

Tapton SCHOOL

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Tapton School

RE Policy

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COMMITTEE: Learning & Inclusion

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RE POLICY

In accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Education Act of 1996, Religious Education is an entitlement for all pupils. This position has been made all the stronger following the Commission On RE (CORE) Report of 2018 and the OFSTED Review of 2021.

RE is unique in that while Agreed Syllabi are determined locally (in this case by Sheffield LEA) it still fulfils the aims of the National Curriculum by enabling young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It makes a major contribution to spiritual and moral development of young people by providing opportunities for them to learn from religious and secular world views as well as about them. Underpinning all the work of the RE department is our commitment to “Valuing everyone, Caring for each other, Achieving excellence”.

Our vision is that every young person experiences an academically rigorous and personally inspiring education in religion and worldviews to better equip them to realise their life chances and dreams. We live in a diverse, plural country and a globalised world. Society is neither wholly religious or wholly secular, it is both multi religious and multi secular. To become happy, confident, fulfilled, and successful members of modern society, our pupils need to understand their own perspective and those of others from multiple backgrounds and outlooks.

This means that our curriculum should:

- Support pupils to recognise, that they, like everyone else, have a worldview, crafted by perspective, experience and context.
- Help pupils to make sense of and appreciate the rich diverse and complex world around them in relation to religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Introduce pupils to disciplinary lenses such as philosophy, theology and sociology to enable them to be open minded and make academically informed judgements about moral and social issues and religious and nonreligious worldviews in their context, culture, and diversity.
- Encourage pupils to recognise, reflect on and develop their personal worldview, and to understand how their worldview provides a lens through which they encounter the worldviews of others to help them gain a greater appreciation of their own place in society.
- Help pupils to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and non-religious world views, e.g. Humanism, represented in Great Britain.
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teaching of principal religions represented in Great Britain and statements by non-religious organisations such as the British Humanist Society.
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:
 - Developing an awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experience, and the religious and secular responses to them.

- Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.
- Develop and promote a tolerant understanding of and respect for religious and non-religious believers in our multicultural society.
- Develop a positive attitude towards living in a society of diverse religious and non-religious views.

In meeting these aims, RE at Tapton does not seek to promote any one religion; rather it promotes a learning environment which supports children of all faiths or none by encouraging pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others in a way that reinforces the position of the individual within our community.

Our **curriculum intents** are shared with pupils via the SAIL mnemonic. The analogy of the ship envisages a multi religious, multi secular sea through which pupils must navigate. While at Tapton our curriculum journey is driven by the four sails: spiritual and personal development, academic progress, intellectual curiosity, and religious literacy. By the time pupils leave us, they will have had the opportunity to gain sufficient knowledge to prepare them for adult life in modern Britain and beyond. In analogous terms, this means they will be able to steer their own boat, recognising the developmental nature of their own worldview as well as being able to make academically informed judgements about the worldviews they encounter.

The Curriculum:

KEY STAGE 3:

RE Departments within TSAT share 50% of substantive knowledge and 100% of disciplinary knowledge, procedural knowledge, and threshold concepts.

Agreed core substantive knowledge:

It is likely that the three schools (Forge, Bradfield and Tapton) will share more than 50% of substantive knowledge in Y7&8 due to the collaborative nature of our relationships. It should however be noted that individual Schemes of Learning may differ due to context, prior learning, and links to nonaligned topics.

Year 7

The first unit in year seven underpins all the work of the RE department. Students are introduced to the concept of worldviews and the idea that everyone has a personal worldview that is shaped by their experiences in life. They are introduced to the rich and diverse religious and non-religious worldviews of the people of Sheffield and beyond by considering the enquiry question, “How have worldviews in Sheffield changed over time?” Throughout key stage 3 pupils are encouraged to recognise, reflect on and develop their personal world view, recognising that it is a lens through which they encounter the worldviews of others and gain a better appreciation of their own place in society. Pupils are also introduced to three disciplinary lenses through which all key stage 3 enquiry questions are investigated: theological, philosophical and sociological. Other year seven enquiry questions include, “Where can young people today find wisdom by which to live?” an investigation into the life and example of Abraham, Jesus, Peter and Paul. The final year seven unit investigates religious and non-religious explanations for the origins of the universe and considers whether it is logical to believe in both science and religion.

Year 8

Students build upon the skills accumulated in the philosophical modules in Year 7 through a study of ethical issues in our world and the role that religion and philosophical thought has in tackling these. The question of wisdom is revisited, this time through the life and influences of Muhammad and Malala. An ethics module allows pupils to explore what religious and non-religious ethical theories can tell us about the right and wrong ways to behave. This includes a consideration of environmental issues from different ethical viewpoints. The last unit in year eight focuses on a philosophical enquiry into the existence of god and draws from theology, philosophy and sociology to explore the question, "Does it make sense to believe in God in a modern world?"

