students benefit from university-style Philosophy and Ethics lectures at a yearly A Level conference. Additionally, pupils and students often benefit from the visits of distinguished guest speakers. Sixth form students had the privilege of meeting Archdeacon Kiddle, while Year 9s participated in an event led by Bishop Cheetham.

Careers

Religious Education provides students with a range of skills which are transferable to a number of different A Levels and degree subjects. The subject encourages students to think critically, analyse texts and develop arguments. These are essential skills within all humanities and social sciences subjects.

According to AGCAS (the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Service), Philosophy and Ethics will prepare students for the following careers:

- Financial services
- Legal sector (Law)
- Medicine
- Politics
- Consultancy
- Journalism
- Media sector
- Education sector
- Publishing sector
- Social care sector
- Voluntary sector
- Social & pastoral care
- Community work

Exam Boards

Key Stage 4

Exam Board: Edexcel Religious Education B

Specification:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/religious-studies-b-2016.html>

Past papers:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/religious-studies-b-2016.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=Pearson-UK:Category%2FExam-materials>

Key Stage 5

Exam Board: OCR Religious Studies A Level

Specification:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce/as-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/>

Past papers:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce/as-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/assessment/>

Textbooks and revision resources

Key Stage 4

[Edexcel Religious Studies for GCSE \(9-1\): Beliefs in Action \(Specification B\): Beliefs in Action \(Specification B\)Specification B: Amazon.co.uk: Watton, Victor W., Stone, Robert M.: 9781471866593: Books](#)

Revision guides:

[GCSE Religious Studies: Edexcel B Beliefs in Action Revision Guide \(with Online Edition\): superb for the 2024 and 2025 exams \(CGP GCSE RS\) : CGP Books, CGP Books: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

Revision padlet:

[GCSE Revision \(padlet.com\)](#)

Key Stage 5

Year 12: [Oxford A Level Religious Studies for OCR: AS and Year 1 Student Book: Christianity, Philosophy and Ethics: Amazon.co.uk: Ahluwalia, Libby, Bob Bowie: 9780198392859: Books](#)

Year 13: [Oxford A Level Religious Studies for OCR: Christianity, Philosophy and Ethics: Amazon.co.uk: Ahluwalia, Libby, Bowie, Robert: 9780198375333: Books](#)

Revision guides:

[Oxford A Level Religious Studies for OCR Revision Guide: Get Revision with Results: Amazon.co.uk: Ahluwalia, Libby: 9780198423751: Books](#)

[My Revision Notes OCR A Level Religious Studies: Philosophy of Religion: Amazon.co.uk: Waterfield, Julian, Eyre, Chris: 9781510418042: Books](#)

[My Revision Notes OCR A Level Religious Studies: Religion and Ethics: Amazon.co.uk: Waterfield, Julian, Eyre, Chris: 9781510418059: Books](#)

[My Revision Notes OCR A Level Religious Studies: Developments in Christian Thought: Amazon.co.uk: Waterfield, Julian, Eyre, Chris: 9781510418066: Books](#)

Padlet (wider reading and enrichment resources): [A Level RS \(padlet.com\)](#)