

# Religious Education

*“Were not our hearts burning within us”*  
**-The disciples on the road to Emmaus - Luke 24:32**

*“The invitation of Jesus Christ for all people to live life in all its fullness is the challenge that lies at the heart of Religious Education within a Catholic school.”*

**- Catholic Education Service.**

## Intent Statement

At St. Cuthbert’s we believe that Religious Education is the **"core of the core curriculum"** (Pope St John Paul II) and is fundamental to the life and purpose of our school. Christ and his teaching is at the heart of who we are and all we do. Classroom Religious Education gives pupils a unique opportunity to explore the big questions of meaning and purpose. As Jesus listened to the questioning disciples on the road to Emmaus, we aim to hear and understand each of our students as we walk with them on their journey of faith and discovery. We are committed to academic rigour and attainment, while providing all students with a variety of learning experiences, ensuring that Religious Education is engaging, relevant, meaningful, knowledge rich, ambitious and enjoyable. Through their reflective learning, students will develop an understanding of their innate dignity and their own beliefs and values. Students will also know and understand about the beliefs of others and how they are impacted by their faith, enabling our learners to become responsible, active, empathetic citizens of the world. We believe that in Religious Education we are sowing seeds which will help our students to flourish and go on to **live their lives in all its fullness**, just as God intended.

The primary focus of classroom Religious Education is the academic study of religion. Our aim is to provide an aspirational curriculum using appropriate pedagogy and rigorous assessment.

- We aim to make the study of religion accessible, with an awareness that many of our students are not baptised Catholics. We will provide targeted support in the classroom and through additional support, for those students without prior experience or knowledge of religion.
- We aim to make our lessons accessible and relevant so that students can see the connection between their learning, their own lives, and the society they live in.
- Equally, we will challenge all students and develop their learning from KS2 by implementing a knowledge rich, ambitious curriculum. Interleaving key concepts and taking time to reflect and revise opinions will deepen all students’ knowledge and understanding.
- Students will be given the opportunity to study various religious and non-religious worldviews on a variety of religious and moral issues. Students will be encouraged to formulate their own views and opinions with justification. They will also be given the chance to respond to the views of others.
- We intend to provide a stimulating curriculum that explores the theological, philosophical and ethical questions central to human experience. Each curriculum module from year 7 to year 11 is framed within a “Big Question” about life. Each lesson title is an enquiry ‘big’ question.
- We want all our students to understand the richness of the Catholic faith and follow the guidance of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory as set out by the Bishop’s Conference of England and Wales. The KS3 curriculum is based on “To know You more clearly” and all students are entered for GCSE Religious Studies Eduqas Route B.
- We hope to develop students’ appreciation of sources of wisdom and authority, especially the Bible and Church teaching. Embedding and developing literacy skills through the use of sources and a variety of ambitious texts, we hope to inspire students with the power of the written word and a passion for reading.
- We aim to provide our students with opportunities to reflect spiritually, and so prayer and opportunities for creativity are embedded within our curriculum.

- The GCSE curriculum develops critical thinking skills and the ability to construct well-informed, structured written arguments. Opportunities for debate and discussion within lessons will develop oracy and provide the stimulus and preparation for expressive extended writing.
- Appreciating others' beliefs and values is key in broadening minds and overcoming prejudice. We provide opportunities in school for students to explore different religions and to meet people of faith within the curriculum, during enrichment days and by visiting places of worship.
- Faith impacts what individuals and communities do in their daily lives. We aim to explore and inspire social action as students explore Catholic Social Teaching and reflect on their own beliefs and values.
- We work closely with Archdiocesan and local network groups to share best practice and inform our own curriculum and pedagogy. We also take all opportunities for CPL offered by Eduqas.
- We aim to enable our students to achieve their potential at GCSE, to spark an interest in further academic study, and a life-long interest in education in all its forms.
- We wish to contribute to raising the aspirations of our students through high expectations, academic rigour, cultural capital opportunities, links to careers and further study.

### **Research the curriculum is based on**

Our curriculum, like all other Catholic schools, follows the Religious Education Directory from the Bishops of England and Wales. The new Religious Education Directory was introduced in 2023.

### **Powerful knowledge**

Our curriculum provides students with knowledge about:

- Structure and authority of the Bible
- Different Christian interpretations of the Bible e.g. Catholic and fundamental views.
- Biblical accounts of creation
- Religious and non-religious view about stewardship and how can care for the planet
- Different religious and non-religious views about creation of the universe
- Scientific accounts of Big Bang and evolution and religious and non-religious responses
- The story of the fall in Genesis how this links to Christian and Jewish beliefs about sin and suffering
- Covenant stories relevant to Christianity and Judaism (and Islam)
- Prophets and their role in bring people back to God
- Jewish and Christian beliefs about the Messiah and how their beliefs differ
- Christian beliefs about Jesus as the incarnation
- Christian beliefs about the Trinity and the nature of God
- Life and ministry of Jesus (important parables and miracles stories)
- The events of the last week of Jesus' life
- Christian beliefs about the resurrection
- Christian beliefs about salvation
- Catholic practices as a result of beliefs – seven sacraments, vocation, pilgrimage and prayer
- Mary, the Mother of God and her role in salvation history
- Christian denominations – similarities and differences
- Moral authorities that influence religious and non-religious people, as well and themselves
- Moral authorities in the Catholic Church
- Principles of Catholic Social Teaching and how individuals and charities put these principles into action
- How Christians and other believers put their faith into action and follow the golden rule
- Religious views and non-religious views about life and its sanctity
- Different views about moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, problem of evil, capital punishment
- Religious and non-religious views about life after death and the impact of these beliefs
- Worldviews impact life and practices
- Critically weigh up and evaluate different religious and non-religious views
- Come to evidenced conclusions about a range of moral and religious questions
- Know and apply a variety of sources of wisdom and authority
- Make use of sources of wisdom when constructing arguments and when coming to a justified conclusion

