

Subject Curriculum Intent: RPE

Definition of the Subject:

"RE gets to the heart of what it means to be a human, to live and to be a part of this amazing, wonderful planet. It provides a framework and a structure to help students unpick the big questions of religious belief and practice, of life and death, of society and culture, of morality and philosophy – all the things that make us human and help us to understand the shared identity of what it means to be human." (Louise Hutton and Dawn Cox).

RPE makes an enormous contribution to SMSC, developing not just academic skills in students but also self-knowledge, moral courage and empathy. "RE is like the Tardis. Despite the small space it occupies in the curriculum, it is huge, encompassing nothing less than humanity's most searching questions, its deepest hopes, the history of the world's beliefs and their diverse manifestation in the modern world." NATRE.

Nature of RPE:

The study of RPE can be divided into substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge. Substantive content includes different ways that people express religion and non-religion in their lives and knowledge about artefacts and texts. Also critical is understanding the key concepts within the subject; ideas such as belief, truth or moral code. Allowing these topics to be built gradually through a spiral curriculum is critical to student's growth in RPE.

Alongside this development of substantive content, disciplinary knowledge is appropriately taught and is not isolated from the content and concepts that pupils learn. Disciplinary knowledge refers to the different ways that pupils learn how it is possible to explore the substantive knowledge. Pupils need to learn 'how to know' in RPE. The disciplines largely used in the RPE curriculum are Theology, Philosophy and Social Science. Using these disciplines recognises that there are different ways of approaching similar topics and different types of questions that can be asked about similar topics.

Through the RPE curriculum, pupils also build personal knowledge. When pupils study RPE, they do so 'from a position.' This position is their viewpoint or perspective on the world which is influenced by their values, prior experiences and their own sense of identity. The RPE curriculum builds pupil's awareness of their own assumptions and values about the content that they study.

Purpose of RPE

"In Religious Education, pupils enter into a rich discourse about the religious and non-religious traditions that have shaped Great Britain and the world. RE enables pupils to take their place within a diverse multi-religious and multi-secular society. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It affords pupils both the opportunity to see the religion and non-religion in the world, and the opportunity to make sense of their own place in that world." (Research Review: Religious Education – OFSTED 2021).

The principal aim of RPE is to produce pupils who are religiously literate, by exploring what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own worldview and ways of living.

Design of RPE:

The RPE curriculum provides a balance between three disciplines:

- Theology
- Philosophy
- Social Science

We have designed a curriculum which:

- Is well sequenced where learning is built on previous learning.
- Makes use of teachers as models.
- Uses key vocabulary to extend learners.
- Uses strategic assessment.
- Supports engagement and recall by including Do It Now's at the start of each lesson which tests students on their short and long term memory.

Extension of RPE:

The subject of RPE is intertwined with rich cultural capital: students are given the opportunity to evaluate, reflect on and connect the beliefs and practices studied, allowing them to challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking; discerning possible connections between these and their own lives and ways of understanding the world.

In order to further enhance student's learning and develop cultural capital, they are given the opportunity to visit places of worship in the local area and Exeter during their study of the KS3 curriculum.

The subject of RPE offers many opportunities for further study in the fields of Theology, Philosophy, Social Sciences and Politics.

Qualifications in Religious Studies lend themselves to a number of careers including Education, Medicine, civil service, social research, Law and Politics.

Further information can be obtained from Ms Roberts –
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