Religious Studies

Religious Studies (RS) is about enabling one to think for oneself, not about making a person 'religious'. Rather, it is about encouraging pupils to think independently and critically about real-world issues. We make no assumptions or stipulations about a pupil's personal beliefs, except that they will be willing to consider them carefully and, indeed, critically.

Pupils value this subject for its rigour and its relevance; we expect them to engage with the course, and to support their own views soundly. In return, they leave with well-developed reasoning skills and an appreciation that not everyone thinks in the same way!

Component 1: Religion, Beliefs and Teachings

We study two religions from Christianity, and Islam. We cover the major beliefs and teachings of both faiths, and pupils will gain a breadth of knowledge of these religions and their sources of authority, giving them a solid grounding both for Component 2, and in the multi-faith communities that are LGS and the wider world.

Component 2: Thematic Studies

Here we cover theological, ethical, and philosophical issues and their impact on the modern world. In consultation with our pupils, we have chosen to study:

- Relationships and Families.
- Religion and Life.
- Religion, Crime, and Punishment.
- Human Rights and Social Justice.

We discuss a range of weighty ethical and philosophical questions, including, but not limited to:

- Is it ever acceptable to kill?
- What is the value of human life?
- What is the purpose of life?

Assessment

Pupils sit two exams of 1 hour 45 minutes each.

How does RS benefit our pupils?

Universities welcome the evidence that an applicant approaches difficult issues in a clear and open-minded manner, analyses conflicting arguments, understands deeply held moral and religious convictions and expresses their own personal conclusions in a thoughtful and lucid manner. Prospective employers appreciate the emphasis on critical thinking, especially in careers which require an understanding of others, and the ability to relate to people of different backgrounds.

At the Grammar School, in recent years, the subject has been enjoyed by pupils with ambitions as diverse as Medicine, because of the emphasis on ethics; the armed forces; the Law, due to the focus on analytical thinking and justice; journalism; teaching; and the natural sciences. In an increasingly digital world, the subject is also proving valuable for those interested in software development and artificial intelligence, where understanding ethical frameworks, moral responsibility, and human nature is essential in creating technologies that serve society safely and fairly. Several students go on to university to read subjects directly related to Religious Studies and Philosophy, such as Theology, Philosophy, Social Sciences, Politics, and Economics.

"The real problem of humanity is the following: we have Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions, and godlike technology." - E. O. Wilson

At a Glance

Exam Board
AQA

Assessment Type
The course is assessed by two components:
Exam 1 (50%)
Exam 2 (50%)

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