

Trinity School

Religious Education Policy



DOCUMENT REVIEW

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Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Proverbs 4: 6-7

Introduction

Religious Education is not just an academic subject, but lies at the very heart of the curriculum and has an important role in reflecting and conveying the distinctively Christian character of the school. All students study the subject in Key Stage 3 and 4 with all students taking the GCSE course in year 11. RE is a core subject at Trinity School.

RE enables students to think theologically and explore the great questions of life and death, meaning and purpose; reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief; see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today and face the challenge of Jesus' teaching in a pluralist and post-modern society; experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community and become active citizens, serving their neighbour.

The RE curriculum aims to have an appropriate balance between content focusing on Christianity and that addressing other world faiths, alongside moral and ethical issues from religious perspectives. Students consider what it means to be a practising member of a faith.

RE enables students to build on and develop work covered in primary school and so come to an understanding of the world around them.

Leadership of religious education

Governors are responsible for ensuring the distinctly Christian character of Trinity School is maintained through monitoring visits, staff appointments and development of long term vision.

The senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum delivered is centred on Christianity and that the standards of teaching within RE are high. As such it is an occupational requirement that the Headteacher and at least one Deputy Headteacher is a practising Christian.

Given the status of RE within the school and the curriculum time given to it, outcomes in RE are expected to be in line with core departments.

The Head of Department for RE is responsible for the day to day implementation of this policy and oversight of curriculum detail. Teachers of RE are required to be sympathetic to Christian faith.



Status

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'

Trinity is a faith-designated school. Therefore, the provision of RE is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The Governors in consultation with the Headmaster have decided to follow the principles of the Kent 'Locally Agreed RE Syllabus 2012' and supplement this with material from other sources.

As of November 2017, following the recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), the effectiveness of the religious education was graded 'Outstanding'.

Aims in Religious Education

The following whole school aims are particularly relevant to our work in Religious Education:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.
- Deepen students' breadth of understanding by ensuring that fitting opportunities are planned across the RE curriculum to address Christianity as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic world-faith (SIAMS inspection 2017).
- Apply an understanding of Christianity to make reasoned choices and informed responses to life issues and moral choice. Apply the teachings and traditions of different Christian denominations to ethical and contemporary issues to help reach a justified conclusion.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of other religions and the ability to engage in dialogue with other faiths.
- Apply an understanding of religion to develop sensitivity and respect toward all people.
- Develop the ability to reflect on and communicate issues of truth, belief and faith.

Curriculum Outline:

KS3 students will focus primarily on Christianity. In year 7, we will focus on understanding the broader narratives of the Old and New Testament and the life of Jesus. The emphasis will be placed on improving the 'biblical literacy' of all students. This will prepare them for their later KS4 study of Christianity. In year 8, during the first term we will explore the core beliefs and practices of the Abrahamic traditions. Following this we will investigate the wider topics of: *Life after Death*, *Religion and Science*, *Religion and Philosophy* and *Heroes of Faith*. Throughout these topical units, we will focus predominantly on Christianity. However, the views of World Religions will also be incorporated into the curriculum. This will provide breadth and variety, allowing students to deepen their knowledge of other cultures and systems of belief.



KS4 students follow the AQA “Religious Studies (A)” syllabus. The GCSE is divided into two components: Paper 1, *The Study of Religions, Beliefs and Practices* and Paper 2, *Thematic Studies*. Each component is assessed by a written exam of 1 hour and 45 minutes at the end of Year 11. Both exams are of equal weighting (50%). Within ‘Paper 1’ students study core beliefs and practices of Christianity and Buddhism. In ‘Paper 2’ students study the following themes: *Religion and Life, Religion, Peace and Conflict, Religion and Relationships, and Religion Crime and Punishment*. The syllabus explores questions about belief, values, meaning, truth and purpose. It gives students the opportunity to critically analyse contentious ethical issues and to form independent judgements upon religious issues. Students will gain an appreciation of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. They will hone the key transferable skills of critical thinking, analysis, and research, as well as the ability to work with abstract ideas.

At KS5 students who have elected to study A-level RE will follow the AQA syllabus. The course is divided into two components: *Philosophy and Ethics* and *The Study of Religions and Dialogues*. At Trinity, the core religion studied is Christianity, in line with the Christian character of the school. The course is assessed by two three-hour written exams at the end of Year 13. Amongst the variety of topics studied within *Philosophy and Ethics*, students will explore in-depth the classical philosophical arguments for the existence of God, such as: the Ontological, Cosmological and Teleological arguments. They will explore the normative ethical theories of Situation Ethics, Virtue Ethics and Natural Moral Law. *The Study of Religions and Dialogues* comprises of the study of Christianity in relation to some of the following topics: sources of wisdom and authority, beliefs about God, the expression of religious identity, religion gender and sexuality, religion and science, religion and secularisation, religion and religious pluralism.

Core RE:

Students who do not opt to study Philosophy and Religion in year 12 and 13 are taught through PSHE, worship and the lecture programme, which address issues of faith alongside a range of other relevant issues.

Approaches to the teaching of RE

In RE, students gain knowledge of religious tradition and practise, particularly Christianity and the Church including how it shapes culture today and how it differs from other perspectives. Students are then taught to examine the evidence available for belief and understand the reasoning behind religious practice, understanding both the variation and similarities between and within faiths. Particularly, Christianity as a worldwide faith practised across different cultures.

Students develop a knowledge of theological and philosophical structures which support wider critical thinking both in school and beyond, preparing students for higher level study across disciplines.



Assessment and monitoring of RE

Assessment in RE is completed in accordance to the school policy on assessment and monitoring. The learning objectives are shared with the children and regularly, throughout each unit of work, tasks are set which are linked to these objectives.

The children are encouraged to develop skills to enable them to self and peer assess their progress in RE and to understand how to improve their RE work.

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of pupils through marking work set.

Three times a year each pupil in KS3 will complete an agreed key assessment task that will form part of his or her work done in RE. The assessment structure will mirror what is asked of them at KS4 to help support them with understanding the GCSE specification.

KS4 (year 9, 10, 11) students are formally assessed three times throughout the school year as well as through class activities designed to assess the acquisition of knowledge .

Reporting to parents

On at least an annual basis, the school reports to parents on attainment and progress in RE based on teacher judgement. This is to be done in accordance with the school reporting procedures and policy.

The right of Withdrawal from RE

At Trinity School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education on the grounds of conscience. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the headmaster, headspa@trinitysevenoaks.com to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Trinity.