



# **Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service**

## **Curriculum Policy Religious Studies**

<b>Reviewed:</b>	September 2021
<b>Next Review:</b>	September 2022
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Andre Savchenko

## Aims

**The government-funded Commission on Religious Education (September 2018)** found that *“learning about worldviews helps young people to deal positively with controversial issues, to manage strongly held differences of belief and to challenge stereotypes”*. The teaching of Religious Studies *“should include the study of atheism, agnosticism and secularism”* and, when taught well, *“enables young people to develop greater respect and empathy for others”*.

The TMBSS Religious Studies policy very much reflects this broader interpretation of RS, embracing controversy, ethical debate and mutual understanding, and acknowledging that the principal aim of Religious Studies is to help young people to develop their knowledge and understanding of a diverse range of experiences, insights, beliefs and practices.

This encompasses two attainment targets which are, by their nature, interconnected and reliant on each other:

- **AT1 – Learning about religion**

Pupils should be able to describe and explain a variety of religious and non-religious world views preparing them for adult life as citizens in a plural society.

- **AT2 – Learning from religion**

Pupils should draw from AT1 the understanding to articulate their own world view whilst appreciating that of others. From this process they should be able to come to a reasoned and reflective personal viewpoint.

**The curriculum should ensure that pupils know and understand a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, so that they can:**

- describe, explain and analyse religious and non-religious beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between individuals and communities;
- identify and investigate the questions posed and the responses offered by the world’s religions and non-religious worldviews;
- appraise the nature and significance of religion and non-religious worldviews;
- appreciate the impact of faith, beliefs and values on individuals and communities;
- know and understand a range of responses to questions of meaning, purpose and truth;
- develop the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and non-religious worldviews, so that they can:
  - describe them, interpret text, consider, analyse, and appraise evidence critically;
  - explain some of the key concepts that underpin them; and
  - articulate beliefs and values clearly in order to explain the reasons why they may be important in their own and other people’s lives.

## Delivery

Pupils at all Key Stages have an entitlement to Religious Education, as part of the basic curriculum. This is taught in conjunction with the National Curriculum; KS3 RS is delivered as part of a Humanities thematic programme. At KS4 students can study AQA GCSE Religious (Christianity and Buddhism).

Wherever possible, pupils are encouraged to visit local places of worship and to meet religious leaders and practitioners within the wider community.

A parent's right to withdraw a pupil from Religious Education if they wish is recognised. The right to withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum where religious matters / issues may be raised.

### **Assessment**

Progress in non-examination Religious Studies is assessed and reported as part of Humanities. Owing to the flexible approach adopted by TMBSS, aspects of Religious Education may be assessed / reported on through other subject areas, such as PSHE and Citizenship.

Assessment can be informed by Shropshire Agreed Syllabus and GCSE level descriptors. Examination courses are assessed according to specification criteria.

### **SMSC**

While SMSC education has multiple strands embedded across all subject areas, the teaching of Religious Studies represents a key opportunity to focus on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural elements.

**The Spiritual** aspect of SMSC is embedded in our lessons, with pupils often being given the opportunity to reflect on how the things they have learnt can affect and influence their own lives. At GCSE level pupils are asked for their own opinion in evaluation questions, and responses to moral issues are discussed at length in lessons.

In Key Stage 3

**Issues of Morality** flow throughout the courses in all key stages. At GCSE level the course specifically requires pupils to consider the moral issues of the topics that are being addressed, such as the role of humans and the environment, whether abortion and euthanasia are morally acceptable and the extent to which the application of laws and punishments can have a positive impact on society.

Within Religious Studies pupils are given the opportunity to develop their Social skills through debate, group work and the use of a variety of modern media. Younger pupils are encouraged to employ persuasive speaking strategies and to listen to alternative opinions empathically. We also reflect on issues of community cohesion through interfaith dialogue and discuss the effect religion has on individuals within society.

Religion, Morality and Social skills are underpinned by the **Culture** we live in. Within Religious Studies pupils look at issues of how religion is shown in our culture by the media, and how religious beliefs affect and colour the culture we live in. We also explore a range of world faiths and traditions, and consider how the influence of culture and religion often go hand in hand throughout the world.

Within TMBSS the introduction of the Gridmaker system has encouraged staff to reflect on how SMSC can be incorporated in their planning and teaching, irrespective of their subject area; this has allowed this key strand of education to become embedded into the daily curriculum.