

Philosophy and Ethics KS4 – Statement of Intent:

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.”
Proverbs 18:15

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 7:12

It is a common misconception that Philosophy and Ethics is solely the study of religious facts. However, at All Saints Academy, our Philosophy and Ethics course is much broader as we deal with the ultimate meaning and purpose of life. Additionally, Students are taught imperative and transferable skills to question and evaluate key beliefs and practices, enabling our learners to formulate their own coherent and justified viewpoints. This firstly shows our students how the study of Philosophy and Ethics leads to both rational and spiritual development. Secondly, it highlights how this subject has a positive impact on their future lives, studies and careers. This is because Philosophy and Ethics gives our students the opportunity to work with others who have different views and beliefs, enabling them to combat prejudice.

In Year 10, students of Philosophy and Ethics will build upon their prior learning of the subject from KS3, by delving into the core beliefs of Christianity and Islam in more depth. They will also consider non-religious beliefs found amongst famous humanists, agnostics and atheists.

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 10

Substantive Knowledge

In their first GCSE year at All Saints Academy, our Year 10 cohort will build upon the big philosophical questions and techniques they have experienced from their previous years in the subject. This gives our students the necessary foundation to identify and understand the key debates that have, and still do, occupy the minds of philosophers and theologians today. For example, our students will gain a deeper understanding of key religious and non-religious views about the world we live in, whilst remaining sceptical about such positions, in order to formulate their own.

Students in Year 10 will grapple with key beliefs found in both Christianity and Islam. These include creationism, the existence and nature of God, life after death, and religious leaders and how they lived their lives. Throughout the year, our students will also learn about non-religious perspectives to be able to make logical conclusions for themselves.

Year 10

Disciplinary Knowledge

In Year 10, students of Philosophy and Ethics will be encouraged to practise and advance the skills they have gained from Key Stage 3, to become competent in the subject. Firstly, our learners will be able to sufficiently identify key beliefs within both Christianity and Islam, with reference to religious scripture. They will also be able to do this for non-religious beliefs too. Secondly, students will exercise the skill of making comparisons between these religious and secular viewpoints. Finally, our advanced learners at All Saints Academy will have the opportunity to build upon the skills of analysis and evaluation, by considering the strengths and weaknesses of these beliefs to logically and coherently reach their own justified conclusions.

Year 11

Substantive knowledge

Our students of Philosophy and Ethics in year 11 will now be able to appropriately apply their knowledge of the key religious (Christianity and Islam) and non-religious beliefs they studied in year 10 to 4 different and interesting themes. These include the family and relationships, arguments for the existence of God and the Cosmos, the importance of human beings and animals, and war and peace in the world today. Students will firstly consider different views about the types and purposes of families and relationships, including the nuclear and extended family for example, and one-partner relationships in comparison to polygamy. Secondly, our students will look into the most famous theological arguments for the existence of God and the Universe, including the Teleological and Cosmological arguments. They will then deal with the ultimate questions about personal identity, what makes a human being a human being for example, and does this apply to animals as well? Finally, students will learn about varying concepts about war, and how peace may be attainable.

Disciplinary:

In year 11, students will be encouraged to practice and advance the skills they have gained from years 10 and throughout key stage 3, specifically regarding their evaluative skills and their ability to reflect upon their own viewpoints. Students at All Saints Academy in year 11 will have the opportunity to participate in class discussions and debates to excel in these skills. Our learners will also develop their critical thinking skills in comparison to year 10, by focusing more on making comparisons between the key religious and non-religious viewpoints within the four themes we study. Throughout Philosophy and Ethics in year 11, learners will progress further in comparison to year 10 by exercising the skill of linking the topics we study to the world we currently live in and current affairs.