

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT GCSE

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?



# WHY STUDY R.S.?

- Studying a GCSE in Religious Studies will help students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to engage in debate and discussion about life in a modern multi-faith society. This includes developing an understanding of non-religious beliefs.
- They will be encouraged to explore their personal values and beliefs, with an emphasis on critical analysis and the ability to construct balanced and informed arguments within the context of religious, philosophical and ethical awareness.
- Students do not need to be religious to enjoy and excel at GCSE Religious Studies.
- **Religious Studies helps students develop the skills that will prepare them for a diverse range of career paths in fields such as law, journalism, business, medicine, the police, emergency services and military, education, social work and caring professions and many more.**

# GCSE RS SUPPORTS STUDENTS TO...

- **Communicate** their ideas clearly and interpret and understand those of other people.
- **Think critically** about important issues and decisions.
- **Analyse** different viewpoints or options and **evaluate** which one is best.
- **Make decisions** and **justify** their decisions effectively.
- **Work independently** and **collaborate** with colleagues.
- **Respect** and **understand themselves and others** in a diverse world.
- **Resolve conflicts.**

# GCSE VS CORE RS...

- At HGS Religious Studies is an options subject meaning students do not have to study for a GCSE in it.
- Students who choose to take the GCSE will have 5 periods of GCSE RS a fortnight.
- However, Religious Studies is a statutory subject so all students also have one hour lesson a fortnight, even if they do not take the GCSE. We call this CORE RS. In Core RS students will develop valuable skills which will support their progress and achievement in other subjects and in their lives outside of school, as well as securing knowledge and understanding about different faiths, exploring ethical issues, and considering their own perspective on spirituality.

# ASSESSMENT

- The GCSE course is assessed through three examinations at the end of year 11.
- Two of the examinations are 1 hour long, and one exam is 2 hours long.
- There is no coursework.
- In these examinations students will answer questions ranging from 3 marks to 15 marks, and their spelling, grammar and punctuation and quality of written expression will also be assessed.
- Throughout years 10 and 11 students will regularly develop their ability to tackle exam questions through lesson activities, home learning and assessments with detailed feedback provided to ensure they have the best possible preparation to excel in the final exams.

# EXAM OVERVIEW...

| Component   | Details  | Weighting   |
|---|--|-------------|
| Beliefs, Teachings & Practices 1                    | Christianity (J625/01)<br>1 hour paper, 63 marks                         | 25% of GCSE |
| Beliefs, Teachings & Practices 2                    | Islam (J625/02)<br>1 hour paper, 63 marks                                | 25% of GCSE |
| Religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world | From the perspective of Christianity (J625/06)<br>2 hour exam, 126 marks | 50% of GCSE |

# BELIEFS, TEACHINGS & PRACTICES IN CHRISTIANITY

- **1: Beliefs and Teachings:** students will explore the nature of God for Christians, the concept of Trinity, Biblical accounts of creation, the problem of evil and suffering, the person of Jesus (including his teachings, role, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension), the concept of salvation and beliefs about life after death.
- **2: Practices:** students will examine practices including worship, sacraments, prayer, the importance of pilgrimage and festivals, the role of the church in the local community and living practices, mission and the role of the church in the wider world.



# BELIEFS, TEACHINGS & PRACTICES IN CHRISTIANITY

- Students will consider different interpretations by different Christian denominations, and will look at sources of wisdom and authority such as Biblical teachings which support these understandings.
- Visits to the local church and the cathedral will help to support students' understanding and enable them to locate their learning in context.
- Guest speakers are also invited in to give students an insight into particular concepts and practices.



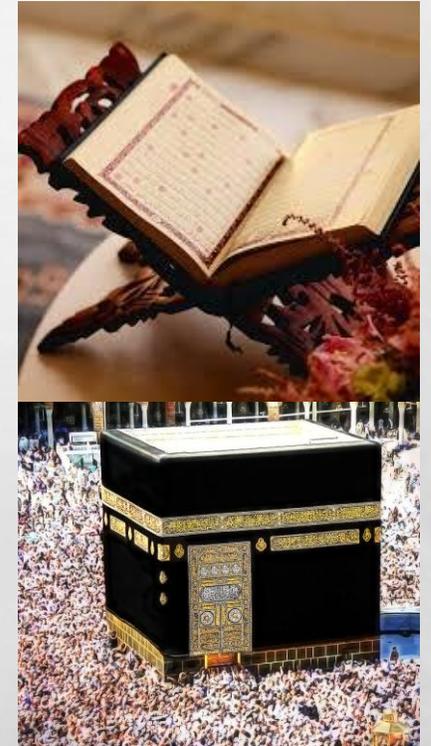
# BELIEFS, TEACHINGS & PRACTICES IN ISLAM

- **1: Beliefs and Teachings:** students will explore the core beliefs of Islam including the nature of Allah, the importance of prophethood, the Qur'an and holy books, angels, and eschatological beliefs (about the Judgement Day and life after death)
- **2: Practices:** students will examine practices including public and private acts of worship, the five pillars of Islam, festivals and special days and the concept of Jihad.



# BELIEFS, TEACHINGS & PRACTICES IN ISLAM

- Students will consider interpretations and emphases given to sources of wisdom and authority by different Muslim groups, and will look at sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith and Sunnah.
- Visiting a Muslim place of worship will enable students to gain first hand experience of the concepts and practices which they have been learning about in lessons.



# RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS IN THE MODERN WORLD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTIANITY

- **1: Relationships and Families:** Exploring Christian views on fidelity, sexuality and ethical modes of relationship, roles of men and women, equality and the influence of culture on beliefs.
- **2: The existence of God:** Looking at the nature of God, the problem of evil, the nature of reality, arguments for the existence of God, the purpose of life and ethical living, religious experiences and miracles.

# RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS IN THE MODERN WORLD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTIANITY

- **3: Religion, Peace and Conflict:** Attitudes to war and violence, Just War Theory, pacifism and the value of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation
- **4: Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes:** Looking at challenges for religions including secularism, science and others; dialogue, within and between religious and non-religious groups, freedom of expression and diversity.

# COMMENTS FROM PAST STUDENTS...

- *“In the 21st century our community is becoming ever more diverse so we need to learn about and work with people with different beliefs and values and understand each other. RS GCSE teaches you how to structure essays and how to have a civilised argument (debate!) and that's a good skill to have in life.”*
- *“RS is one of the most respected subjects if you are looking at higher education. It's been a good journey to year 11 and the techniques I have learned help with all my other subjects.”*
- *“When people ask me what I did at GCSE/A Level and I say 'Religious Studies', they always assume it was an easy subject that I sailed through. Nothing has developed me more in terms of how I think and interact with others and it's the subject I'll miss and value the most.”*

# COMMENTS FROM PAST STUDENTS...

- *“There is no other subject that engages with philosophical problems, ethical dilemmas and the ever-progressing world of today as much as Religious Studies does. It is more than looking at the practices and principles of different religions, rather it is about finding answers to the universe’s greatest questions and forming beliefs of your own.”*
- *“Studying R.S. enabled me to discuss current and past ethical issues in a safe environment with dedicated teachers. Being able to debate with fellow students gave me the confidence to have a greater impact on my school in general, helping me achieve my role on the School Captains Team where discussing my views with others was vital.”*