

RELIGIOUS STUDIES GCSE - EXAM BOARD AQA

SPECIFICATION A – Components 1 and 2 (new specification for teaching from September 2016)

The **new** GCSE will entail an in-depth exploration into the beliefs and practises of specific religions and an exploration into how these beliefs inspire, motivate and influence different attitudes towards ethical contemporary issues. The GCSE will reflect religious traditions but will focus on how these are applied in contemporary British Society.

Component 1 - The Study of Religions, beliefs, teachings and practices

The exam board only require that two religions are studied and assessed but we have chosen to teach the first three religions because they reflect our specialism as teachers and because these religions largely reflect the religious affiliation of our students in the Fortismere School community. In this component, students are studying the influence and impact that religious beliefs have on practises in contemporary Britain.

- **Buddhism**
- **Christianity**
- **Islam**
- Judaism
- Sikhism
- Hinduism

One exam at the end of year 11

Exam will be 1 hour and 45 minutes

Students will choose two religions from

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism

Component 2 - Thematic Studies - Religious, philosophical and ethical theme

These four themes will be studied alongside the traditional and contemporary beliefs of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Humanism.

- **The Existence of God and Revelation** – philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God, the characteristics of God and knowledge of God.
- **Religion and Life** – the origins and value of the universe and the origins and value of human life. Religious teachings and beliefs about animals, the environment, abortion, euthanasia and death.
- **Religion Crime and Punishment** – the various causes of crime, the various aims and attitudes towards punishment.
- **Religion, human rights and social Justice** – Knowledge of Human Rights, justice, equality and freedom of expression. Religious attitudes towards Prejudice and Discrimination and Wealth and Poverty.

One exam at the end of year 11

Exam will be 1 hour and 45 minutes

When answering questions from this paper, students can make reference to **one** religion or **all four** religions **and non-religious beliefs**, such as Humanism.

Modules / units studied / course content - Percentage to the whole GCSE

- One exam on component 1 = 50% of teaching time and 50% of the final marks
- One exam on component 2 = 50% of teaching time and 50% of the final marks.

Main skills covered

- Identifying key teachings that get to the heart of religious traditions and of attitudes towards contemporary moral issues.
- Exploring and evaluating a wide range of religious and secular arguments
- Application of beliefs and teachings to ethical issues
- Critical analysis of how relevant religious beliefs and values are to contemporary moral and social issues
- Textual analysis and ability to identify different Interpretations of scripture and interpretation of a wide variety of attitudes
- Expressing and developing own views using reasoned arguments.

Assessment

Two exams in year 11. Each one is one hour and three quarters.

There are 2 assessments objectives; **A01** which is demonstrating knowledge and understanding, this will be tested on questions that are 1, 2, 4 and 5 mark questions. **A02** demonstrates analysis and evaluation of aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence. This skill is tested on 12 mark questions which require extensive writing in response to a given statement.

Progression

The natural progression for students taking the RS GCSE is the Philosophy A Level. This GCSE will equip students for further study in many related A Level subjects including, Government and Politics, Sociology, History, and English.

Controlled assignments calendar and percentage

This course is assessed by 100% exam. Our strategies for success so far have been:

- Regular and frequent exam practice throughout the two years with teacher feedback
- Completing an exam response after each topic focusing on different elements (timed responses or answering to get maximum marks)
- Group work in completing an exam question
- Group work in marking an exam question
- Emphasis on knowing the mark scheme
- Emphasis on exam skills (such as planning, timing, reading command questions)
- Self-reflection on progress throughout the two year course
- Student generated exam tips
- Reading past responses to exam questions and evaluating them
- Re-writing a response to an exam question if it is unsatisfactory according to the challenging target of the student
- Asking students to attend top up workshops to improve on exam questions or ask for further advice