



## Religious Education Curriculum

### Statement of Intent, Implementation, Impact

*"The study of religious and non-religious worldviews is a core component of a well rounded academic education. This has long been recognised as essential in Britain. Indeed, one could argue that it is more important now than ever. Young people today are growing up in a world where there is increasing awareness of the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews, and they will need to live and work well with people with very different worldviews from themselves. One need only glance at a newspaper to know that it is impossible to fully understand the world without understanding worldviews."*

(Religion and Worldviews: A national plan for RE 2018)

The vision and educational aims for RE at Broughton are to provide a rigorous academic curriculum that is ambitious, challenging, enriching and inclusive. This is in line with the school's aim to encourage high aspirations in order to maximise progress and enable all pupils to experience the joy of success. Our aims for RE also reflect the intent of the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus which is 'to support pupils' personal search for meaning by engaging enquiry into the question 'what does it mean to be human?' through exploring answers offered by religion and belief.

Our intent is to provide an academic RE curriculum that enables pupils to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and worldviews.

*"In religious education, pupils enter into a rich discourse about the religious and non-religious traditions that have shaped Great Britain and the world. RE...enables pupils to take their place within a diverse multi-religious and multi-secular society... it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It affords pupils both the opportunity to see the religion and non-religion in the world, and to make sense of their own place in that world."* (Ofsted research review: RE 2021)

#### **Religious Education should enable pupils to:**

- Learn about the religions and world views which have influenced millions of people and heavily influenced the development of different human cultures.
- Apply academic skills such as analysis and critical thinking, to their approach to the study of religion.
- Learn more about themselves and their place in the world through an academic exploration of religions and world views.

#### **Religious Education aims to help pupils to:**

- Understand the nature, role and influence of religion in the world.
- Formulate reasoned argument and handle controversial issues and conflicting truth claims.
- Approach sensitively and respectfully the beliefs and behaviours of others, so that they can make informed contributions to discussions about religious, philosophical and ethical issues suitable for the public sphere.

RE has an important role to play in promoting **SMSC and the fundamental British Values** within our school and this is built into our curriculum plans. RE contributes to pupils' personal development and well-being and to building integrated communities by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society. Studying RE helps develop a knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and values which have shaped and continue to have an important influence on the world that we live in. It provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. As part of the RE curriculum, pupils will learn about the influence that religion and philosophy has had on culture. They will be introduced to the best that has been thought and said through studying the work of various philosophers and through learning about the stories from religious scriptures that have influenced music, art and literature throughout the world. In this way, RE makes a substantive contribution to the development of **cultural capital**.

The RE curriculum is planned to develop knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices. Pupils have opportunities to develop their religious literacy and to master the skills needed to analyse and interpret expressions of faith. The core beliefs and teachings of the religions studied spiral

through the curriculum so that pupils develop a depth of understanding over time. The planning and delivery of RE aims to young people to understand the narrative of the religion as opposed to a collection of sayings and generalisations.

We have a clear plan for what pupils should know and be able to do in RE by the end of KS3. Pupils are expected to be able to talk and write knowledgeably about religions and belief, using subject specific language accurately and confidently. They should be able to utilise RE specific skills such as making links between beliefs, teachings and practices; analysing and interpreting religious texts and understanding symbolism in images, actions and metaphorical language. The RE curriculum is **coherently** planned and **sequenced** over 5 years to ensure that each pupil has the relevant knowledge and skills to engage in respectful dialogue about religious, philosophical and ethical issues.

## Implementation

### Key Stage 3:

In Year 7, pupils have a two hours per week (although some of this curriculum time is used to deliver PSHE). Most lessons are taught by subject specialists. All staff delivering Y7 RE have taught it for many years and have received subject specific CPD.

In Years 8 and 9 pupils are taught by RE specialists and have 4 hours of RE over a three week timetable. This is a discrete lesson of RE.

### Key Stage 4:

All GCSE classes are taught by **subject specialists** and have 2 hours a week in Y10, 3 hours in Y11 or vice versa.

This model means that pupils receive 5% of curriculum time in KS3 and that the GCSE course meets to minimum requirements of 120 hours of teaching time in order to deliver the specification.

