

OCL R.E. Curriculum: Statement of Intent

Purpose of study

RE examines what it is to be human in the modern world, engaging directly with the questions at the heart of the Oasis Ethos – Who Am I and Who Am I Becoming – in addition to the deep questions on meaning and purpose that have consumed human beings since the beginning of time. The OCL RE Curriculum enables pupils to understand what RE *is* and how it can be used as tool through which to understand the world around us (both the world that we can see and the world that we cannot). In doing so RE will naturally contribute significantly to the SMSC education of pupils.

Through a carefully constructed multi-disciplinary curriculum which honours the individual academic lenses of RE, our students will develop the knowledge and skills to explore the ways in which different worldviews (including religion, belief and philosophy) can be used to explore and analyse the big questions about life, for example ‘what does it mean to be human?’.

The ambitious and aspirational OCL RE Curriculum will prepare pupils for successful life in culturally complex modern Britain, whilst providing the knowledge and skills to access further study at GCSE and beyond.

We value character, competence and community in our curriculum, and seek opportunities to meaningfully demonstrate these virtues through a knowledge rich, diverse and inclusive curriculum. Below is a representative (but not exhaustive) list of the myriad of ways in which RE honours the three ambitious intentions of the OCL Curriculum:

Character

Engaging all pupils in a curriculum that develops sensitivity, an understanding of what informs our morality and a sense of true tolerance - where diversity is championed and celebrated as the factor which brings colour, brilliance and interest to society. The confidence, composure and philosophical articulacy to engage in meaningful discussion about Big Questions. To contribute to the personal development of pupils by enabling them to explore deep questions of purpose, meaning and human behaviour. To challenge pupils to not only look within and explore the morals that define them, but to also listen to those which define others. In doing these things RE enables pupils to understand important things about themselves as human beings growing into and becoming part of the modern world. Here the 9 Habits provides a foundation and filter through which to examine core content in addition to a mechanism through which to discipline discussion.

Competence

The ability to describe religious practice, explain religious beliefs, teachings and attitudes, analyse sources of authority (for example sacred texts) and evaluate responses to questions of meaning, belief, purpose and ethics based upon belief and culture. The OCL RE curriculum will enable pupils to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to debate, discuss and argue about Big Questions of human existence be them theological, philosophical, ethical or social.



Community

An understanding of what it is to be human – a sense of identity and belonging to their local community as well as a sense of being a global citizen. A clear understanding of their own role and responsibilities within their communities, and the ability to see themselves as participants in and champions of the transformation of attitudes – which in turn will transform communities. An understanding of the role that faith, belief and practice play in shaping the identity of both citizens and communities. An understanding of how religion and faith unite global communities and positively contribute to the development of individual and communal character.

Core Concepts

Core Concepts for the OCL RE Curriculum fall into three broad categories, which can be best summarised as substance, tools and lenses:

Substantive knowledge and understanding of worldviews [‘substance’]

This category refers to the ‘substance’ of religious and non-religious worldviews. Within this the traditional attainment target of ‘learning about’ is honoured. It is important to note here that representations of traditions and worldviews must be honest representations of lived realities, not simplistic or over-homogenised representations. Areas include:

- The different ways that people express religion and non-religion in their lives, including diverse lived experiences and the complexity of the fluid boundaries between different traditions
- Knowledge about artefacts and texts associated with different religious and non-religious traditions
- Concepts that relate to religious and non-religious worldviews, such as ‘dharma’, ‘incarnation’, ‘ritual’, ‘authority’, ‘prayer’ and ‘sacred’, and debates around these big ideas
- Concepts that are common to religious and non-religious experience (such as ‘interpretation’); concepts that are common to multiple forms of religious experience (such as ‘sanctity of life’) concepts specific to a religious tradition (such as the Christian notion of ‘Trinity’)

Ways of Knowing [‘tools’]

Pupils will develop an understanding of how we know about religious and non-religious worldviews and be both cognisant of and able to apply different methods of exploring and analysing religious traditions. Essentially, this concept is about the *tools* of RE. This concept is important because it plays a key role in avoiding the oversimplification or misrepresentation of different religious traditions and worldviews; in addition to providing added scholastic rigour.

- knowledge of methods, processes and other tools of scholarship that are used to study and make sense of global and historical religion/non-religion; for example hermeneutics.
- knowledge of the modes of enquiry that academic communities have about religion/non-religion; for example the work of social scientists, ethnography, historical reconstruction, etc.

Personal Knowledge ['lenses']

Personal knowledge has been described by 'knower-knowledge', 'personal worldview', 'reflexivity' and 'positionality'. All of these descriptors need de-mystifying somewhat. Essentially, this concept is about personal lenses – a pupils' viewpoint, position or perspective. These lenses shift and develop over time, and are affected by personal experience, including faith membership, culture, education, and so on.

- Building awareness of pupils' own assumptions and values about the content they study
- Curriculum and pedagogy that teaches from a position of neutrality and is not inducting pupils to adopt any specific worldview
- Opportunities through relevant themes of enquiry (eg: medical ethics) for pupils to explore the foundation of their own personal viewpoints.

We know that the RE domain is huge and expansive and we cannot teach it all. We want to give pupils access to a curriculum that provides strong knowledge and understanding of the Abrahamic traditions (focusing on Christianity) and focused exposure to a complimentary Dharmic worldview. Alongside this so called 'non-faith' worldviews will be examined through the exploration of Humanism. Our aim here is to develop cumulatively sufficient knowledge of the nature and diversity of selected worldviews and traditions, whilst providing added depth through the examination of key themes of enquiry.

Knowledge and understanding of the selected religious worldviews, philosophical and social science concepts are developed overtime. Pupils are challenged not just to learn about but also to learn from and through the study of religion, faith practice, philosophy and ethics. As such, developmentally appropriate themes (rooted in 'Big Questions') are planned into each Year at KS3, enabling pupils to utilise and deploy knowledge and understanding of religion, faith, belief and practice from previous themes as building-blocks to inform and contextualise study.

End Points

Through our carefully sequenced and ambitious curriculum we intend that our curriculum will equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding to:

- Use and deploy a wide range of theological, philosophical and social science specialist terminologies,
- Use and deploy a range of theological, philosophical and social science tools through which to investigate the Big Questions of the curriculum
- Through cumulatively sufficient knowledge of Abrahamic Faiths and one Dharmic worldview, describe practice, explain teachings and analyse diversity
- Explore the ways in which belief and practice differ both between and within religions,
- Discuss, explore and question core concepts, religious teachings and practices, such as the sanctity of life,
- Discuss, reflect upon and develop arguments about key theological questions, such as *what do faith stories tell us about God?*
- Discuss, reflect upon and develop arguments about key philosophical questions, such as *can we convincingly argue that God exists?*
- Discuss, reflect upon and develop arguments about key social science questions, such as *does religion really generate social justice?*
- Discuss, reflect upon and develop arguments about key moral questions, such as *is all life equally special?*
- Develop an understanding of personal lenses and perspectives that affect our own worldviews