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Year 7

# Department of Religious Studies

# OVERVIEW

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Students will begin to investigate: “What is religion?” via a systematic review of the Abrahamic traditions. We begin with an introductory unit looking at ultimate questions and worldviews, which sets the scene for the entire curriculum as these themes underpin every topic from Year 7- A-level.

By the end of year 7 students we want students to know the story of monotheism from Abraham to Muhammed, to be able to know key religious practices and histories of Judaism, Christian and Islamic tradition so that they will have a better understanding of how these arrived at the practices and beliefs they hold today.

Through our identified key interlinked concepts of the **Nature of Reality, Human Purpose, Ethical Living, and Diversity** we want to demonstrate to students that each religion does not exist as an island in isolation but rather faith traditions have been born, developed and changed often in response with other traditions.

We want students to be able to make links between units of work and to clearly see how faiths evolve and adapt over time as well as being able to understand that faiths are, in essence, a human response to the ultimate quest for truth.

We encourage students to form their own opinions on the content studied and hope that students are able to become more confident individuals regardless of their written ability. We want students to understand how the disciplines of philosophy, theology and sociology can come together to form an understanding of religion as it exists today.

## Skills Developed

- Ability to apply knowledge to evaluative questions
- Critical thinking skills
- Empathy and building understanding of others in society
- Evaluative 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

- Introduction to philosophical thinking – what is “real”?
- Development of monotheistic traditions – from Abraham to Muhammad
- An introduction to the key beliefs and practices of Judaism, Christianity and Islam

### 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 7 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.