

## **Philosophy and Ethics KS3 – Statement of Intent**

*“Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Worship God. This is the kind of life you’ve been invited into, the kind of life Christ lived. He never did one thing wrong, not once said anything amiss.” 1 Peter Chapter 2: Verse 17-23*

As a Voluntary Aided Church of England Academy the study of religious education, within the philosophy and ethics curriculum, is of paramount importance to our vision, ‘Living Well Together with Dignity, Faith and Hope.’

When our students arrive in Year 7 they will have come from a variety of feeder schools, the majority of which are not Church of England schools. With this background and the interruptions of the pandemic over the last two years, it is vitally important for our students and society today that we give them a basic understanding of the six key religions so that they can ‘Live Well Together,’ free of ignorance and prepared to make informed choices about the relevance of faith in their futures.

As part of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE (2016) it is important that students undertake a curriculum that involves 50% Christianity, which is achieved with 62% (46/74 lessons) of lessons based on Christianity in Year 7, 50%(36/74 lessons) in Year 8, and 75% (56/74 lessons) in Year 9.

### **Research informed practice in Social Sciences (Philosophy and Ethics)**

The subject teachers are focussing this year on improving subject knowledge and subject specialism. We have purchased a series of textbooks that have helped us to plan and improve the curriculum maps and sequence of knowledge, for example *Explore RE* and also the Collins series by Robert Orme. There are 14 people involved in the teaching of philosophy and ethics / RS, and so we benefitted from a visit from the Head of RE at Denbigh school in Milton Keynes recently. She was able to help us in how we approached the teaching of Islamic units to our students. The team have also worked with the Diocese of Bedford to help quality assure the curriculum planning for 2021-22 and into next year. One teacher is reading *The Sons of Abraham*, which will help him to plan the Y7 curriculum as this year focuses on the confluence of the three Abrahamic religions, their similarities and differences.

### **Specific support planned for SEND students:**

In philosophy and ethics support is provided in various ways. For more lengthy written answers, a writing frame or key word prompts are used to help students structure ideas. Model answers are also provided (known as WAGOL- what a good one looks like) and although these are not allowed to be copied they provide a way to show students what is expected of them in their work. Students receive support during the new learning in small steps to make sure it is explained clearly and new concepts are explored, often in pairs to

allow students time to talk through new ideas in a less threatening way before ideas are shared with the class. Their assessment for learning and independent practice tasks are also supported through additional use of pink pen by the teacher.

## **Year 7 - Faith**

### **Substantive Knowledge**

#### **Autumn Term**

Throughout Year 7 students will focus on *'faith'* as part of our Academy vision of Living Well Together with Dignity, Faith and Hope.' They will explore the bigger picture of the six main world faiths, focusing on the Abrahamic three within this year, and gaining understanding of the difference between agnostics and atheists.

Students will begin Year 7 with an introductory topic where they baseline their current understanding of where their beliefs lie on the continuum of faith, so that they can track how this changes throughout their time at All Saints Academy. They will then look at their own life and background so that they can appreciate how they see life through their 'own lens', and how this leads to people having different perspectives on issues. Through this understanding it is hoped to develop tolerance of other's beliefs and religious practices. Students will then learn about the difference between being agnostic or atheist in Britain today.

Once students have understood where they are and what they are bringing with them to every interaction, they will then spend Year 7 gaining an overview of six faiths, and why three (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) are known as Abrahamic faiths with the other three (Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism) known as Dharmic faiths.

This introduction will be followed in Year 7 by in depth studies into the Abrahamic faiths, starting with Judaism as the oldest, followed by a Christianity focus leading up to Christmas with two modules, "Do prophets still influence us today?" and "Why do Christians believe Jesus was God on Earth?" Within this topic they will understand that Jewish, Christian and Islamic concepts of prophethood overlap in many ways and are also distinctive to each religion. For example, Jesus, the Prophet Isa in Islam, is not always seen as a prophet in Christianity, whereas Abraham/Ibrahim and Moses/Musa are key figures for Jews, Christians and Muslims. Whilst this unit has a Christian focus, the syllabus remains broad and open to other religious examples (Key concepts: the word of God, the People of God.)

