

## Religious Studies Curriculum Statement

### *Wimbledon College Curriculum Intent*

*Our curriculum, rooted in our vision statement and the key principles of Jesuit education, provides aspirational pathways for all pupils to enable them to strive for excellence in all that they do so that they can achieve their potential and progress on their career pathway.*

*All pupils engage with a broad, balanced and sequenced curriculum and are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of concepts, skills and talents. They also have access to an extensive range of extra-curricular activities which provides both a balance to their academic studies and enriching cultural capital opportunities. We are committed to care for the individual pupil and their development as a whole person and help them to grow the personal characteristics and virtues within the Jesuit Pupil Profile. Being 'men and women for others' means that each pupil has the desire and capacity to make a positive difference in the lives of those they meet now as pupils and in their future lives.*

### **Intent**

The Religious Education (RE) Department at Wimbledon College aims to uphold the key principles of Jesuit education. "Education is preparation for life, which is preparation for eternal life, and is concerned with the ways in which students will make use of their formation in the service of others for the praise, reverence and service of God." Jesuit education tries to instill a joy in learning and a desire to learn that will remain beyond the days in school. The Department is an academic community at the very heart of a Catholic school that reflects the College's curriculum intent. Our educational philosophy is that pupils should be able to clearly articulate and be proud of their own faith and personal beliefs, while respecting the beliefs and values of others. We encourage students to debate, discuss and to be critically evaluative of ideas in order to enable the pupils to communicate their views through speech and in writing. Much use is made of current affairs issues and new technologies, yet we remain grounded in the Gospel values and bear witness to the message of Christ. Ultimately, we believe that Religious Education is of the utmost importance in the 21st Century because we are teaching the future leaders and policy makers of our country. We want pupils to be the very best they can be, fulfilling their academic potential but also going out into the world with a strong sense of morality and justice, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other people and to be oriented towards values rather than material possessions.

The long term aim is that pupils are able to talk and write knowledgeably about religion and belief, using subject-specific language accurately and confidently. They should be able to use RE-specific skills such as making links between beliefs, teachings and practices; analysing and interpreting religious texts; and understanding symbolism in images, actions and metaphorical language. Pupils should have the skills to engage in respectful dialogue about religious, philosophical and ethical issues facing the world today.

## Implementation

Our overall approach is to give students the skills they need to develop as religiously literate young people as set out in our curriculum intent. The skills they learn support this, and the broader development set out in the whole school's intent. These include the development of knowledge and understanding skills, and the ability to recall information which they will later use to formulate their own arguments when considering and analysing social, moral and spiritual issues as well as discerning, evaluating, judging and responding to them. Through recall and the interleaving of these skills, students are able to remember and embed their learning which is then regularly assessed, with weaknesses identified and interventions put in place. The skills that we would like all pupils to have include the ability to define, describe, explain and evaluate in their work.

To support this, our curriculum is a spiral curriculum with each year building on the one before but in greater depth. Key concepts are the building blocks through which students encounter new knowledge and develop key skills of defining, describing, explaining, evaluating and analysing. These are skills that lead into AO1 & AO2 at GCSE. In turn, these skills are essential requirements at A-Level. This means that in Year 7 we focus on the skills of defining and describing, in Year 8 we add explaining skills, and in Year 9 we add on evaluative skills. These skills are used in sequence as they build on each other. At KS4 we focus on both AO1 & AO2 which also acts as an essential basis to the key skills required for the rigor of KS5.

All students at KS3,4 and 5 are given a year's overview of what they will be learning and a variety of other sheets to do with expectations, targets and detailed outlines of individual modules that highlight key concepts and key skills. Lessons are planned and adapted according to the ability of each teacher's group. Lessons have a consistent approach with titles, learning objectives, key concepts, reflection, experience, engagement exercises, a plenary, and opportunities to recall or recap previous learning. Opportunities for discussion, debate, paired work etc. are to be found in all lessons.

The design of the curriculum also encourages positive attitudes to learning and behaviour for learning. There are clear routines and expectations of both the teacher and the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their exercise books and with their work. Positive use of the Jesuit Pupil Profile encourages students to strive for excellence.