RS is an optional GCSE subject for years 10 and 11. Pupils who do not opt to study RS at GCSE level have a combined RE/PSHE (Respect) lesson once a week throughout KS4. This ensures that all pupils receive their entitlement to RE, including those who do not opt to study it as a GCSE.

The department has strong links with the professional association for RE (NATRE) and accesses all the subject specific support and up to date guidance available. Staff have the expertise and development opportunities to ensure that RE is well taught across the school. Non-specialist teachers are well supported through guidance and resources.

We also have excellent links with Lancashire SACRE and the Head of RE acts as a consultant for RE in Lancashire, supporting primary RE through providing training and curriculum development. This means that we know what pupils should have studied in RE at primary school and our KS3 curriculum is deliberately planned to build on this.

The 6 main world religions and Humanism are covered in KS3 RE, but not all in the same amount of depth. The intention is that pupils will learn about the beliefs and values of the major religions and non-religious world-views but will have opportunities to revisit their learning about Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism in order to build on and deepen prior knowledge and understanding. Most units are taught as a discrete study of a religion; however, a small number of units are taught comparatively or thematically in order to pull together learning, revisit content in a new context and consider the bigger picture.

We have made the decision to have smaller blocks of time for topics in years 7 and 8 in order to chunk learning and allow opportunities to revisit key concepts at another point in order to develop retrieval of knowledge over time. We have decided to study Christianity and Hinduism in greater depth as these are the religions that pupils will continue to study at GCSE level. We study these two religions at GCSE to provide pupils with contrasting world views of an Abrahamic faith and dharmic tradition. When constructing the core RE programme for KS4 we chose to predominantly study Christian and Islamic philosophy and ethics as this provides a contrast for those who are studying GCSE whilst also creating a relevant and up to date curriculum for all, which enables pupils to understand some of the religious, philosophical and ethical issues in contemporary society.

In Key Stage three, curriculum planning and delivery is in line with the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus field of enquiry. Each unit is centred around an enquiry question which reflects a big question (religious, philosophical, ethical or sociological). Planning then begins with the 'theological nugget' – the key concept or teaching which might be referred to in response to the question in the religion being studied. We will then consider how this belief is expressed through living religious traditions. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own world views and values through reflecting on their own personal meaning, purpose and truth.

The **KS4 core RE** curriculum is delivered as part of a combined RE and PSHE programme entitled 'RESPECT'. This curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that all pupils (including those who have not chosen to study RS at GCSE level) continue to build on and deepen their knowledge and understanding of religions and world views. This curriculum makes a significant contribution to the teaching of British Values, Citizenship, cultural capital, social cohesion and literacy.

The curriculum is planned and sequenced to enable pupils to revisit key concepts and deepen understanding. Retrieval of relevant prior learning at the start of each topic aims to embed these concepts and teach for long term memory. Frequent 'low stakes testing' is used; this is because the act of recalling information from memory actually helps to strengthen the memory itself. Frequent testing does not just help measure understanding, it helps develop understanding.

Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary is explicitly taught and modelled by teachers. Pupils are expected to use technical language in both oral and written answers. Knowledge organisers contain vocabulary lists and the learning and testing of vocabulary is a routine part of RE lessons both in KS3 and GCSE.

RE classrooms are well equipped and supportive of high-quality teaching and learning. Classroom displays are used to enhance learning through being a visual prompt for information and also promoting high expectations of standards of work.

**Assessment is used to check pupils' understanding in order to inform future learning.** Pupils are assessed in three main areas: factual knowledge (through multiple-choice diagnostic testing), application of skills and extended writing. Assessments are built into each unit of work and have been designed to challenge all abilities and allow pupils to master key concepts and skills over the course of Key Stage Three.

Our assessment system has 2 strands:

**1. TESTING OF SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE** – Has the pupil gained an adequate knowledge of this topic? This is assessed using multiple-choice testing which identifies gaps and misconceptions in knowledge of religious and non-religious traditions. This form of assessment provides all pupils with the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in RE without the constraints of having to write at length.

