

Religious Education and Theology and Ethics at St Osmund's Middle School

This document is designed to give you an overview of RE and T&E at St Osmund's in terms of expectations, routines, the curriculum intent, implementation and impact.

Clarification

Students in Years 5&6 study Religious Education as would be expected in a primary setting. This then changes in Years 7&8 to Theology and Ethics in order for the students to understand that they are now starting to study the subject at KS3 and will be looking at more ethical issues, applied ethics and different world views such as Humanism. All students are made aware that the subject is compulsory at GCSE level in our main feeder school: Thomas Hardy School. It is our job in the middle school to ensure that the students arrive at THS Theologically Literate and with the skills needed for GCSE RE and beyond. The department are aware that in the 2015 report: *Living with Difference* it was noted by Clarke and Woodhead (in 2018) that there was a need for better understanding of the lived reality of religion and the complexity of what it means to be 'religious'.

Expectations and Routines

During Lessons:

- ✓ The date (top right), title (learning question) and subtitle 'Starter/DNA' need to be copied into student books and underlined using a ruler.
- ✓ Focus on presentation – handwriting, underlining, drawing in pencil and labelling in pen and exercise book covers always need to be free from doodling. The whole school Presentation Promise will be in each students' book..
- ✓ Each new topic has a specialist **vocabulary list** that the students add to each lesson. Each new word must be underlined by a ruler. Each lesson has a Do Now Activity. All students are to record the specialist language included in the lesson's PowerPoint so that they build up an extensive new vocabulary in each topic.
- ✓ Each lesson will include 3 Quick knowledge retrieval and re-cap questions to ensure that students are constantly building on their previous knowledge and understanding. This helps the knowledge to become 'sticky' and more ingrained and thus easier to access and make wider connections from.
- ✓ Purple pens, highlighters and dictionaries need to be accessible to the students each lesson.
- ✓ Students use highlighters to peer edit SPAG.
- ✓ Students use purple pens to self and peer assess, write spellings out three times in the margin and to respond to dialogue.
- ✓ Built in recall time of previously taught units ensures learning is embedded in long term memory

Assessment:

- ✓ Targeted questioning
- ✓ Use of mini whiteboards
- ✓ Regular routine quizzes, tests and exercises to build memory
- ✓ Live marking and use of a visualiser
- ✓ Peer and self-assessment

- ✓ End of unit summative assessment (there are 3 formal assessments for each year group)
- ✓ Revision lessons, including mind-mapping and evaluative tasks, are used prior to each assessment task and used for students to revise from at home
- ✓ Use of **Knowledge Organisers** for recall and revision
- ✓ SL meetings and learning walks are scheduled to complete book scrutiny and to moderate assessment tasks

Curriculum Development:

- ✓ The SL has worked to develop the RE curriculum in line with whole school expectations and values.
- ✓ The SL has developed a lesson for each week for each year group in line with the whole school T&L policy and literacy expectations.
- ✓ Each lesson has a DNA, 3 retrieval of knowledge questions, a clear reason why the students are studying this topic and the context '**we are learning about so that**' and new specialist vocabulary. There is always a minimum of 15 minutes writing per lesson.
- ✓ Whole class and teacher evaluations at the end of 3 units for each year group to effectively review the content and activities.
- ✓ Meetings with the other middle schools will promote the sharing of good practice.
- ✓ A Retreat Day linked to the RE curriculum for each year group happens each year.

Curriculum Intent:

Subject design

Pupils build their understanding of world religions across the four-year journey at St Osmund's, whilst also examining, in detail, the central beliefs of the Christian faith and how to live a Christian life. At the centre of teaching RE, is our school's Christian Values: **Respect, Hope love and Community**.

The RE curriculum in KS2 and KS3 is designed to inspire a curiosity and fascination about religious beliefs and practices. All students are encouraged to learn about and reflect on religious beliefs and practices. All students learn about religion and from religion. The RE curriculum offers a high quality sequential RE programme that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.

Central to RE in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as an inclusive Church School we provide sequenced learning, about a range of religions and worldviews, and respect is fostered by all students for all people. In RE, it is important to nurture students' inquisitive thinking and questioning skills to help them interpret the world around them.

St Osmund's aim is for the children and young people to be religiously literate in order to navigate the complex world in which we live. We want our students to have the ability to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and world views. RE and T&E at St Osmund's is about

enabling pupils to become free thinking, critical participants of public discourse, who can make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief which shape the global landscape. RE at St Osmund's invites all students to think deeply and critically about ultimate questions whilst also learning tolerance and respect towards religion and other aspects of our society.

The curriculum is scaffolded and knowledge rich to enable students to make progress through the concepts of beliefs and practices. Students can expect the use of high quality and contemporary resources (these have all been updated in line with the new school **Teaching and Learning policy**). It is imperative that students recognise that RE is an academically rigorous subject as well as an opportunity within a busy school curriculum to engage and reflect. St Osmund's uses the **Understanding Christianity** resource, which ensures that students engage with Biblical texts and theological ideas. The SL is ensuring that all students are aware of the Text Impact Connection idea which runs throughout the Understanding Christianity. Lessons are active, engaging, motivating and students should have a sense of where and how religion and world views fit into modern life. Students have the opportunity to understand the roles of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals and practices and how they help form identity. Lessons are active and religious artefacts, clips, music, photos and art are all used to engage and motivate learners.

Reflecting our school values

RE at St Osmund's should inspire our pupils with a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Pupils should have a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and /or philosophical ways of seeing, living thinking, believing and belonging. Students should have opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews. The SL is working on bringing in a number of outside speakers from different faith communities to broaden the students' perspective about the diversity and richness of beliefs and traditions both locally and globally.

