



Meridian  
Trust

# Curriculum Overview Philosophy, Religion and Ethics



# Curriculum Overview

## Key Stage 3

### Curriculum Aims

Philosophy, Ethics and Religion promotes diversity and deep-thinking skills which enable students to fully engage in their spiritual, moral and cultural development. Students study a blended approach of religious and non-religious worldviews alongside real philosophical questions that are open to discussion. Pupils build on empathy skills so that they can ask questions, reflecting on their learning and beliefs. The overall aim for students in Key Stage 3 is that they can develop the key skill of making effective judgements based on evidence, growing their own religious literacy in the process. They begin to realise the impact

of different worldviews and religions on society, developing respect for other cultures and accepting the diverse nature of not only the world but also their local areas.

Each school is responsible for ensuring that the overall aims are met, however the delivery of this should be implemented in a way that caters the need for the school itself. The focus on the key skills allows our subject leaders to actively focus on opportunities for learning that enable a meaningful exploration of the key concepts.



### Key Curriculum Content

Key Stage 3 content in Philosophy, Ethics and Religion is split into two different curriculum strands. Firstly, we look at the different worldviews in depth. A range of religious and non-religious viewpoints should be explored that should include some of Buddhism; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam; Judaism; Sikhism and Atheism (Humanism). By building on the learning from the primary phase, our curriculum solidifies important knowledge that can be used to harness empathy, understanding and identify similarities between a student's own belief and that of others. Each worldview is presented as unique, delivering a curriculum that remains impartial, fair and compassionate to people around the world.

Particular care is devoted to using specialist language whenever possible, so that students can begin to identify these phrases and actions in the world around them.

The second strand is Philosophical or Ethical questions. Units are dictated by the subject leader at school level. The use of these questions may depend on a variety of aspects such as whether a GCSE course is mandatory or the local area facilities, for example some of the questions explored are:

- How was the world created?
- What happens after life?
- What does Religion offer young people?
- Should we respect animals and the Earth?

Students will explore and draw on a cross section of religious and non-religious worldviews to find their own beliefs to each of these philosophical and ethical dilemmas. Each religious or non-religious opinion is taught



with evidence to support this, and to reflect on how these questions are answered using a person's core beliefs. Each scheme or work should build on previous learning, with common references consistent throughout Key Stage 3.

## How are students taught and assessed?

Students should be given Philosophy, Religion and Ethics lessons twice per fortnight. Students should expect to have visitors of faith, as well as visiting places of worship themselves if possible. Lessons will draw on a wide range of evidence, from textual references to real life stories from current news. Students may also look at the life of key religious figures to see why so many people around the world see these figures as role models or moral guides.

Assessment is regular and will take a wide range of styles depending on the particular schools need or requirement. For those schools who offer GCSE RE, there is an expectation that this style of questioning is developed and assessed at this early point. However, this is carefully matched with knowledge-based tests to ensure students can identify and recognise religious symbols, concepts, buildings, and practices. All assessments are used to gauge student understanding of our complex and broad topics whilst also nurturing their critical analysis skill.

Typical Curriculum Allocation:  
2 hours per fortnight



# Curriculum Overview

## Key Stage 4

### Curriculum Aims

Regardless of whether Philosophy, Religions and Ethics is continued into GCSE, the overall aims are similar.

Using Key Stage 3 as a foundation for beliefs and questions, Key Stage 4 begins to look at serious ethical and philosophical issues in modern day society. Alongside this, students will also look deeper into the life of a religious person, and how beliefs impact the way in which a believer lives their life.

The overall aim for Key Stage 4 is for pupils to gain an appreciation of how Philosophy, Religion and Ethics forms culture, identity and societies whilst also developing analytical and critical thinking skills. By the end of Key Stage 4, students will be able to effectively evaluate religious and non-religious teachings and how they can apply to a wide range of situations, moral dilemmas and world issues.

Students will also develop debating skills within Philosophy, Religions and Ethics, using verbal persuasion skills to make impactful and progressive discussion points. We encourage our pupils to be able to argue in different points of view, as well as their own. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils should be able to not only develop their own debate points, but solidify their own views in the process.



### Key Curriculum Content

Philosophy, Religion and Ethics is split into two different strands for Key Stage 4. Many of our schools offer GCSE RE alongside Core PRE, however some choose to offer just one of these.

For those that offer and study GCSE RE, we use the AQA Religious Studies A specification. The chosen religions for our studies are Christianity and either Buddhism or Islam. In the GCSE, students are given a wide range of ethical, social, and moral issues to answer using religious teachings and theories as evidence. Students will find debates revolving around areas such as crime, war, relationships, medicine, human rights, and death. Students tackle each of these fairly, using both interfaith points of view as well as those from humanism and atheism.

Students will also engage closely with the chosen religions, learning about faith and practice. Students will explore the roots of religions and key beliefs and the differing festivals, traditions and actions that go alongside these. Diving even deeper, students will explore different understandings and denominations within each religion itself, to harvest respect and appreciation for all interpretations of faith.

Core RE, on the other hand, is a mandatory section of

*"THROUGHOUT THE CURRICULUM STUDENTS DEVELOP A LIFELONG LOVE OF LEARNING AND THE NECESSARY SKILLS TO BE A RESILIENT, CONFIDENT AND INDEPENDENT LEARNER."*

the curriculum for all our Meridian Trust pupils. This study is about widening the views of students, broadening their understanding of faith as well as their own moral values and belief. Students should expect to study a wide range of



faiths in these years, building on the key concepts of previous studies in Key Stage 3. Using this as a foundation, we will look to apply religious teachings to a wide range of ethical dilemmas mirroring those that may appear in the GCSE courses. Pupils will receive a range of different worldviews in their learning, whilst also being able to make comparisons between different religious and non-religious beliefs when put into these themed contexts.

## How are students taught and assessed?

Students will be taught thematically, using philosophical and ethical questions as topics. Students should expect to experience religion first-hand whether that is with visits or guest speakers. They will also be taught religious texts in some depth, with key quotes, passages or stories being mastered so that they can be applied to the many themes and questions. Students will equip themselves with their empathy skills to fully explore each theme, using all tools within their provision to maximise the accuracy of what they deem to be the most representative answer to these questions for each worldview. Students should also expect to see debates that are linked to the real world. This could be through short clips from the perspective of a believer or research using the specialised websites.

**Typical Curriculum Allocation:  
1 hours per fortnight (GCSE 4-5 hours)**

Students are assessed in GCSE RE using two different papers. The first is the thematic studies, where students will need to select four themes and use their religious knowledge to answer a range of questions. They are awarded marks in numerous ways, based on their understanding of key concepts but also their application, evaluation, and analysis of beliefs within the themes. The second paper is specialised towards the religions of choice. There are sections for both where students will be tested on beliefs and then practises of this religious worldview.



# Curriculum Overview

## Enrichment

### Beyond the classroom

Students should expect to visit places of worship wherever possible. This allows all of our students in Meridian Trust to experience religion and its identity first-hand. On top of this, pupils also have the opportunity to speak and hear the real-life experiences of a religious believer which may not align with their own. Students may also have guest speakers or visitors to provide some of their lessons. It is not uncommon for the local church or faith groups to provide some lessons within school. Students may also have access to a wide range of school clubs, such as philosophy discussion clubs, Christian unions, or other faith voice groups.

### Cross-Trust Activities

Students may also be invited to an evening curriculum event for Philosophy, Religion and Ethics. Students will be given a challenge, completed by all schools across the trust regarding an 'Ultimate Question'. This question will be provided for them and they will need to give a wide range of evidence from beliefs to provide an overall 'worldview' on this debate question.







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