



Curriculum Overview – PTE

PTE has an interesting place in the curriculum as it is both a legally required subject across the age range and an optional subject at GCSE and A-Level.

Students come to us with a whole variety of skills and knowledge from home, religious lessons, and primary school. Our student intake is diverse and many students have a knowledge or faith of their own. Primary schools can vary greatly in the emphasis they put upon religious studies and philosophy. In the few cases where Philosophy is taught it tends to be in the form of P4C (Philosophy for Children) events. Religious studies tends to take the form of exploring the basic beliefs and festivals of various religions. In faith schools there may be a focus on only one religion. Students report a wide variety of feelings about the PTE/RE teaching they received at primary school. We can assume very little at the start of Y7.

In Y7 and Y8 we aim to provide some breadth of knowledge of the world religions at the same time as developing key philosophical, ethical and theological skills. These skills are Knowledge and Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation, and Connecting and Appreciating and are designed to reflect both the legal requirement and the skills needed to do well at GCSE, A-Level and beyond. We aim to link the knowledge and skills to lively current topics. For example, in Y8 our students take part in our award winning Sports Ethics scheme of work in which concepts from Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are related to ethical issues in sport such as cheating, violence, the use of animals, and how a religious person might respond when their sport seems to clash with their religious practice. Analytical and evaluative skills are developed in engagement with Big philosophical questions in Y7 and in topics concerning truth in Y8.

One of the most important things we ask from our PTE curriculum is that it develop our students' ability to engage well with others who hold very different beliefs than their own. In making fruitful connections with others, we learn to live in a multicultural society whilst being true to our own philosophical or religious identity. In our Y7 Religious Diversity topic we look at religion from a worldwide, countrywide and school-wide perspective. We discuss what it might be like to have a very visible religious identity at these levels, looking at the 5Ks of Sikhism in this context. In the Y8 Rites of Passage topic students look at what may seem like extreme or strange rituals and challenge the idea that these are 'alien' by participating in their own ritual based around their own personal values. Looking at Jewish and Hindu coming of age ceremonies also assists in this.

At Y9 through to GCSE we study the AQA Religious Studies GCSE we narrow our focus and specialise in Christianity and Islam. We also look at secular ideas and philosophical influences to complement and challenge the religious viewpoints. A good understanding of Christianity is vital to understand the history and culture of the UK and is supportive in all humanities subjects and beyond at GCSE and A-Level. Other religious viewpoints and philosophical ideas are always welcome and can be used at GCSE. In studying Islam we understand a faith which is well represented at Pate's and often misunderstood in the media. GCSE students will look at how Christians, Muslims and themselves respond to issues such as abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, the importance of family, contraception, equality, free speech, and war. The skills and knowledge gained in Y7 and Y8 help students to be open to the views of others and use their analytical skills to break down complex ideas and evaluate them. They will be able to challenge these views with philosophical and religious ideas in order

to come to their own well-reasoned conclusion. This kind of independence and space for difference is part of why students can develop their confidence and self-awareness during GCSE, just as they began in KS3.

CORE RE in Y10 and Y11 provides the spiritual and philosophical exploration that all students are entitled to by law. It is not the same as the GCSE and takes a very different form. These lessons take a thematic approach and build on our strands in KS3. Students will encounter religious and philosophical ideas through issues such as use of social media, addiction, human rights, revelation and many more. The lessons include plenty of discussion and visual media. The students will be strongly challenged in these lessons in terms of their intellect and their self-awareness. We aim to cover a variety of world religions in the CORE provision since the GCSE and A-Level are necessarily more specialised.

At A-Level we study the OCR Religious Studies course with exams in Philosophy, Ethics and Christian Theology. This will build on the religious and philosophical understanding and the analytical and evaluative skills of KS3 and GCSE. The OCR course provides a good grounding for degrees in Philosophy, Theology, Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics, PPE, Liberal Arts and combined degrees of all sorts. Our students also find it gives them a great advantage when going on to study law and medicine. Recent reports from past students indicate that Jurisprudence is a lot easier when you've studied ethical theories in Y12, and that A-Level ethics is exceedingly useful in medical ethics modules. The ability to put together a precise, concise and logical argument with reference to essential theory is a skill that has wide application in a broad range of further study.

A-Level students will keep the breadth of Philosophy, Theology and Ethics within their study, whilst going into much deeper thinking than at GCSE. Topics may be revisited and GCSE students can build on what they have learnt. However, it is not necessary to have the GCSE in order to pick up in Y12. The range of topics include everything from traditional philosophical debates such as the Mind Body problem and the nature of language, to Gender Theology and Business Ethics. A-Level is a time when the curriculum becomes circular and the more the students study, the more they can see links across the three subject areas. Those who go on to specialise in Philosophy will have a humanity and breadth to their thinking, whilst those who go on to study in areas of Theology and Religious Studies will have a philosophical clarity to their work. The study of ethics is potentially the most life-changing for students as the work is never simply academic and students and staff are constantly challenged to evaluate their own ethical thinking and practice.

Key Stage 3

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Big Questions	Sports Ethics	The Nature of God
Religion in the UK	Rites of Passage	The Existence of God
Spirited Arts	Meaning, truth and purpose	Relationships, Sexuality and Family

Key Stage 4 – AQA Religious Studies A

Year 10	Year 11
Religion and Life	Human Rights and Social Justice
Death and the afterlife	Religious responses to global problems
Crime and Punishment	Revelation
Worship	
Religion, Peace and Conflict	

Key Stage 5 – OCR Religious Studies A Level

Year 12	Year 13
Ancient Philosophical Influences	Conscience
Soul, Mind and Body	Euthanasia
Arguments based on observation	Business Ethics
Arguments based on reason	Religious Pluralism and Theology/Society
Augustine's teaching on human nature	The challenge of Secularism
Death and the afterlife	Liberation Theology and Marx
Meta-ethics	Sexual Ethics
Absolutism and Relativism	Gender and Theology/Society
Natural Law	Christian moral principles
Situation Ethics	Christian moral action
Kantian Ethics	Knowledge of God's existence
Utilitarianism	The person of Jesus
Religious Language	Religious Experience
Twentieth Century Perspectives	Problem of Evil
Attributes of God	