In the next module 'Why do Christians believe Jesus was God on Earth?' (Key concept: Incarnation). Students reflect upon whether they think the world could do with a 'saviour' today. If so, how and why might such a 'saviour' offer guidance, direction, sustenance, wisdom, protection, life, hope? They will also explore a Humanist alternative argument that we need to be our own 'saviours.'

## **Spring Term**

In this term students study four Christianity based modules. In the first one, 'What do people believe about God and the Universe?' students will examine questions such as: What arguments do theists offer to support their vision of God as the Creator of life? How do atheists account for the beauty, love, order or grandeur of the Earth and humanity? Why do some people believe/not believe in God? Why are some people uncertain about God? Can science and religion both tell the truth about questions of origins? (Key Concept: science and religions),

In the second topic, 'Should Christians be greener than everyone else?' (Creation), students reflect on whether Christians have been good enough stewards of the Earth. Following this they study the module, 'What happens when we die? What difference does it make if you believe in life after death?' which finds students considering the impact of beliefs about rewards/punishments on moral choices, and implications of believing that there is no judgement after death.

And finally before Easter students conclude the term with 'Why are people good and bad?' (Fall) and examine the mainstream Christian view that humans are 'fallen', people's character is spoiled by sin, and the relationship between humans and God is seriously damaged, so that something needs to be done to put it right. This leads nicely towards Easter.

## **Summer Term**

May commences with a deep study on the third Abrahamic faith - Islam. The module, '**Core and Diverse Islam**', explores what unites Muslim people (core) and also looks at Muslim diversity. This topic reinforces or builds upon prior KS3 learning depending on primary feeder schools, so teaching needs to be responsive and fluid to fill gaps. Students will revise the key concepts of the five pillars, iman (faith), ibadah (worship and belief-in-action) and akhlaq (character and moral conduct). They will dig deeper into the Muslim faith by exploring modern Islamic art such as Ali Omar Ermes' use of Arabic letters. They will find out about the rich meanings behind each piece and discover the use of words and phrases in Islamic art and architecture, such as those carved into stone in the Alhambra or the Taj Mahal.

## **Disciplinary Knowledge**

The Understanding Christianity syllabus focuses on three key skills: Making sense of beliefs, understanding the impact and making connections between beliefs and practices.

By the end of Year 7 students will be able to give reasoned explanations of how and why the selected core beliefs and concepts are important within Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They will be able to give reasons and examples to account for how and why people put their beliefs into practice in different ways, individually and in various communities (e.g. denominations, times or cultures; faith or other communities). Students will learn how to construct coherent accounts of the significance and implications of the beliefs and practices studied in the world today.

## **Year 8 - Hope**

### **Substantive Knowledge**

#### **Autumn Term**

Students will begin the year by re-examining where they are on the continuum of faith. This year students will have a focus on the three Dharmic religions: Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Throughout Year 8 they will also focus on 'Hope' as part of our Academy vision.

They will begin the year by studying the topic, 'It's my life: what should I do with it?' (Concepts: commitment, identity, belief, values.) Within this unit students will investigate some of life's bigger questions such as: What are good human values? How do I decide what is right and what is wrong? Why do people follow different religions or none? Does it make a difference to how people live? Is there a God and a devil? This will build on the knowledge from Year 7 topic 'What happens when we die?' when students discussed how religion affects people's moral choices.