Year 9

Students will begin the Edexcel GCSE course in Religious Studies (Specification B papers 1b and 2c). This enables students to gain a full GCSE at the end of Year 11 without using up any of their GCSE option slots.

The focus in Year 9 are Christian and Muslim beliefs and Practices. These units build on knowledge gained through the enquiry questions considered in year seven and eight and provides a strong platform from which to explore the application of specific religious teachings to important ethical issues in key stage 4. The fact that we have two lessons per week in y9 allows us to build understanding of difficult concepts more effectively due to the shorter gap between lessons and the opportunity to linger longer to ensure deeper understanding. It also means that spaced retrieval in the following two years can help embed this knowledge and understanding more effectively.

KEY STAGE 4

In recognition of the valuable contribution that Religious Education makes to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, community cohesion and academic excellence, GCSE religious Studies forms part of the core offer at Key stage 4 at Tapton. To facilitate this all students begin their GCSE course in Y9. While certification is not legally required, experience shows that pupils gain the most from their experiences in RE when the academic value of the subject is recognised. The GCSE course focuses on Christian, Muslim and Secular responses to contemporary moral and philosophical issues. Pupils are encouraged to draw on their own experience in order to evaluate these responses and to develop and evaluate their own reasoned opinions.

Students continue with the Edexcel GCSE course in Religious Studies (Specification B papers 1B and 2C). The foci for key stage four are religious responses to ethical issues facing people in modern society and Christian or Muslim responses to these issues and consolidation of beliefs and practices studied in year 9.

Year 10

1B (2) Marriage and family life: Types of family, support for the family in the parish, sexual relationship, contraception, marriage, divorce, equality of men and Women, Gender Discrimination.

2C (2) Crime and Punishment: justice, crime, good, evil and suffering, forms and aims of punishment, forgiveness, treatment of criminals, death penalty.

Year 11

1B (4) Origins and value of the natural world, sanctity of life, origins and value of human life, abortion, euthanasia, life after death, issues facing the natural world.

2C (4) Peace and conflict: Peace, peace-making, types and causes of conflict, pacifism, the just war theory, holy war, weapons of mass destruction.

There are 2 written exam papers at the end of the course in year 11.

KEY STAGE 5:

Religious Studies is also offered as an option at both AS and A Level. Religious Studies is a respected discipline at this level due to the academic rigour and higher level reasoning skills inherent in the programme of study. In recognition of this, Religious Studies A Level appears on the Russell Group Universities list of preferred subjects at A Level.

This is essentially a Philosophy and Ethics course leading to a qualification in Religious Studies. The two year course is made up of three modules. The modules chosen build on knowledge gained at GCSE Level, both Full and Short courses, but is not dependent on previous experience.

A Level Religious Studies and in particular the Philosophy and Ethics options places emphasis on problem solving and a rigorous examination of evidence together with the development of sustained and well supported arguments. While it is a perfect choice for students hoping to pursue degrees in Philosophy, Theology or Religious Studies, it is also particularly useful for students considering careers in medicine, social work, personnel management, education, public relations, the police force, journalism and the legal professions.

Trips to conferences organised by examinations boards and Higher Education Providers are offered to students as and when they are available.

Philosophy of Religion:

- Ancient Greek influences on philosophy of religion, specifically looking at Plato and Aristotle
- The nature of the soul mind and body
- Arguments for the existence or non-existence of God
- Issues in religious language
- The nature and impact of religious experience
- The problem of evil and suffering and its challenge to belief.
- Ideas about the nature and attributes of God
- Issues in religious language.

Religion and Ethics:

- Normative ethical theories such as Kantian ethics, natural law and situation ethics
- The application of ethical theory to euthanasia and business ethics.
- Ethical language and thought
- Debates surrounding conscience and free will
- Sexual ethics and the influence of ethical thought on developments in religious belief.

Developments in Religious Thought:

- Beliefs, teachings and ideas about human life, the world and ultimate reality: Augustine's teaching on human nature; Death and the afterlife.
- Gender and society; gender and theology
- The challenge of secularism; liberation theology.

Withdrawal from RE

Although parents have the right to withdraw their child from the RE provided by the school, due to the inclusive nature of RE and many benefits it provides, parents rarely exercise this right. Every care is taken to ensure that RE provision is appropriate for all pupils and there should be no need for any child to be withdrawn. It is the policy of the school to address any concerns that parents may have concerning RE.

Parents wishing to exercise the right to withdraw their child from RE should in the first instance contact the Subject Leader for RE who will try to address any concerns. If following discussion concerns remain, parents should formalise their request by writing to the Head Teacher.

Parents should note:

- The right to withdraw is not from RE itself but from the RE provided by the school, alternative provision that seeks to further the child's knowledge and understanding of the parent's beliefs, values and philosophies must be provided by the parent and copies made available to the subject leader.
- This time is not for private study, extra tuition in another subject or homework.

Heather Bower

Subject Leader RE

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