



Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service

Curriculum Policy Religious Studies

Reviewed:	September 2025
Next Review:	September 2026
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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.

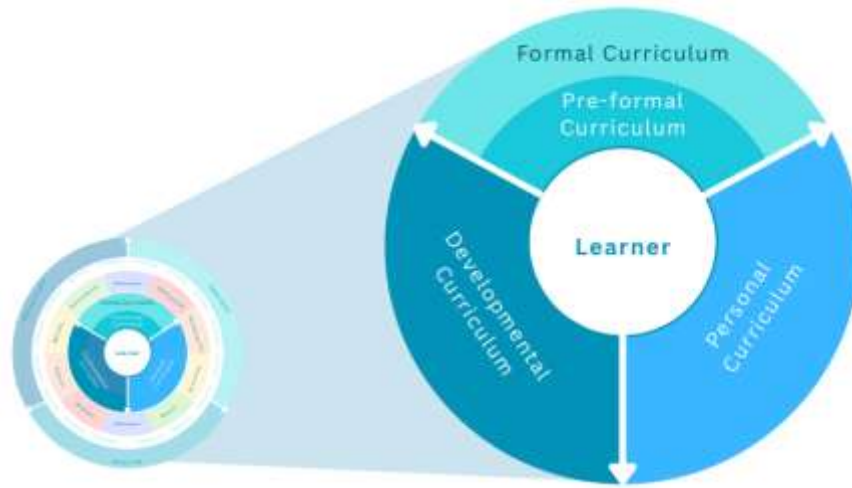
The Religious Studies element of the curriculum is embedded within the provision of Humanities and further enhanced through the two whole-School intervention programs, Focus and Connect. Through the exploration of key topics, it is hoped that students will gain a knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, aiming to guide them towards the ability to:

- 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 moral 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;
- 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. A Whole-School Review in 2025 led to the development of a key strategic shift in how all subjects are delivered to our broad and eclectic range of students.

This is shown in the diagram below, and Religious Studies, as part of the broader Humanities thread, is a key curriculum area where this model can benefit the learner without compromising the delivery of key themes and ideas.



In KS3 Religious Studies is delivered as part of the departmental offer, using oracy-based rather than pen-and-paper methodology. Students in KS4 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 the potential for sustained engagement may have the opportunity to sit the papers to achieve this qualification.

Across all age groups Religious Education is not delivered as a discrete subject, and the main focus is on oracy, on being able to articulate opinions while empathising with those whose opinions may differ. The value of 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 is assessed through other subject areas including PSHE and Humanities at KS3. At KS4, students may be entered for GCSE Religious Studies if their previous setting would recommend this pathway, but also have the option of being entered for AQA’s accessible GCSE in Citizenship Studies which includes elements of all strands within Humanities.

Assessment models are informed by, but not limited to, the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus and GCSE level descriptors, and at Key Stage 3 progress is 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 integrated 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 both in lessons and through the Connect oracy programme.

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 both a faith-and a society-based lens, with staff supporting through the provision of 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 and 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 both the culture we live in and the issues that have the greatest impact on us all. Where appropriate, students may explore the influence of world faiths and traditions and consider how the culture and religion often go hand in hand, affecting law-making, social mores and governmental policy.

Students have access to daily or weekly discussion around **Social** issues which may affect the students themselves or their broader community through the Connect program, and this is enhanced by the wide range of texts which are selected for the whole-School reading intervention program, Focus.

Regular SMSC audits also enable the departmental Humanities Lead to maintain an overview of how and where key skills relating to Religious Studies and World Views are being practised across the broader curriculum.