They will then commence a deep study into Hinduism in the unit, 'Why don't Hindus want to be reincarnated and what do they do about it?' Students will explore Hindu ideas about samsara, karma and moksha, and examine how the law of karma governs reincarnation. They will also explore some of the ways Hindus can escape from samsara and attain moksha. Students will learn about British Hindu teenagers' lives, their multiple identities and thoughts about their traditions. They will then compare similarities and differences with the diverse lives of students in their own class. Students will practise analysing sacred texts dealing with dharma and explore the idea of dharma and varna in modern Indian and British Hindu communities. They will explore Hindu commitments to non-violence (ahimsa), harmlessness and vegetarian food and evaluate the proposition that the Hindu path is the best hope in the battle to protect the environment.

They will finish this term by focusing on the religious teachings of the sanctity of all life to include animal rights, euthanasia and abortion. This will begin to prepare them for the GCSE in Year 10.

#### **Spring Term**

Students will begin this term with a deep study on the second Dharmic faith- Sikhism. They will study the unit, 'How are Sikh teachings on equality and service put into practice today?' Students will find out how and why Sikhs remember God, examine how the teachings and lives of Guru Nanak and the Ten Gurus guide Sikh living today, find out about a Sikh's three duties, and explore the Sikh path of life, away from being self-centred (manmukh) towards being God-centred (gurmukh). They will finish this focussed study by considering the questions of Sikh identity in modern British culture, from religious and sociological perspectives whilst investigating what it means to be a young Sikh in Britain today.

Students will end this term considering the unit 'Why is there suffering in the world? Are there any good solutions?', where they will explore questions raised by the experience of suffering, in relation to God, the world, human life and life after death. They will explore

different causes and types of suffering: emotional, physical, existential and consider how suffering differs around the world, e.g. compare relative poverty to absolute poverty.

### **Summer Term**

Students will begin this term by studying a facilitating unit towards their GCSE course by looking at the Christian teachings of religion and families. They will then engage in an extended study on the third Dharmic religion – Buddhism and the unit, 'How and why do Buddha's experience and teachings have meaning for people today' and 'Should happiness be the purpose of life?' Within this they will explore the key events in the life of the Buddha and how they led him to seek enlightenment whilst examining some key texts used within Buddhist traditions to teach central Buddhist teachings (e.g. Dhammacakkappattana).

Students will explore the dharma/dhamma: the key teachings of the Buddha and the impact these have on Buddhists today: three universal truths; life as suffering (dukkha) and how this may be alleviated (the Four Noble Truths); and the Noble Eightfold Path. Students will get the opportunity to explore some Buddhist symbols and artefacts beyond statues of Buddha (rupas) such as: lotus flower, stupa, bells, mala (beads), prayer wheel, prayer flags, singing bowls, mudras (hand gestures).

Students will conclude Year 8 with a focus on a GCSE preparatory module on social justice where they will examine how the Bible relays Jesus's perspective on the rich and the poor.

### **Disciplinary Knowledge**

During Year 8 students will learn how to take account of context(s), explain how and why people use and make sense of texts/sources of authority differently to explain important beliefs reasonably, describing different interpretations. They will use evidence and reasoning to show how and why beliefs and moral values guide people in making moral and religious decisions, applying these ideas to situations in the world today. Student will recognise how to respond reasonably to the challenges raised by religions and beliefs with coherent views and connections of their own. They will be able to evaluate how far the beliefs and practices studied help pupils themselves and others to make sense of the world.

### **Year 9 - Dignity**

#### **Substantive Knowledge**

Throughout the final year of Key Stage 3 students will focus on the word Dignity as part of our Academy vision. They will now have an appreciation of all three Abrahamic faiths and three Dharmic faiths and will spend this year comparing the impacts of these religious beliefs on the modern world.

To embrace the harder concept of Dignity students will begin the year studying the unit, 'What do we do when life gets hard?' Within this unit students will consider the bigger questions of, 'Which evils and suffering are our own fault? Should God be blamed for evil? If

there is a great, all-loving God, why is the world so terrible for so many? Does a wise life avoid evil or attack it? It is hoped that these discussions will provide our students with a clear understanding of how to lead our lives in a dignified way.