- Beliefs and practices in different religious and non-religious worldviews: Judaism in year 7, 10 and 11, Sikhi in year 8, Islam in year 9, Humanism in all years

## **Multiculturalism and Diversity**

### **1. Vision and Commitment**

Religious Education (RE) plays a vital role in fostering a school, local and global community built on respect, inclusion, and a deep appreciation of diversity. Our RE curriculum is intentionally designed to reflect the multicultural and multi-faith society in which we live, ensuring that all students—regardless of their background, beliefs, or identity—are represented, respected, and empowered.

We are committed to creating an inclusive learning environment that:

- Helps students to understand different views, beliefs and traditions.
- Encourages open dialogue and critical thinking around different worldviews, both religious and non-religious.
- Recognises and values the lived experiences and cultural identities of all students.
- Promotes equity by providing all learners with opportunities to engage with content that reflects the global community.
- Fosters empathy and tolerance towards different views, religions, cultures and ways of life.

### **2. Curriculum Integration**

Through the study of a wide range of religions, beliefs, and ethical perspectives—including Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Judaism, Humanism, and other non-religious worldviews—we aim to broaden students' horizons and deepen their understanding of the world around them. In addition to curriculum RE, we aim to provide students with the opportunity to meet people and communities from a diverse range of backgrounds and religions through our extra-curricular provision.

Our curriculum highlights the contribution of diverse religious traditions and practices to society. We also explore issues of social justice, environmental justice, peace, and human rights. By doing so, RE supports the development of global citizenship and intercultural understanding, equipping students so that they can navigate and contribute positively to an interconnected diverse world.

### **3. Impact on students**

Religious Education at St. Cuthbert's is not only about knowledge, but about nurturing empathy, compassion, and respect—qualities that are essential for living in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. Through the RE curriculum students also learn important skills such as critical and reflective thinking, ethical reasoning and how to communicate respectfully.

## **Cultural Capital**

Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that a student can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, knowledge and competence; it is one of the key ingredients a student will draw upon to be successful in society, their career and the world around them.

The UK has a rich heritage of culture and diversity. Religion and belief for many people forms an integral part of their culture and identity. Religion and beliefs have become more visible in public life locally, nationally and internationally. In Religious Education we foster an empathy and understanding of beliefs, customs and culture, which is important in a multi-cultural society like Britain. We break down religious and cultural stereotypes and we promote tolerance, respect and acceptance of all. Through Religious Education students explore a variety of religious beliefs and understand how belief impacts people and gives rise to a variety of practices that students will encounter in life. In Year 7, 10 and 11 students will study Judaism and Christianity, in Year 8 Christianity and Sikhi, in Year 9 Christianity and Islam. The study of non-religious

worldviews and practices are also embedded throughout the curriculum. Students will also examine the contribution of immigration to society, as well as the benefits of living in a multi-faith society.

Religious Education is primarily about the study of people and their beliefs. In Religious Education we study different people and the contribution they have made to the world. Students study a variety of role models to learn from.

Religious Education gives students the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices. A great deal of Religious Education across all year groups is about students making moral decisions, with a focus on their rights and responsibilities in their local, wider and global community. Students examine a variety of modern ethical issues that are relevant in a modern society, where medical and modern technologies are developing e.g. abortion, genetic engineering, death penalty, euthanasia, contraception, speciesism, stewardship.

Religion has influenced much of history, culture, art and society both in Britain and internationally. Embedded within the Religious Education curriculum is an exposure to a variety of different artefacts, texts, works of art, pieces of music and types of architecture e.g. Faure's Requiem, Pieta, Creation of Adam by Michelangelo. Students also have the opportunity to experience a variety of different visitors from different backgrounds and take part in educational visits e.g. theatre trips, museums, cities and places of worship. In summary, Religious Education plays an important role in preparing students for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

### **Catholic Social Teaching**

Catholic Social Teaching is rightly evident across the Religious Education Curriculum. The new Religious Education Directory "To know you more clearly" allows students in Years 7,8 and 9 to gain a full understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. Students explore all elements of CST during the course, for example, "Care for Creation" in Year 7 with students reflecting on how we can all look after our common home. In Year 8, students will explore the life of Oscar Romero and how he fought for justice for the oppressed. A further example, in Year 9 students assess what it means to be human, and reflecting on the sacredness of human life and dignity of work. In Year 10 and 11 Religious Studies GCSE, CST is studied as a distinct topic in Origins and Meaning. CST is also embedded through looking at topics such as sanctity of life, imago Dei, stewardship, dying well, wealth and poverty, abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment.

