

## **Humanities Faculty: Philosophy, Religion and Ethics**

### **Overview of the Curriculum**

#### **Philosophy, Religion and Ethics - Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 & 9)**

At Parmiter's, the KS3 curriculum broadly follows the guidance of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The aim is to ensure that all students develop knowledge and understanding of sources of wisdom and their impact whilst exploring personal and critical responses. PRE provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It challenges students to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

There are 8 key areas that are covered during KS3: Beliefs and Practices, Sources of Wisdom, Symbols and Actions, Prayer, Worship and Reflection, Identity and Belonging, Ultimate Questions, Human responsibility and Values, and Justice and Fairness. These areas are consistently revisited through the study of different religious, philosophical and ethical perspectives as part of our spiralling curriculum.

The dual emphasis is that students should learn from and about religious and non-religious worldviews; assessment of student work is based on these criteria. Year 7 aims to give students a broad grounding in the key beliefs and practices of the world's most followed faiths. As we move through Year 8 and 9, where a range of philosophical and ethical questions, ideas and schools of thought will be encountered, students will apply the religious teachings they have covered in Year 7.

Students are introduced to philosophical concepts such as what it means to be human, why God would allow suffering and what makes a just and fair society. As we move through these topics, both religious and secular philosophical responses will be considered. Students are expected to question their own values and responses to the world they live in. They are encouraged to formulate and express their own views, and are expected to listen carefully and respect the views of others. They are taught to be 'participants' and to be global citizens responding to and being affected by topical issues and news stories - topical issues are also woven into the delivery of the PRE curriculum. The knowledge and understanding developed during KS3 forms a solid foundation for further study at GCSE.

#### **Philosophy, Religion and Ethics GCSE - Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11)**

At GCSE level, we have chosen to study the Edexcel Religious Studies B specification. This qualification allows students to confidently interpret, contextualise and analyse the expressions of religions and world views they encounter. Students focus on key questions around Ethics, Philosophy, Peace and Conflict. They also explore important topics such as marriage and the family, crime and punishment, and matters of life and death.

The specification has a flexible structure, which has allowed us to respond to our students' interests and needs. In this vein, we've opted to focus on the religion of Christianity and Judaism throughout our study, building on prior learning at KS3. Students also explore Humanist viewpoints, Situation ethics and non-religious views such as Utilitarianism. They are also encouraged to use their own religious views or secular beliefs as a comparison.

Throughout this course, students will develop an appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies. They will also develop analytical and critical thinking skills to enable them to present a wide range of well-informed and reasonable arguments, aiding in progression to A Level study. The examination papers are well structured, coherent and accessible for students of all abilities.

### **Philosophy, Religion and Ethics A Level - Key Stage 5 (Years 12 & 13)**

At A Level, we have chosen to study the AQA Philosophy specification. The AQA Philosophy A-level explores fundamental questions across four key areas: Epistemology (theory of knowledge), Moral Philosophy (ethics), Metaphysics of God (arguments for/against God's existence), and Metaphysics of Mind (nature of consciousness). Students develop critical thinking, analytical, and argumentative skills through evaluating classic philosophical texts and constructing their own reasoned judgments.

### **SMSC in Philosophy Religion and Ethics**

Spiritual development in PRE involves the study of World Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at KS3 and in-depth study of Christianity and Judaism at GCSE. Students also study Humanist beliefs and atheist views as part of the GCSE. Teachers plan interesting and diverse lessons with the question of what spirituality is being integral to the PRE scheme of work from the very beginning of year 7. Students take part in reflective activities considering a full range of philosophical, religious and ethical questions.

Moral development in PRE involves learning about the importance of Human Rights, including examples from across the world from when they have been broken. In KS3 students study both religious and enlightenment ethical theories, applying them to a wide range of examples. At GCSE this links with the study of war and conflict to develop an understanding of 'just war theory' and encourages students to develop their own moral framework. Students study crime and punishment, contrasting this with the scriptural message of forgiveness and reconciliation encompassing the Christian approach to behaviour and injustice. At A-level, more advanced ethical concepts are considered and students gain a detailed understanding of normative realist and anti-realist ethical theories and their application.