This will be further built upon by the module, 'Good, bad; right, wrong: how do I decide?' Students will examine the key terms: ethics, morality, absolute morality, relative morality, and how beliefs, values and principles act as a guide for moral decision-making, using case studies and moral dilemmas. This will enable and encourage students to reflect upon their own process of moral decision-making throughout this unit and to consider where people get their moral values from, e.g. society, family, conscience and religion.

In November, to align with the Academy calendar, students will study a facilitating module, 'Is there such a thing as a just war?' Students will consider other wars and explore the Just War Theory in an effort to forge an opinion as to the answer to this question.

To end this term, students will focus on poverty and charity as we lead up to Christmas and consider those less fortunate than ourselves.

### **Spring Term**

As a preliminary to their GCSEs students will study the unit, 'What does it mean for Christians to believe in God as Trinity? (God). They will learn what Christians mean by the term 'God' and explore biblical views of God as Trinity through key texts.

In the following module, 'What can we do to make our community more respectful?' they will learn about the concepts of cohesion, tolerance and mutual respect. They will investigate how the local area contrasts with other parts of Luton and Bedfordshire, and explore the idea that interfaith dialogue contributes to prejudice reduction. Students will consider the different kinds of prejudice that can sometimes divide our communities: Race, gender, sexuality, religion and social class. They will reflect upon teachings – found in every religion – about the duty to care and show love or compassion to people who are different for example in *The Golden Rule*.

Before Easter they will study the unit, 'What is so radical about Jesus? where students will explore the background contexts of Gospel accounts on Jesus' relationship with 'sinners' and with the religious authorities. Students will examine other texts which articulate Jesus' concerns, as far as the Gospel writers saw it. They will consider in what ways Jesus' message and actions were radical. through exploring a range of ways in which Christians try to put Jesus' message of 'good news' into action, including putting the needs of the outcasts and vulnerable first, and challenging injustice and hypocrisy where they encounter it.

### **Summer Term**

Students will begin this term with an extended study into Islam starting with a focus on the festival of Ramadan which will be occurring at this time. They will learn about Muslim teachings in the Qur'an, such as that righteousness comes from iman, assenting to the seven key beliefs; some things are forbidden by Allah); fasting and zakah in the Five Pillars; ihsan

(excellence, doing what is good; from the Hadith of Gabriel). They will consider the importance of submission in Islam and how it may affect moral decision-making?

Students will research famous mosques around the world, such as in Indonesia, Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, London and Mali and identify similar features. They will learn to explicitly label 'core' mosque features and 'diverse' mosque features before visiting a local mosque.

In the very last unit of KS3 students will finish with, 'Sharing one world: are religions part of the problem or the solution? They will evaluate the underlying causes of the prejudice that creates all these barriers and learn to use negative terms such as ignorance, fear, scapegoating, stereotyping and prejudice. Students will investigate recent and current examples of racial/religious prejudice and the consequences. By reflecting on what questions these events raise about the nature and power of God, students will question whether existence of many religions make human unity impossible. They will research and reflect on the attempts by religious groups or individuals to build 'bridges', which will include local community and interfaith activities.

Students will end KS3 fulfilling the Academy vision of *Living Well Together with dignity, faith and Hope* as they learn to use positive terms such as tolerance, acceptance, respect, mutual understanding and celebration of diversity.

### **Disciplinary Knowledge**

In Year 9 students will be able to explain how and why texts and beliefs are used in different ways, reasoning and interpreting them for themselves, and be able to explain how appropriate different texts are as sources of authority. They will learn to exemplify reasonably the diversity of religious practices in the contemporary world. Students will acquire the skill of coherently connecting accounts of diverse beliefs whilst evaluating the impact of beliefs in the modern world, offering reasons and justifications for their responses. At the end of Key Stage 3 it is hoped students will be able to articulate reasons and justifications about current topical issues such as, 'Why is Jerusalem so important?'