



KING JAMES'S  
SCHOOL  
KNARESBOROUGH

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW RELIGIOUS STUDIES & PHILOSOPHY

2025/26

At King James's School we believe that Religious Studies and Philosophy are critical subjects for students to learn. Religious Education has never been more relevant, engaging, or challenging as religion and religious issues are in the news every day. For students to understand our constantly changing world they need to be able to interpret religious issues and evaluate their significance. Religious Education gives students valuable insights into the diverse beliefs and opinions held by people today. It helps with their own personal development and supports an understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural questions that surface again and again in their lives. In tackling difficult questions it provides students with insight that can work to challenge stereotypes, promote cohesion, and tackle extremism. Religious Education does important work encouraging young people to value themselves and the communities within which they live.

Throughout the school we seek to help students develop a sensitive, reflective and informed approach to the religious dimensions of life, and to instil a genuine, open-minded curiosity in the diversity of religious beliefs. There are many opportunities offered both inside and outside the classroom for students to see that Religious Studies matter.

Our **Key Stage 3** course includes themes such as belief, theological and philosophical concepts of God, monotheism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Biblical and Qur'anic literacy, living the religious life; its beliefs and practices, polytheism and Dharmic faiths, philosophical questions about belief, science and religion, good and evil, human rights, and other moral, ethical, spiritual and cultural issues raised by religion. World religions are covered in varying depths. Progress is assessed by the school's KS3 assessment policy and links to the local agreed syllabus guidelines. Great emphasis is given to substantive and disciplinary knowledge of faith and learning from the religions we study; questioning their impact in an historical and modern society.

At **Key Stage 4** students may opt to take GCSE Ethics, Religion and Life. The students follow the Edexcel B Religious Studies: Beliefs in Action specification (9-1). The topics are studied from the viewpoint of Christianity and Islam and also a non-religious viewpoint. Students are encouraged to use logical reasoning in their answers and to build up an argument supported by evidence - whatever their personal view on the religious or moral issue. Students are also encouraged to express their own opinions and to look at ethical questions from both sides of an argument. The course explores a range of philosophical, ethical and moral issues and various ways of expressing the Christian and Muslim faith.

At **Key Stage 5** students may opt to take A Level Philosophy and Ethics. The students follow the Edexcel A Level Religious Studies specification. Students will explore key themes in philosophy and religion such as philosophical issues and questions; the nature and influence of religious experience; problems of evil and suffering; religious language; works of key philosophers and scholars; influences of developments in religious belief and key themes in religious ethics such as significant concepts in issues or debates in religious ethics; a study of three ethical theories; application of ethical theories to issues of importance; ethical language; deontology, virtue ethics and the works of philosophers and scholars; medical ethics; beginning and end of life issues. Students will also study the philosophical and theological issues of Christianity.