



www.nonsuchschool.org

Year 9

Department of Religious Studies

OVERVIEW

Skills Developed

- Ability to apply knowledge to evaluative questions
- Critical thinking skills
- Empathy and building understanding of others in society
- Evaluative skills
- Essay writing skills
- Use of sources to analyse key issues
- Exploration of personal values and spirituality is integral to RS (SMSC)
- Debating and reasoning skills– oracy and the ability to articulately defend their own views and confidently challenge those of others
- Regular group tasks promote leadership and co-operative skills
- There are opportunities for creative responses to religious issues in drama, art, poetry and group presentations

Topics covered

Year 9 takes a different approach to RS to previous years – moving away from “World Religions” to take a more holistic view of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics.

Autumn term

- “What is this thing we call religion?” using Professor Ninian Smart’s 7 features of religion: a wide-ranging analysis of religion using a variety of case studies from a number of religions.

Spring term

- An exploration of philosophical issues, considering how we know that something is true, and applying these ideas to particular issues such as the potential conflict between religion and science.
- We will also explore a range of issues in applied moral philosophy considering how sound decisions could be made in topics such as animal testing and difficult moral dilemmas.

Summer term

- An examination of the key ideas of some of the world’s smaller religions and alternative world views, considered in relation to the major world religions studied in Years 7-9.

Full details of the GCSE specification are available at www.ocr.org.uk

How we assess your daughter's progress

We use a variety of assessment types in Year 7, including multiple choice question quizzes, shorter key knowledge assessments, longer descriptive pieces of writing and evaluation questions.

We are also continually informally assessing the quality of students' engagement with class debate, as this is a key way to develop thinking skills. There are also informal assessments of the more creative responses, which cover a wide range of skills.

How we support and develop your daughter

There is no specific textbook for the Year 9 course however if your daughter find herself interested in a particular area we have a large number of books in the department available to borrow.

Students are encouraged to share their own opinions and to consider carefully the opinions of others. All points of view are respected and all students are encouraged to share their insights. The aim is to equip students to have well-informed reasons to support their opinions.

Careful marking and feedback will enable students to know what they have done well and how they might improve. Modelling good answers will enable students to see what they are aiming for. Additional guidance in class to explain how students can improve their answers, or giving an opportunity to redo a piece of work which was initially weak will usually be sufficient to support those students who need extra help.

How you can help your daughter

The most important way to help your daughter is simply by engaging in conversation to ask her what she thinks about a variety of topics – it doesn't matter whether they are specifically religious or not.

A key skill to develop in RS is to be able to argue both sides of an argument, so simply asking her, "What do you think about this – and why?" will help her to develop her thinking skills.

It would be wonderful if students would develop the habit of watching the news, as this will give them a wealth of current affairs knowledge, and many news items are about different parties arguing about what the right course of action is. This is excellent for helping students to construct well-reasoned arguments.

An excellent and accessible book for those interested in these topics and wanting a challenge is: *A Little History of Religion* by Richard Holloway

Websites which can be useful include BBC Religion and BBC Bitesize, as well as the online lessons available on the Oak National Academy site.