

The Religious Studies and Philosophy Curriculum

Whole School Curriculum Intent:	Wallington County Grammar School is a highly academic but pastorally minded school which delivers a curriculum that enables all students to embody our motto - <i>Per Ardua ad Summa</i>, Through Difficulties to the Heights. Each Subject Leader has autonomy over their own curriculum and its intent, i.e. its subject content, skills content, sequencing and assessment schedule. This is vital to ensure the academic curriculum is designed by highly qualified subject experts. The intentions behind whole school approach to curriculum design taken by senior leaders are to provide: ● Breadth - We intend to provide a broad, academic and liberal curriculum that equips students with the body of human knowledge and different ways of thinking necessary to succeed in and enjoy their education, careers and wider lives. ● Depth - We do not want our students to simply study the national curriculum and examination specifications with grades being our sole focus. We aim for our students to become true scholars of the disciplines that they are learning so that they achieve a deep and sophisticated level of knowledge and understanding. ● Values - We aim for our students to develop our four core values: commitment, courage, compassion and creativity. ● Democracy - We aim for all our students to have the necessary knowledge and confidence, not just to participate in the democracy of the United Kingdom, but to lead it.
Subject Curriculum Intent:	Our RS & Philosophy curriculum provides students with access to powerful knowledge: the conceptual frameworks, canonical texts, and critical arguments that allow them to understand religion and philosophy as disciplines, not just as opinions. Students encounter the core ideas and practices of major world religions, the ethical systems and philosophical traditions that shape human thought, and the key debates about truth, morality, God, and mind that continue to animate scholarship. Through this, they learn to interpret diverse worldviews with intellectual charity, argue with precision, and apply abstract ideas to pressing contemporary issues. The curriculum equips them with specialised language and concepts – from <i>karma</i> and <i>nirvana</i> to <i>utilitarianism</i>, <i>virtue ethics</i>, <i>scepticism</i>, and <i>dualism</i> – that give them entry into debates across theology, ethics, and philosophy of mind. We aim for all students not only to think critically, write analytically, and speak persuasively, but also to participate in the “great conversation” of humanity: asking enduring questions, weighing competing arguments, and forming reasoned judgements. In doing so, they develop the intellectual courage to question, the compassion to understand, and the creativity to imagine new possibilities – embodying our core values of commitment, courage, compassion, and creativity.

Subject Curriculum Aims:	· Build secure substantive knowledge of major religious and non-religious worldviews (KS3), progressing to depth in Christianity and Buddhism (GCSE), and advanced analytic philosophy (A-level). · Develop disciplinary thinking: using sources of wisdom and authority, comparing interpretations, constructing and evaluating arguments, and applying ethical frameworks. · Secure ambitious literacy: precise use of key terms, extended writing, and oral reasoning through structured debate and presentational talk. · Prepare students for public examinations and further study through explicit instruction, interleaving retrieval practice, and responsive teaching.
GCSE Examination Specifications:	GCSE (AQA Religious Studies A: Paper 1—Study of Religions (Christianity & Buddhism); Paper 2—Thematic Studies (four themes). Each paper 1h45; 50% of GCSE.
A Level Examination Specifications:	A-level (AQA Philosophy, code 7172): Paper 1—Epistemology & Moral Philosophy; Paper 2—Metaphysics of God & Metaphysics of Mind. Each paper 3h; 50% of A-level.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Y7	Hinduism: Core Beliefs & Identity - Origins and diversity; Brahman, atman, dharma, karma, samsara, moksha - Worship and community: mandir, home puja; Diwali (intro) - Sources: Bhagavad Gita and epic narratives (Ramayana/Mahabharata)	Hinduism: Practice & Ethics - Ashrama/varnashrama as duty and debate; ahimsa; environmental ethics - Festivals and rites of passage; living Hinduism in the UK	Judaism: Covenant, Law & People - Abrahamic covenant; Torah, mitzvot and Ten Commandments - Shabbat, synagogue life; Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur	Judaism: Lived Religion - Life cycle rituals; diversity within Judaism; Judaism in Britain - Skills: interpreting texts and symbolism	Islam: Beliefs (Aqidah) - Tawhid, angels, holy books, prophets; Muhammad (pbuh) as final prophet - Akhirah: accountability and afterlife; Sunni/Shi'a overview	Islam: Practices (Ibadah) Five Pillars; Ramadan and Eid; mosque as a community hub
	Assessment 1 Format:	45-minute short-answer & MCQ paper		Assessment 2 Format:	50-minute short-answer & MCQ paper	
Y8	Ethical Theories—Foundations - Meta-ethics lite: facts vs values; moral disagreement - Normative frameworks: utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, virtue ethics - Case warm-ups (lying, stealing, fairness)	Ethical Theories—Applied Cases - Eating animals, simulated killing in media, stealing for need, telling hard truths - Reason-giving and counter-example drills; writing a mini-position paper	Mindscapes—Introduction to Philosophy - What is philosophy? Conceptual analysis and thought experiments - Personal identity and free will: Ship of Theseus, Locke's memory theory	Knowledge & Reality - Perception (appearance vs reality), illusions; scepticism and responses - Basic logic: arguments, validity/soundness; building an argument	Comparative Religion—Belief, Practice, Ethics Cross-tradition lenses: authority, ritual, community, ethics	Comparative Religion—Project & Showcase Student-led comparative inquiry (choice of theme)