**2. ASSESSING DEVELOPMENT OF RE SPECIFIC SKILLS AND EXTENDED WRITING** - Can the pupil apply their knowledge by connecting different strands of information together to show an understanding of the 'bigger picture'? The skills assessed are those that are required to develop the different disciplines of RE: interpretation of sources of wisdom and authority, interpretation of images, making links between beliefs, teachings and practices. Pieces of extended writing are also set to assess pupils' ability to express themselves clearly, to structure a piece of writing and to demonstrate critical thinking skills.

This work is assessed using a RAG marking system:

-  no evidence of this skill has been demonstrated
-  this skill partially demonstrated, but in need of further development to reach the expected standard
-  skill clearly demonstrated at the expected standard
-  skill demonstrated at a particularly high level, beyond the expected standard

## Impact

Quality Assurance within the department ensures that the intended curriculum plans are delivered appropriately. There is a planned programme for monitoring and reflecting on provision, including:

- Cooperative planning meetings
- Weekly departmental briefing meetings
- 'Focus on Humanities – includes RE' (in depth visits to lessons, discussions with staff and pupils as part of our annual self-evaluation process)
- Fortnightly meeting with SLT line manager
- Termly work scrutiny – to look at pupil books as a department and compare/monitor standards of pupil work

All of the above is designed to ensure there is no mismatch between the planned and delivered curriculum in every single subject area.

Religious Studies has been both a popular and successful GCSE at Broughton. **Outcomes in RS have historically been excellent and well above national averages.** RS results at Broughton continued to be considerably higher than national averages in 2019: 7+ 45.5% (28% national), 5+ 68.2% (59% national), 4+ 86.4% (71% national). These results are significantly higher than RS results in Lancashire (7+ 25.6; 5+ 55.3; 4+ 67.7). All pupils consistently achieve good results, including disadvantaged and SEND pupils. EAL pupils do particularly well in Religious Studies GCSE. Many pupils enjoy the GCSE course and want to study it further. 18% of last year's GCSE RS pupils went on to study it at A' Level (national, 2.2% of A' Level pupils take A' Level RS).

Feedback from the most recent pupil voice survey indicates that the curriculum intent is successful. Pupils said that they enjoyed learning 'lots of new facts' in RE and 'getting involved in debates'. They feel that they make good progress in RE and that this is evident through teacher feedback, improved test score and 'being able to take part in a discussion and know what you're talking about'. Pupils feel that they have an opportunity to speak and express an opinion without fear of ridicule or any sense of embarrassment. One of the strengths of RE lessons at Broughton is the quality of class discussion, reflection, deep thinking and respectful dialogue in all lessons.

## COVID and learning recovery

Y7- We decided that the unit on Hinduism might be difficult for pupils to study at home. We replaced this with a thematic unit that would normally be taught at the end of Y8 (people inspired by faith). This has then given us additional time in Y8 this year to spend on teaching about Hinduism. Y8

– We did not teach the unit on 'The philosophical problem of Evil and Suffering' during the first lockdown as we felt that some pupils might find this a difficult and emotive topic and would be better taught when there were opportunities to follow up learning with classroom discussion. We replaced this with the Y9 unit on Buddhism. The Problem of Evil unit was then taught to Y9 in the Autumn term of this academic year. On reflection, we have decided that the curriculum is better structured in this way and it is a change we intend to keep. Y9 - The 'flying

start to GCSE' was helpful and gave a sense of purpose to work set. We do not feel any pupils who opted for GCSE were unduly disadvantaged. KS4 core RE –

During the lockdown from Jan-March 2021 we took the decision not to deliver the intended unit on Attitudes towards death. We replaced this with a unit from NATRE on anti-racist RE.

Apart from these amendments, we taught the intended curriculum. Where units were felt to be inappropriate for remote learning they were moved to a later date when we would be back in school. By the end of the academic year 20-21 all pupils should have covered the intended curriculum.

## Key issues for all years: literacy and development of subject specific vocabulary.

Reading, writing, and drilling of vocabulary is a key part of success in RE lessons. We recognise that some pupils did not do this as well at home. We will use strategies from 'The Writing Revolution' to help pupils get back on track with writing and literacy skills. Vocabulary checks will be a key part of retrieval practice and testing for all years.