



Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service

Curriculum Policy Religious Studies

Reviewed:	September 2023
Next Review:	September 2024
Responsibility:	Rebecca Watters

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, leaning further towards the idea of World Views, 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 ethical issues, from both a religious and secular perspective;
- 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

The delivery of Religious Education for all students at TMBSS forms one element of a broader Humanities offer within the core curriculum. In KS3 RS is delivered within the broader Humanities thematic programme, while at KS4, those students who are likely to remain in the Service for an extended period (often in the medical Centres) but have also completed a significant proportion of a Religious Studies GCSE course *and* are able to demonstrate sustained engaged may have the opportunity to sit their exams.

One significant element of the course across all age groups is oracy, and of being able to articulate opinions while empathising with those whose opinions may differ. The need for rational and accepting debate cannot be underestimated and this is a skill which staff at TMBSS feel is vital for all students. This principle is explored in more depth in the Humanities Policy for the Service.

While a parent's right to withdraw their child from Religious Education if they wish is recognised, this does not extend to other areas of the broad Humanities curriculum where religious matters and issues may be raised.

Assessment

Progress in key skills for non-examination groups may be assessed through other subject areas, including, at KS3, PSHE, while at KS4, students may be entered for GCSE Religious Studies if their previous setting would recommend this pathway, but may also be entered for AQA's accessible GCSE Citizenship Studies, which will include elements of all strands within Humanities.

Assessment models are informed by Shropshire Agreed Syllabus and GCSE level descriptors, and at Key Stage 3 take the form of a Skills Matrix, largely based on oracy and discussion. In both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 the use of Discussion Records is encouraged so that staff can maintain an overview of the extent to which each individual student has been able to develop their broader skills.

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 students often being given the opportunity to reflect on how the things they have learned can affect and influence their own lives. At GCSE level, where appropriate, students are asked for their own opinion in evaluation questions, and responses to moral issues are discussed at length in lessons.

Issues of Morality flow throughout the courses in all key stages. At GCSE level both the Religious Studies course and the more universally accessed Citizenship Studies specifically require students to consider the moral issues of key topics viewed through a faith-based lens, and staff provide opportunities for students to develop their social skills through debate, group work and the use of a variety of modern media.

Younger students 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 impact religion has on individuals within a diverse and accepting society.

Religion, Morality and Social skills are underpinned by the **Culture** we live in. Within Religious Studies students are encouraged to consider how religion is shown in our culture by the media, and how religious beliefs affect and colour the culture we live in and the issues that have the greatest impact on us all. 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, affecting law-making, social mores and governmental policy.

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. The SMSC audit also enables the departmental Humanities Lead to gain a detailed overview of how and where key skills are being practised across the broader curriculum.