Social development in PRE involves students considering what it means to be a part of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish communities. Students study the wide variety of religious, cultural and ethnic practices and activities that take place in Britain e.g. religious festivals and cultural events. This encourages students to develop an understanding of the importance of community cohesion and promoting racial harmony. Students reflect on injustice that occurs in Britain and around the world.

Cultural development in PRE involves learning about how the media represent issues e.g. the role of women in different Religions, and how this translates into cultural expectations. Students study the different cultures in the local area, including the contribution of different communities in the local area, and the importance of prayer and significance of, for example, the Mosque in the Muslim community. This develops a consideration of different cultures and the similar/contrasting practices e.g. when Sacraments take place. Students explore the importance of racial harmony and community cohesion and how this is promoted by the school.

Examples of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development in PRE include:

- reflecting on their own beliefs and that of other cultures and religions
- Class debates on, amongst other things, the existence of God, when life begins, the role and importance of the family, the end of life and good and evil
- Class discussion comparing British values and the values of different world religions
- Students consider ethical dilemmas

### Overview of schemes of work at each key stage

<p><b>Key stage 3</b> Throughout this course students develop a knowledge, understanding and appreciation of philosophical and ethical questions and world religions. They reflect, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues throughout all topics.</p> <p><b>Year 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is religion?</li> <li>● Features of the Six World Religions.</li> <li>● Judaism: covenant and mitzvot</li> <li>● Christianity: Miracles, parables.</li> <li>● Christianity: reconciliation</li> <li>● Islam: the six articles of faith and the five pillars</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key stage 4</b> Throughout this course students develop a knowledge, understanding and appreciation of philosophical and ethical questions and different religious views. They reflect, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues throughout all topics.</p> <p><b>Year 10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Christian Beliefs</li> <li>● Jewish Beliefs</li> <li>● Judaism- Attitudes to Marriage and Family</li> <li>● Christian - responses to Crime and Punishment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key stage 5</b> Year 12 will embark on A Level Philosophy, while Year 13 finishes the legacy course in A Level Religious Studies.</p> <p><b>Year 12</b></p> <p><b>Philosophy - Epistemology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is knowledge?</li> <li>● Knowledge from experience</li> <li>● Knowledge from reason</li> <li>● The limits of knowledge</li> </ul>
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### Year 8

- Dharmic faith traditions
- Introduction to philosophical thinking
- Doubt and scepticism, and religious responses
- Philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God
- Big ideas in 20th century philosophy
- Philosophy and alternative faiths: is modern Britain a 'post-religious' society?

### Year 9

- Introduction to ethics
- Ethical theory
- Where do right and wrong come from?
- Environmental and animal ethics
- Current moral dilemmas
- Religious responses to moral dilemmas
- Ethics project

### Year 11

- Living the Christian Life - ceremonies and practices
- Living the Jewish Life - ceremonies and practices
- Christianity - issues of peace and conflict e.g. Pacifism, holy war and issues surrounding conflict
- Judaism - matters of life and death.e.g. abortion, euthanasia, animal rights

### **Moral Philosophy - Ethics**

- Normative ethical theories: Kantian ethics, Utilitarianism, Virtue ethics
- Applied ethics: simulated killing, eating animals, telling lies, stealing
- Moral realism and moral anti-realism
- Meta-ethics

### Year 13

#### **Metaphysics of Mind**

- What do we mean by mind?
- Dualist theories: Substance dualism
- Physicalist theories
- Functionalism
- Dualist theories: property dualism

#### **Metaphysics of God**

- The concept and nature of God
- Religious language
- Arguments relating to the existence of God
  - Ontological arguments
  - Teleological arguments
  - Cosmological arguments
  - Evil and suffering