Alongside classwork, students also undertake homework and formative assessments. These allow students to embed knowledge, key concepts and key skills. The format of these formative assessments will vary year to year depending on the skill focus for that year group.

All formative assessments are marked in depth and, in addition to comments within assessment papers, whole class feedback occurs after each assessment. Students will be given detailed answer sheets to enable them to green pen their work. This helps them to identify what they have answered correctly, what they have got wrong, and what they need to do to improve. It also helps them to reflect and then set targets for themselves. This encourages pupils to work out 'what went well; even better if' (www/ebi). Across KS3,4 and 5 students are assessed in accordance with the specific skills set to that year group. There are also end of year exams and two mocks in year 11. At KS5 this is supplemented by EOY tests in year 12 and two mocks in year 13.

The HOD meets with the co-second in departments before and after assessments to review and update assessments but also to view the data and discuss [www.ebi](http://www.ebi). Departmental meetings are also opportunities to share good practice, identify progress and underperformance, and ensure that all staff are confident in their teaching.

The units of work at KS3, 4 and 5 have been reviewed and adapted to fit the needs of our pupils. This has given us a flexibility to take onboard local, national and global events as they happen; this keeps the curriculum relevant and interesting, by providing live examples of how students' work links to real life events. More information about each Key Stage is set out below.

**At KS3**, we are moving away from our current programme which was loosely based on *The Way, The Truth & The Life*. We are moving to the RED (3-19) and its particular focus on Catholic social teachings. This move is very much a work in progress as we carefully implement it over a three-year period to support our current students' ongoing learning. The RED is a document produced by Catholic Bishops Conference in England and Wales to provide guidance for the Religious Education classroom in Catholic schools. We refer to the Curriculum directory to meet the needs and interests of our particular intake. For example, students are introduced to Catholic belief and practices as well as an opportunity to encounter non-Abrahamic faith (Buddhism in Year 7) and other Abrahamic faiths. This enables students to appreciate diversity in our contemporary society. The new RED began roll-out in September 2022 for Year 7.

**At KS4**, we chose the EDUQAS Route B specification because it is academically and theologically challenging while also helping students understand Catholic practices and the theology behind it, along with giving them the opportunity to explore Judaism's beliefs, teachings and practices. The study of Judaism is crucial as it is the root of Christianity and much of Roman Catholicism's rituals have direct links with Judaism. We follow the suggested Schemes of work from the examination board alongside our own work booklets.

**At Key Stage 5**, we chose the OCR Philosophy & Ethics specification because it is academically rigorous and relevant in contemporary society, and gives good grounding for university expectations. Other than academic study, students have various enrichment programmes in RE, mostly linked to Chaplaincy and the Catholic life of the school. Skills are taught interwoven with content and take place in class with the teacher to bridge the gap between GCSE and A Level. To make time for this there is an element of flipped learning where the content is learnt via homework tasks and lesson time can be dedicated to developing A Level essay writing skills. All schemes of work have been reviewed and revised to follow the OCR Specification for A Level Philosophy & Ethics. This year the department has its largest uptake at A Level for a number of years. Key assessments are moderated internally within the department and externally at the recent Heads of RE Conference for the Westminster Diocese (July 2022).

**KS5 Core RE** - Up until this academic year Wimbledon College & Ursuline High School have shared a Core RE Programme. In Year 12, students had opportunities to explore Ignatian Spirituality; visiting places of worship from other faiths; and discussing, debating and reflecting on challenging and controversial religious matters. Pre-pandemic, students carried out volunteering placements to enable them to experience what our mission is as members of a Jesuit community. Now, after discussions initiated by the HOD with the Provincial, a new Core RE programme will start in September 2022 for all Year 12 students. Our new core RE programme is being delivered to all Year 12 students by specialists. This is a work in progress and will help our young adults prepare for life after school and how to be an impactful person of faith within it.

