

Religious Studies – Year 9

Curriculum Intent

In Year 9, Religious Studies develops students' ability to engage with philosophical and ethical questions in greater depth. Building on their understanding of religious belief and diversity, students explore questions about truth, freedom and the purpose of life. The curriculum encourages independent thinking, careful reasoning and respectful evaluation of different worldviews, preparing students for mature engagement with complex issues.

What Students Will Study Across the Year

Autumn Term – How Do I Know What Is Real?

Students begin the year by exploring philosophical questions about truth and reality. They examine how philosophers, theologians and social scientists approach questions about knowledge, belief and evidence, engaging with ideas from thinkers such as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. Through case studies linked to environmental ethics and freedom of speech, students consider how beliefs about truth influence behaviour and society. This unit develops analytical thinking and challenges students to reflect critically on their own assumptions and sources of knowledge.

Spring Term – Should People Be Able to Believe and Practise What They Want?

In the Spring term, students investigate issues surrounding religious freedom, tolerance and the limits of belief in a diverse society. They explore case studies including body modification, the Amish community and polygamy, applying concepts such as autonomy, consent and discrimination. Students consider how prejudice and labelling can lead to conflict and examine legal and social responses to hate crime. This unit strengthens evaluative writing and deepens understanding of how belief, culture and law interact.

Summer Term – Should Happiness Be the Aim of Life?

Students conclude the year by examining ethical perspectives on happiness and purpose. They explore Christian, Buddhist and Humanist responses to questions about fulfilment, morality and the meaning of life, alongside philosophical ideas such as utilitarianism and existentialism. Students compare absolute and relative approaches to morality and consider whether happiness should be the ultimate goal of human life. This unit consolidates their ability to analyse and evaluate contrasting worldviews using structured argument.

Assessment and Progression

Students are assessed through extended writing, structured argument and knowledge retrieval activities. Assessment focuses on use of key terminology, clarity of reasoning and the ability to compare and evaluate different perspectives. By the end of Year 9, students can engage confidently with philosophical and ethical debate, preparing them either for further academic study in Religious Studies or for thoughtful participation in a diverse society.