The RE Department at St. Osmund's recognises and welcomes diversity in all forms and encourages all students to express their faith and world views. The subject area recognises the importance of Non-Eurocentric faiths. In line with a request from THS we have included the teaching of Hinduism in Year 5 in 2020 as well as Islam in Year 6 and Buddhism in Year 7 in line with the Dorset SACRE Agreed syllabus.

We recognise RE has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning as it enables them to develop respect, empathy and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. RE at St Osmund's promotes discernment and enables pupils to challenge prejudice, negative discrimination and racism. The RE department are trialling NATRE's Anti-Racist RE resources with Year 6 in Summer term 2022 to give our students the chance to reflect on and challenge racism and work towards social justice in the world today.

Progression through the curriculum

The curriculum is being adapted through the use of new resources to ensure that it is rigorous in all areas. The whole curriculum has been reviewed to ensure greater depth in knowledge and understanding and theological literacy. The KS3 units include the challenge of working towards GCSE standard work. All of the year 8 assessments are designed to meet the new specification GCSE standards and encourage stretch and challenge. Students are taught new evaluation and reflection skills which will be needed at KS4. Students are introduced to the idea of balanced arguments and from summer 2022 the SL will make students aware of the Trade C module which is now being used at THS. These initiatives will ensure our students can access their GCSE from the moment they arrive at their upper school.

The curriculum includes regular opportunities to assess student progress. It is designed to build skills and knowledge and to recall previous knowledge to maintain progress in all aspects of RE. Students are consistently reminded of ***The Big Story of the Bible*** both by reminding them of the 8 core concepts and referring to the big frieze, by revisiting and re-calling the key ideas. Through active and collaborative learning, these concepts will become ingrained in the students' memories.

Success is a class who question the world and recognise the complexity of religious and ethical beliefs, a class who recognise that there are no easy answers, who have gained and developed their thinking skills and are becoming confident Theologians and Philosophers. Their books should demonstrate this progress. Moderation in DASP and subject meetings considering prior attainment should demonstrate that students at St Osmund's are in *line or exceeding expectations of progress*.

Knowledge Organisers and ***Key Skills sheets*** are a valuable tool for regular class learning which are based on recall.

Curriculum Implementation

Equality of opportunity:

The curriculum has been carefully designed in line with ***SIAMS*** expectations and ***The Church of England Statement of Entitlement***, and can be accessed by all learners. SEN students are supported with literacy, where necessary, to ensure that they meet the same curricular goals confidently and successfully. ***Knowledge Organisers*** have proven to be a useful tool to help all students. The SL is currently working to ensure that all of our assessments are accessible to all students.

Our curriculum helps to offer equal access as it includes different religious beliefs and practices and also different world views, such as: Atheism, Agnosticism and Humanism. The RE and T&E curriculum challenges the following: racism, stereotypes and inequality and looks seriously at some of the important issues in the world today, such as social justice and extremism.

To ensure excellent implementation we endeavour to keep all our teaching materials up to date, diverse and relevant, for example in year 7 when we were looking at radical positive role models like Malala students also make us aware of examples that they may have come across on social media, such as Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, a young environmental activist, who has challenged world leaders about their environmental policies at the UN. By listening to the student voice, the curriculum that we implement will be engaging and relevant.

Our '*spiralled*' curriculum develops the theological skills and knowledge through the 4 years. The **Dorset Agreed syllabus** has informed the curriculum for key stage 2 and 3 and is in line with the other 2 local middle schools to ensure consistency. It has also been developed considering the RE taught at our main first school feeders and the year 9 curriculum and GCSE syllabus taught at Thomas Hardy School.

Curriculum Impact:

- **Ensuring student progression**

Threshold concepts are integral to RE teaching and learning. These range from understanding the **Big Story of the Bible** to some of the philosophical and ethical implications which can be taught from this, for example where does evil come from? Are human beings free? What does it mean to put faith into action? It is important that students recognise their **Understanding Christianity modules through the Text Impact and Connection model** and that they can make wider theological and world views connections through this way of teaching.

The curriculum is continually revised to challenge misconceptions and to ensure that concepts which are complex and challenging such as **The Fall, and The Ethics of War** are taught with contemporary evidence and examples which are constantly updated. Topics are revisited and built on through the four years in a scaffold approach to learning. In order to know and remember more, the department recognise that it is imperative that ideas are linked together and constantly re-visited to ensure a deep knowledge is achieved.

Underperforming students are identified in each class. Subject teachers offer support, which is mainly in class along with peer support which is evident in seating plans.

- **Additional opportunities to learn**

The SL has organised for an outside speaker to come in and '**Walk through the Bible**' with the Year 5 students. This has meant the students learning Old Testament stories and actions that go with them. This has been added to in Summer 2022 when our Year 6's complete the New Testament WTTB programme. The SL is also looking for opportunities to invite in other guest speakers and will work towards organising a trip to a place of worship, for example a mosque in Bournemouth. Students also attend one Church service in each year, which enables time for reflection and invitational worship. The SL has worked closely with the School Chaplain Lydia Topp to run Retreat Days for all Year groups to further their understanding of the RE curriculum in a unique and innovative way. There have been a variety of speakers for example Linda who represented Living Faiths Judaism and I sing Pop.

The SL is keen to keep T&L in RE constantly up to date and offers a debate club on a Wednesday lunchtime where contemporary moral and social issues are looked at. For example, what are the ethics of driverless cars? Are zoos morally permissible? Is there any proof for the existence of God? Is Jediism a religion? The debate club looks at issues which the students come up with and is student-led.

