

## **KS4 Overview**

Students who are interested in modern issues, like to ask difficult questions, enjoy discussion, and are prepared to take on different points of view will enjoy and thrive in this course. The GCSE Religious Education course explores how religious and non-religious thinkers have tackled some of the most vital and important questions that face us. As well as studying Christianity students will study Buddhism in depth. This will give them the chance to engage with a very different way of thinking about life and themselves. This insight into two very different belief systems and ways of life will help students to consider different points of view and evaluate their own ideas. These two religions account for almost 40% of the world's population. Studying what those people believe and do will give students a greater understanding of the world they live in.

Once they've examined different religious teachings and beliefs pupils will then explore how those beliefs can be applied to a range of contemporary moral problems and philosophical issues. This includes medical ethics, the environment, war, crime and punishment. Engaging with these issues will help pupils develop critical reasoning, such as how to create and evaluate arguments and how to defend their own views both verbally and in written form. These are essential skills for any pupil wanting to go on to study at A-level and beyond. But more than this, pupils who take the course will gain an in-depth understanding of two of the major world religions, an essential feature of any good general education, and also invaluable in the attempt to better understand the world that they inhabit.

## **Year 11 Overview**

The first unit we study will be Christian practices. This will use students' knowledge of Christian beliefs from Year 10 to learn about different forms of worship, the importance of festivals, the sacraments and the Church in the local and global community. In this unit students apply their knowledge of Christian beliefs to Christian action. This includes why they may worship or pray in different ways, different attitudes to communion and differing views on the role of the Church in the world.

In our second unit we study Buddhist practices. In this unit students apply their knowledge of Buddhist belief to Buddhist action. This includes the importance of worship, meditation and festivals. We then learn about Buddhist ethics, including ideas such as karma. This is a chance for students to explore ideas about right and wrong that may be different from those they are used to in western culture.

We then begin our final two "thematic studies" where we apply the beliefs and practices we learnt about Christianity and Buddhism to the modern world. Students will learn religious, philosophical and ethical arguments about key issues and their impact and influence in the modern world. Our first thematic unit is religion, peace and conflict. In this unit we discuss issues around violence, war, pacifism and weapons of mass destruction. This will include questions on what can justify a war, whether there is a right or wrong way to fight a war and how to respond to the problems caused by war such as the refugee crisis. Students will use religious views and their own ideas to tackle these important modern issues.

In our final unit we study religion, crime and punishment. In this unit we explore issues such as corporal punishment, the reasons for punishment and forgiveness. Students will use Buddhist and Christian teachings to answer questions on a range of issues related to crime and punishment. This includes the justifications punishment, whether the death penalty should be allowed and how crime can best be reduced. This is a chance for students to explore these questions and come to their own views on a key aspect of society.