

Religious Education Policy

Person Responsible:	Miss N Khan	Frequency of Review:	2 Year
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1 Introduction

The teaching of Religious Education at Upper Wharfedale School reflects current legislation as outlined in relevant Education Acts, DfE circulars, and the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus for R.E.

As per the 1988 Education Reform Act, Religious Education remains a core subject taught to all key stages, and hugely contributes to promoting Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of students. Through provoking challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God and the issues of right and wrong; students are given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding through an 'enquiries' approach in line with the SACRE recommendation.

2 The aim of RE

In North Yorkshire's schools, one of the primary aims of Religious Education is to help students develop open, sensitive reflective and critical approaches to understanding humankind's varied religions and beliefs; exploring practices, values, beliefs and lifestyles, whilst relating these to their own experiences and to questions of their everyday life. This aim has five elements to it:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and beliefs represented in the UK and globally.
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions and beliefs.
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions and beliefs represented in the UK.
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education by developing awareness of fundamental questions of life, responding to such questions with reference to religions and beliefs and reflecting on their own beliefs values and experiences.

3 Key Stage 4

Students are taught Religious Studies (Specification B) from the Edexcel examination board - learning equally about Christianity and Islam, alongside the beliefs of Humanists. The exam specification allows pupils to compare and discuss non-religious beliefs with the beliefs of Christians (Religion and Ethics – paper 1) and Muslims (Religion, Peace and Conflict – Paper 2). Students are encouraged to debate and suggest reasons for changes in society by looking at divorce, homosexuality, marriage, abortion and euthanasia in Christianity; and evil/suffering, the death penalty and the just war theory in Islam.

All students will be entered for the GCSE qualification in Religious Studies. From September 2022, Year 9 students will begin the GCSE in September for Religious Studies - with their examinations taking place at the end of Year 10. Students will receive 1 hour per week in year 9, which will increase to 2 hours per week in year 10 until their final examinations.

4 Key Stage 3

Students are encouraged and enabled to explore their own and other people's beliefs, values and traditions in meaningful and engaging ways. Students are given opportunities to share their diverse range of experiences and grow individually and together with sensitivity and respect towards people of all faiths and none. The principal aim is to engage students in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and world views address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

- Year 7 – How could we and why should we reduce racism? Should religious buildings be sold to feed the starving? A-Z of religions, Religion and world views
- Year 8 – Does religion help people be good? How can people express the spiritual through music and art? Is death the end? Why is there suffering? Spirited Arts.
- Year 9 – GCSE programme commences

The units above explore a range of religions from the 6 world religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism). Other world views / belief systems are also looked at during key stage 3 - including Humanist teachings and atheist and agnostic beliefs.

The key stage three curriculum for RE aims to ensure that students are given the opportunity to:

- Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - Describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices (recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and individuals)
 - Identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses, offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religion and worldviews.
 - Appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religion and worldviews, so that they can:
 - Explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
 - Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
 - Appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - Find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
 - Enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
 - Articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives

5 Parental Rights

In the UK, parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education. The right to withdraw was first granted when religious education was religious *instruction* and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE has been very different to this for some time (as outlined in the policy above). It is inclusive and wide ranging, exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. Parents who wish to withdraw their child from some or part of the subject, should discuss this with the R.E teacher and/or the Headteacher.