In Year 13, students have reflected on life as an adult Catholic. This was explored through a variety of joint drop-down days shared with the Ursuline High School. While our current practice meets the demands of the old 2017 framework, our priority is to review our current offer and bring it in line with the Diocesan demands from the New Curriculum Directory and the new Inspection Framework as well as any other national initiatives. As the existing programme is phased out, our new Core RE programme will replace this.

**Impact:**

The RE Department is working to create a learning culture in RE where pupils rejoice in their own cleverness, imagination, thought, creativity and development. However, the department understands that it is required to formally assess students' progress in order to be able to show the impact of the RE Curriculum and identify areas for our students' improvement.

KS3, 4, 5 students are assessed twice every half term. In light of the demands of the new RED, GCSE and A-Level, all assessments are being reviewed and rewritten to enable students to progress.

The questions that the department has considered are: How do we know progress is being made? What impact is RE having on the life of the school? What needs to improve? What evidence do we have that shows we are fulfilling our intent? How do we evaluate the resources we use?

Based upon this, some of the insights and measures to improve curriculum impact are included below:

- Low stake AFLs of knowledge & understanding are built into each topic of study in the curriculum (e.g. homeworks).
- Key pieces of writing have been identified in KS3, 4 and 5 to assess pupils' ability to express their learning. These are moderated across the department for quality assurance.
- Feedback from student evaluations indicate that the curriculum intent is successful.
- Pupils say they enjoy learning lots of new facts in RE and getting involved in debates.
- They feel they make good progress in RE and that this is evident through teacher feedback, improved test scores, and being able to take part in a discussion competently with full understanding.
- Pupils feel that they have an opportunity to speak and express an opinion without fear of ridicule or any sense of embarrassment.
- Student numbers on A-Level courses have doubled.

**Results for Summer 2022** - numbers in brackets denote change in performance compared to June 2019 results

**2022 KS4 GCSE RS**

Levels 8-9 = 26.6%

Levels 7-9 = 37.2% (+7%)

Levels 5-9 = 70.7% (+13%)

Levels 4-9 = 79.3% (+8%)

These are a positive set of results, significantly above the national average, and even more so above the national average for boys. It is pleasing to see the continued rise in results at the higher end and to a certain extent the lower end, which suggests that our interventions and approaches this year have paid off. It is also pleasing to see that our SEND & PP students have done equally well, if not better. See SISRA data for further information on all groups.

### **2022 KS5 A Level Results**

2022: 6 candidates - A/A\*=50%, A\*-B= 100%, A\*-C = 100%

2019: 7 candidates - A-A\*= 0%, A\*-B = 42.8%, A\*-C = 71.4%

The data above shows the 2022 results to be an outstanding set of grades, with an increase across the board. The various additional revision sessions, interventions and one to-one support sessions were successful in driving this cohort of pupils to their potential.

It is also important to note that this year we have the highest number of students in a number of years choosing this subject at A-Level. This suggests that the curriculum changes taken by the department in recent years has had a positive impact on the students and their view of this subject. The current uptake in Year 12 is 12 students.

As we seek to continue to improve our results, some of our interventions and improvements to the curriculum to ensure impact are outlined below:

- The Department reviews the curriculum regularly, with topics adapted to suit the needs of the different groups and takes account of local national international cultural events – such as Black Lives Matter, and on Climate Change/COP26/COP27 in 2022-23, the disaster in Pakistan, the impact of war etc. – so that students make the connections between the skills being developed or used and the world around them. This has enabled students to make connections between their lessons and current affairs, and to build on knowledge learned in PSHE, RE, Science, History and Geography. As such, assessment responses have been more developed, and students have felt more confident in completing them.
- The impact of learning is regularly checked through formative and summative assessment. For those not progressing, intervention is explored at an in-class, SEND, and cohort level.
- Where assessments show gaps, the HOD explores reasons for this with the class teacher. Regular informal moderation takes place and changes may be made to the next appropriate unit of work/assessment to better support students. If the gap identified is across several

classes, then changes to the next unit are implemented to ensure greater time is spent on that skill. If the intervention is not engaged with, the HOLs are used to contact home and contact with the SEN department ensures consistency in message and approach.

