

## Curriculum Principles

Our curriculum has been carefully thought through, and to ensure that all students develop holistically, we have designed and planned our curriculum according to the following principles:

Our curriculum is **ambitious**, offering all students access to the most powerful knowledge of each subject

**For example:**

During key stage three, in year seven we study a unit called What is Religion? This unit gives our students the opportunity to look at philosophical questions around the existence of God and look at the work of philosophers such as Socrates and Dawkins. This helps to develop our students' questioning skills and their ability to think and challenge ideas while looking at ethics and moral principles.

At key stage four, all students study AQA Religious studies. Within this course students study a range of themes and topics which are relevant for everyday life in society. This includes looking at modern conflicts such as the current war between Russia and Ukraine and the Israel and Palestine conflict. They also study the works of Thomas Aquinas and St Augustine and the Just war Theory and how this may apply to current conflicts and analyse to what extent a just war can ever exist.

Our curriculum is **taught to be remembered**, not merely encountered, through curriculum content that is **well sequenced** and vertically integrated

**For example:**

In year seven we look at the nature of God and in this unit we look at God as creator in three religions. This is built on in year eight when we look at and compare the specific creation narratives of those religions. In year nine we return to this theme looking at how the religions use this idea to inform their decisions in how to live out these beliefs. This knowledge is again developed at key stage four where in the Christian beliefs and teachings unit we look at the role of the Word and the Spirit in creation and in year 11 study the concepts of stewardship and dominion in further depth.

In year seven we introduce students to the concept of Tawhid ( the oneness of God) as central to Islam beliefs. In year eight we build on this when we look at the Shahadah as one of the Five Pillars of Islam as a way to accept God and demonstrate their faith in action. In year nine this is then looked at within the structure of the six Articles of Faith and the five Roots of Usul ad Din. At GCSE these ideas return with a comparison of interdenominational beliefs and teachings.

Our curriculum embodies our **vision and ethos** through educating for knowledge, wisdom and skills, educating for hope and aspiration, educating for community and living well together, and educating for dignity and respect

**For example:**

Throughout our Religious Education curriculum we educate for dignity and respect. We do this by examining the preciousness and individuality of each person by looking at topics such as the sanctity of life, stewardship and humans as being made in the imago dei. We teach about respecting each other's beliefs and ideas and learning how to disagree in a respectful way.

In the Religious Education Curriculum we educate for community and living well together; which is a core element of the subject we teach. We do this by structuring our curriculum to look at the main religions that we find in our local community including visiting places of worship and inviting guest speakers into the academy. We are an active department during events such as our local communities interfaith week which including visits for our new to the country and EAL students to visit the Islamic Centre and the local Gurdwara which they had never experienced before and inviting guest speakers from a range of different Christian denominations from our local churches to compare and contrast their experiences of living the Christian faith.

promotes the **spiritual development** of all students

**For example:**

Spiritual development is central to the Religious Education curriculum with our students having many opportunities for this to occur. A specific example in Key Stage three is in year eight when we look at expressions of religion across religious and non religious world views. We look at religious experiences, such as the River vision of Guru Nanak, and religious callings to missionary work such as visiting Taize. These give the students the opportunity to reflect on what it means to belong to a faith group and how people think they can experience a greater or spiritual being.

In Religious Education asking and looking for the answers to Big Questions is important. In year seven students do some work on what a big question is and how it applies to RE. They look at their own and others beliefs around the concept of is there a God, learning key terms such as atheism, animism, theism and agnosticism. They look at the works of Richard Dawkins such as the God Delusion and compare it

to religious ideas. These skills of questioning and evaluating concepts continue to be built in through the study of Religious Education looking at issues around the Creation of the Universe, What happens after death and are humans unique.

develops students' **21st century learning skills**, and is underpinned by a **literacy strategy** that supports increased vocabulary acquisition and reading fluency

**For example:**

In Religious Education we place a priority on improving our student's literacy to enable them to flourish in our subject. This can be seen through developing our students' religious literacy in using key scriptural and factual texts, use of prayer models and deconstructing words in order for our students to develop their vocabulary. An example of this is the word philosophy which students are taught broken down comes from philo ( love) and sophos ( wisdom). We also break down words into their separate phonemes when teaching new tier three language. For example the term eucharist becomes Yoo - Kuh - Rist.

In Religious Education we encourage students to demonstrate collaboration and leadership. We use group work within lessons to allow students to demonstrate team working skills. In the key stage three unit on Christianity and religious expression the students work in groups to research different denominations of Christianity in their local community. Not only does this improve their group work, independent research and presentation skills but also develops their knowledge of the community they live in preparing them for life after and outside of the academy.