## **Key Stage 3 Curriculum Rational and Sequencing**

Students in Years 7-9 will follow the Model Curriculum from the Religious Education Directory 2023. There are six branches in each year: Creation to Covenant, Prophecy and Promise, Galilee to Jerusalem, Desert to Garden, To the ends of the Earth and Dialogue and Encounter. Students will explore these branches through four lenses: hear, believe, celebrate, live.

### **Year 7 – To know you more clearly**

Year 7 will begin to follow the new RED programme of study 'To know you more clearly'. In this year, pupils revisit some of the most important learning from their study of Catholicism in primary school. For those who have not attended Catholic primary school, this year presents the theological foundations that are the basis for understanding Catholicism. The focus of the entire year is God's revelation and the way in which this has gradually unfolded through salvation history. In the first unit, a distinction is made between general and special revelation, recognising Creation and the existence of human beings as one way in which all human beings can come to know God using their own natural reason. In the second unit, we look at special revelation, introducing (or reintroducing) students to the significance of Sacred Scripture for Catholics. The third unit focuses on Jesus Christ, the incarnation, and the Christian claim that in Christ is the fullness of God's revelation. In this context, the doctrine of the Trinity is explored further, since the

recognition of Jesus as very God by the early Church required a recognition of him as the eternal Son of the Father. The fourth unit (desert to garden) focuses on the continued presence of Christ with the Church through the sacraments and the transformative effect of these sacraments on the lives of the faithful. The main emphasis for this unit is the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the 'source and summit' of the Christian life. The final unit gives us the last piece of God's revelation through the sending of the Holy Spirit and the presence of this Spirit with the Church.

RECD p186

### **Year 8 – To know you more clearly**

In this year, pupils will consider some of the existential questions that lie at the heart of the human condition and reflect on both the meaning of suffering and the meaning of death. They begin by looking at the account of the Fall in Genesis 3 and the implications this has for human beings and the world, coming to an understanding of what the Church means when it speaks of 'original sin' and how this is distinguished from 'personal sin'. This is followed in branch 2 by an examination of how God tried to deal with faithless humanity by holding out the promise of a new covenant and a coming messiah who would restore human beings to covenant fidelity. Branch 3 presents us with Jesus who, as the announcer of the reign of God, holds out signs of what this final restoration of all things will look like in his treatment of sinners and outcasts, in his parables of the kingdom, and in his miracles. Branch 4 deals explicitly with the mystery of suffering, or the problem of evil as it is sometimes called, and places this in the light of an understanding of suffering that has been transformed by the passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Finally, in branch 5, students will look to the final consummation of all things and the end to all suffering as death is defeated in the Resurrection of Jesus, the first-born from the dead.

RECD p 208

### **Year 9 - To know you more clearly**

The whole of year 9 deals with the mystery of the human person. It begins in branch 1, by revisiting the Creation accounts, focusing particularly on the belief that human beings are imago Dei and the implications this has for the principle of the dignity of the human person and the radical equality of man and woman. The nature of human beings as sexual beings, who are made for each other, forms the foundation for a study of the Church's teaching on marriage and the Sacrament of Matrimony. In branch 2, we take the equality of men and women as our starting point and focus particularly on the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the salvation history narrative. In branch 3 we return to the Gospel of Mark and look at the call to discipleship that is offered to all human beings in Christ's proclamation of the kingdom, and the relationship between discipleship and individual vocations. In this context students will study the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the vocation to religious life. In branch 4, we look at the mystery of redemption and students will be expected to come to some understanding of how the Church explains the connection between Christ's sacrificial death and individual redemption from sins. Finally, we look to the human person as one member of a community that spans both heaven and earth in the final branch where we look at the Church as the 'communion of saints', the mystical Body of Christ.

RECD p 227

## **Key Stage 4 Curriculum Rational and Sequencing**

### **Year 10 – GCSE Eduqas Route B**

Students then move on to the **Foundational Catholic Theology** Component. The first theme in this component is **Origin and Meaning** which is about creation and the values of human life and universe. Students will make relevant links to scripture as well as contrasting scientific views and non-religious views. The second theme is **Good and Evil**. Students will consider philosophical questions concerning the origins of good and evil and different religious answers to the problem of evil and suffering. Throughout sources of wisdom and authority is explored as well as the Jewish perspective.

### **Year 11 - GCSE Eduqas Route B**

In year 11 students start Component 2, **Applied Catholic Theology** with Theme 3 focused on **Life and Death**. This is an opportunity to explore moral issues linking to death for example euthanasia and palliative care. Catholic religious beliefs on life after death is explored through scripture as well as prayer, music and artefacts. Theme 4 is **Sin and Forgiveness**. This requires students to consider philosophical questions about the nature of criminality and rationale for punishment. The justifiability of capital punishment is also explored. Scripture and sources of wisdom is used throughout as well as a link to Jewish interpretation and non-religious viewpoints.