

## Religious Formation

### Intent

Teachers in the Religious Formation department deliver a high quality learning experience for all pupils in the different key stages and ensure that beyond academic achievement, pupils are given the opportunity to grow in faith. It is our philosophy that Religious Formation is at the heart of the College and we should endeavour to foster an inclusive environment with the aim of ensuring that pupils are inspired and engaged in their studies and make effective progress in their learning.

At Key Stage 3, the curriculum has been designed on the 'People of God' programme and as is mapped against the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The curriculum is designed to develop pupils' skills appropriate for their age (age related standards) so as to ensure that pupils grow in understanding of their own faith and other religions. In years 7, 8 and 9, pupils study the five main world religions in order to provide all pupils with a coherent understanding of the communities in which they live and beyond. Pupils should be able to recognise that they live in a multi-faith society and consequently have a greater understanding and respect of different faiths and cultures in the world they live in. Lessons are intended to be highly engaging and promote debate, allowing pupils to discover more about their faith whilst recognising that there are other religions who believe different things. Schemes of work within this key stage have been carefully designed to promote an environment where pupils are encouraged to explore their own faith as well as showing an understanding of secular ideals as this will prepare the students for KS4.

At Key Stage 4, the curriculum designed is underpinned by the Edexcel GCSE specification – Catholic (spec A). The curriculum is intended to introduce students to Catholic teaching and values and Judaism (as a second area of study). The third area of the GCSE explores Philosophy and Ethics through a range of different beliefs including Catholic, Atheist and Humanist views. Schemes of work build upon the knowledge, understanding and skills that students acquired in their Key Stage 3 lessons, whilst, at the same time, preparing students for their study of Religious Studies at A Level.

At Key Stage 5, the curriculum designed is underpinned by Edexcel

'A' Level Religious Studies specification. The curriculum is intended to introduce students to three Areas of Study: Philosophy, Ethics and New Testament. Schemes of work are detailed and the resources are highly engaging, creating opportunities for all learners, irrespective of their starting points, to make at least good progress in this subject. The curriculum has been designed to provide students with the opportunity to enhance their own understanding of key areas of study through a range of T&L strategies. Schemes of work build upon the knowledge, understanding and skills that students acquired at GCSE level, whilst, at the same time, preparing students for their studies in Higher Education.

## Implementation

At Key Stage 3, pupils are allocated five hours of teaching time a fortnight (10%) and this is in line with Diocesan requirements. In Year 7, pupils study Philosophy once a fortnight and this is taught by specialists in the RF department. They are introduced to non-religious challenges to religious belief across a range of subject areas including, including life after death, beauty and medical ethics. Through highly engaging resources and opportunities for debate in lessons, the intention is that all pupils are equipped with critical thinking skills that will support them across other subject areas.

In Religious Formation at KS3, pupils study six different units in each year. Most units follow the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. All schemes of work are carefully planned and the resources differentiated so all pupils make at least good progress. Lessons are well-planned and engaging, providing pace and challenge across the different key stages. Formative assessment including questioning, observing pupils while they work, is used by teachers within the department to gain a good understanding of how pupils are progressing and to provide feedback for pupils to improve in their learning. This is then shared at faculty meetings.

For each year group, three summative assessments are completed in an academic year, allowing teachers within the RF department to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of what they have been taught. The intention of formal assessment in this case is to introduce students to independent and structured writing skills that they will encounter at key stage 4. Summative assessment is also reflected with the departments marking policy, whereby students are encouraged to reflect upon and respond to teacher feedback in order to improve their knowledge and understanding.

The assessments at key stage 3 have been designed to reflect the required skills at GCSE level. Transferable skills such as persuasive language and logical chains of reasoning are developed through schemes of work that examine practical and contemporary ethical dilemmas in light of religious beliefs.

By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have at least a good knowledge of Catholic beliefs and teachings and of other religions. This ensures that pupils are appropriately prepared for the study of Religious Formation at GCSE level.

At Key Stage 4, pupils are allocated five hours of teaching time a fortnight (10%) and this is in line with Diocesan requirements. The units of work provide pupils with the opportunity to gain a good knowledge of the Catholic faith through beliefs and teachings and Philosophy and Ethics. Pupils also study Judaism as a second religion. Lessons are well-planned and is challenging for all pupils. Formative assessment is used by teachers to gain a good understanding of how pupils are progressing and to provide feedback for pupils to improve in their learning. There is a greater use of summative assessment at Key Stage 4. At the end of each unit of study, pupils sit an end of unit test linked to the GCSE examination. This allows teachers to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of the topic, as well as providing pupils with the

opportunities to practise and enhance their understanding. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have a secure understanding of Catholicism and Judaism and have the necessary skills to go on to study this subject at A level should they so wish.

At Key Stage 5, pupils are allocated nine hours of teaching time a fortnight and they study Philosophy, Ethics and New Testament. Pupils are given the opportunity to engage with a highly challenging course through the carefully planned and differentiated activities. Debates are encouraged as pupils listen to a wide range of different viewpoints from the one they hold. Formative assessment is used by teachers to gain a good understanding of how pupils are progressing and to provide feedback for pupils to improve in their learning. At the end of each unit, pupils complete essay style questions linked to the exam. By the end of Key Stage 5, pupils have a mature knowledge and understanding of the Areas of Study and a comprehensive understanding of the elements of Philosophy and Ethics. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for the study of other disciplines at University.

### Impact

The Religious Formation department are extremely proud of our pupils' progress and attainment in this subject. For the 2017-2018 academic year, pupils' progress compared to their academic target level was +0.73 for all pupils in Key Stage 3, +0.72 for all pupils in Key Stage 4 and +0.3 for all pupils in Key Stage 5. Pupils' attainment in GCSE and A Level Religious Formation is also encouraging. The table below highlights the attainment of students in the Summer 2018 examination series compared to the attainment of all candidates nationally entered for GCSE Religious Formation.

<b>2018 Results</b>	<b>Levels 9-7 (GCSE)</b>	<b>Levels 9-4 (GCSE)</b>
<b>GCSE RF</b>	52% (St. Bede's) <b>27% (National average)</b>	87% (St. Bede's) <b>71% (National average)</b>

<b>2019 Results</b>	<b>Levels 9-7 (GCSE)</b>	<b>Levels 9-4 (GCSE)</b>
<b>GCSE RF</b>	50% (St. Bede's) <b>24% (National average)</b>	87% (St. Bede's) <b>75% (National average)</b>