

‘Wonder is the beginning of wisdom.’

Socrates

Religious Studies at Noel-Baker

In Religious Studies, we want our students to have the opportunity to explore the diverse and multicultural nature of contemporary British Society. At Noel-Baker Academy students will be encouraged in their RS lessons to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses. Whilst the main religious tradition in Great Britain is Christianity, students will also look at world religions, to develop an understanding of how different faiths can help shape our culture, and the impact that it, and religious figures, have had on society. All schemes of learning aim to develop students’ religious literacy, as well as their Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural understanding. Students will also explore non-religious world views, such as Humanism and atheism, to gain a greater understanding of the wider world we live in.

Year 7 RS

Unit 1: Early Beliefs: this unit provides the foundation for all they study at Noel-Baker. They will explore the beginnings of religious belief, starting at animism and shamanism. They will then learn about a variety of ancient and religious beliefs about the existence of a soul. Pupils will also learn about myths within the Ancient Greek culture and their messages.

Unit 2: Old Testament: in the unit pupils at Noel-Baker will learn about what the Bible is and what it consists of. They will then move onto study key concepts based in the Old Testament such as creation, the Fall, sin, sacrifice, and prophecy.

Unit 3: Christianity: in this unit pupils will explore and learn about the main religious tradition in Great Britain. They will learn about Jesus as the founder of the religion, as well as key beliefs such as the Trinity. Pupils will also learn about key practices within Christianity, such as worship and festivals.

Unit 4: Hinduism: in this unit pupils will learn about the origins of Hinduism and key beliefs about God and, karma and life after death. They will also learn about Hindu practices such as worship and two of their most important festivals, Diwali and Holi.

Year 8 RS

Unit 1: Islam: in the unit pupils at Noel-Baker will learn about how Islam as an established religion began, with the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). They will also learn about key beliefs in Islam, including life after death. The Five Pillars of Islam will be studied in relation to how Muslims practice their beliefs.

Unit 2: Buddhism: in this unit pupils will learn about the origins of Buddhism which begins with the story of the Buddha. They will explore and question its key teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Pupils in the academy will also have the opportunity to learn about how Buddhists worship and their most important festival Wesak.

Unit 3: Introduction to Philosophy: pupils will begin this unit by learning about philosophical or ultimate questions. They will explore and challenge some of the philosophical questions that have been debated for centuries, such as 'Is God real?', 'What is the meaning of life?' and 'Why do people suffer?'

Unit 4: Introduction to Ethics: this unit gives pupils at Noel-Baker Academy to discuss and debate ethical issues relevant in contemporary society, such as justice, punishment, forgiveness and extremism. However, the unit begins by learning about absolute and relative morality and finding out about an ethical theory, for example, Utilitarianism.

Year 9 RS

Unit 1: Medical Ethics: in this unit pupils will have the opportunity to learn about, discuss and respond to ethical issues raised by medical and scientific advances. Issues which will be explored are the value of life, abortion, fertility treatment, cloning and euthanasia. Real life case studies are used to open the debate about these issues.

Unit 2: Peace & Conflict: in this unit pupils will learn about the ethical issues and responses to violence, war, pacifism and terrorism. They will learn about religious beliefs and attitudes in relation to these issues, and evaluate responses, such as the 'just war theory' and conscientious objectors.

Unit 3: The Holocaust: in this unit pupils will learn about the systematic prejudice and discrimination of the Jews in Germany in the 20th Century, and how this led to the Nuremberg Laws and eventually the Final Solution. Pupils in Noel-Baker will also learn about Holocaust survivors and responses to genocide. This unit will be taught in conjunction with the History department's unit on the Second World War.

Unit 4: Philosophy: in this unit pupils will learn in more depth responses to philosophical questions. They will learn about the 'design argument' and the argument from miracles for the existence of God. They will also learn about the challenges from science, as well as from evil and suffering to these arguments. There will also be the opportunity to learn about the psychologist Freud and his view that religion is childish wishful thinking.

Key stage 4 RS

Pupils who opt for RS will sit AQA GCSE Religious Studies at the end of year 11. Component 1 of the GCSE course provides pupils with an in depth study of two of the world's major religions, Christianity and Islam. In these they will learn about their key beliefs and practices. Component 2 will allow pupils to explore and apply beliefs and worldviews to 4 ethical and philosophical themes. Both of these components allow pupils to build on their knowledge from Key Stage 3.

There are two 1 hour and 45 minutes examinations. One exam is on Component 1 and the other on Component 2. Component 1 will assess the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam. Component 2 will assess the four themes studied.

Yr10

Unit 1 Islam Beliefs: in this unit pupils will learn key terminology in relation to the main beliefs of Islam. They will learn about the nature of God, beliefs about angels, predestination and about life after death. Pupils will also learn about Muslim beliefs about prophethood, focussing on the Prophets Adam, Ibrahim and Muhammad.

Unit 2 Islam Practices: in this unit pupils will learn about the practices of Islam. This includes learning about all Five Pillars of Islam, such as Salah, Sawm, Zakah and Hajj. They will learn about the different practices of Sunni and Shi'a Muslims in this unit. The beliefs and practices of Jihad and the key religious festivals of Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr and Ashura will also be studied.

Unit 3 Christian Beliefs: in this unit pupils will learn key terminology in relation to the main beliefs of Christianity. They will learn about the nature of God, beliefs about Jesus, such as his crucifixion and resurrection, and they will also learn differing ideas about creation. They unit will additionally look at beliefs relating to the afterlife, sin and salvation.

Unit 4 Christian Practices: in this unit pupils will learn about the practices of Christianity. This includes how Christians worship, pray and where they go on pilgrimage. They will learn about baptism and Holy Communion as sacraments. Pupils will also learn how Christians put their beliefs into practice, for example, food banks, street pastors and responding to persecution and poverty.

Yr11

Unit 5 Theme A – Relationships and Families: in this unit pupils will learn ethical issues and religious beliefs regarding sexuality, relationships before and outside of marriage contraception, marriage and divorce. They will also explore the nature and purpose of families and learn about religious attitudes to gender equality.

Unit 6 Theme B – Religion & Life: in this unit pupils will study beliefs and ideas about the origins of the universe and human life. They will explore the ethical issues raised by the use and abuse of the world and animals by humans, and understand how religious teachings have been applied to such issues. This unit also looks at the ethical issues of abortion and euthanasia.

Unit 7 Theme D – Peace & Conflict: in this unit pupils will learn ethical issues and religious beliefs regarding violence, protests, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and pacifism. They will also learn about reasons for war, debate if religion is a cause of war, as well as learning about how religions have responded to war, including the Just War Theory.

Unit 8 Theme E – Crime & Punishment: in this unit pupils will learn about reasons for crime and attitudes to law breakers. The aims of punishment and how we punish criminals will be studied with a focus on religious responses. They will also explore religious attitudes to suffering, forgiveness and the death penalty.

Religious Studies Enrichment activities

In year 9 pupils in Noel-Baker will be given the opportunity to visit the National Holocaust Centre in Newark. This will be a joint visit with the History department which links together and builds upon the RS unit of the Holocaust and the History unit of the Second World War.

At the end of Yr10, pupils who have opted for GCSE RS will have the opportunity to visit the places of worship for the two religions being studied. This is a visit ran through the Derby Open Centre.

Religious Studies

Further studies and career progression

Universities look favourably on the A Level qualification in Religious Studies. Knowledge of other cultures and world religious beliefs can be useful in many jobs where you are working with the public or communities. These include counselling and social services, marketing, sales and advertising, catering and hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism, retail sales and customer services, education and training, medicine and nursing, and service sector roles.