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
	Assessment 1 Format:	45-minute scenario-based paper + MCQs		Assessment 2 Format:	60-minute paper, including both longer answers and MCQs	
Y9	Christianity — Beliefs Nature of God, Trinity, creation, incarnation and atonement, salvation, afterlife, problem of evil.	Christianity—Beliefs - God as omnipotent, omnibenevolent, just; Trinity; creation; incarnation and atonement - Eschatology and final judgement; problem of evil (intro)	Christianity -- Practices - Worship, prayer and sacraments (incl. baptism/holy communion) - Role of the Church in the local and worldwide community	Christianity -- Practices - Worship, prayer and sacraments (incl. baptism/holy communion) - Role of the Church in the local and worldwide community	Buddhism—Beliefs - The Buddha's life; dukkha, anicca, anatta; Four Noble Truths - Theravada/Mahayana perspectives; arhat vs bodhisattva ideals	Buddhism—Practices - Meditation (samatha/vipassana), puja, dana; monastic and lay practice - Festivals and pilgrimage; ethics: Five Precepts
	Assessment 1 Format:	Assessment: 60-minute paper (mini GCSE style)		Assessment 2 Format:	Assessment: 60-minute paper (mini GCSE style)	
Y10	Buddhism—Practices - Meditation (samatha/vipassana), puja, dana; monastic and lay practice - Festivals and pilgrimage; ethics: Five Precepts	Theme B—Religion & Life - Origins of the universe and life; stewardship vs dominion; abortion/euthanasia - Animal ethics and environmental responsibility	Theme B Religion and Life (HT2): Origins of human life; evolution and religion—science; sanctity of life vs quality of life; abortion (incl. risk to mother); euthanasia ; beliefs about death and afterlife. <i>Contrasts required:</i> abortion, euthanasia, animal experimentation (Christianity and Buddhism).	Theme D Religion, Peace and Conflict (HT1): Peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation; violence and violent protest; terrorism; reasons for war (greed, self-defence, retaliation); just war ; holy war .	Theme D Religion, Peace and Conflict (HT2): Pacifism ; nuclear weapons, WMD and deterrence; religion as a factor in modern conflict; peace-making; victims of war (one organisation). <i>Contrasts required:</i> violence, WMD, pacifism (Christianity and Buddhism).	Theme E Religion, Crime and Punishment (HT1): Good/evil intentions and actions; causes of crime (poverty, upbringing, mental illness, addiction, greed, hate, unjust law); views on offenders and crime types; aims of punishment (retribution, deterrence, reformation).

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
	Assessment 1 Format:	Partial Paper 1 mock (Component 1) — 1h Christianity & Buddhism: Beliefs + Practices. AQA five-part items (1,2,4,5,12)		Assessment 2 Format:	Partial Paper 2 — Themes 1h	
Y11	Theme E Religion, Crime and Punishment (HT2): Treatment of criminals (prison, corporal punishment, community service); forgiveness ; death penalty ; ethical arguments (utility, sanctity of life). <i>Contrasts required:</i> corporal punishment, death penalty, forgiveness (Christianity and Buddhism).	Theme C Existence of God and Revelation (HT1): Philosophical arguments: Design, First Cause, Miracles (strengths/weaknesses); one miracle example; challenges from evil and suffering; science-based objections.	Theme C Existence of God and Revelation (HT2): Revelation and the divine: general (nature, scripture) and special (visions); enlightenment; attributes (omnipotent/omniscient, personal/impersonal, immanent/transcendent); value and problems of revelation; alternative explanations. <i>Contrasts required:</i> visions, miracles, nature as general revelation (Christianity and non-religious).	Interleave and assessment: Short 12-mark drills across Theme B and Theme D plus Components 1 topics; targeted reteach	Interleave and assessment: Short 12-mark drills across Theme plus Components 1 topics; targeted reteach	Interleave and assessment: Short 12-mark drills across Theme plus Components 1 topics; targeted reteach All units
	Mock Format:	Full GCSE Paper 105 minutes		Assessment 2 Format:	Full GCSE Paper 105 minutes	

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
L6th	Epistemology 3.1.1 What is knowledge? Acquaintance/ability/propositional; definition and Zagzebski; JTB; Gettier; fixes: infallibilism, J+T+B+N, reliabilism, virtue epistemology. Moral 3.2.1 Normative I: Utilitarianism Utility and maximising; Bentham, Mill, preference; act vs rule; issues: rights, calculation, partiality, integrity.	Epistemology 3.1.2 Perception Direct realism + issues (illusion, variation, hallucination, time-lag) and replies; Indirect realism, sense-data, primary/secondary qualities, scepticism and responses (Locke, Trotter Cockburn, Russell); Berkeley's idealism arguments and God-role problems. Moral 3.2.1 Normative II: Kant & Aristotle Kant: good will, duty, categorical imperatives (F1 contradiction in conception/will; F2 persons as ends); issues. Aristotle: eudaimonia, function, doctrine of the mean, habituation, phronesis; issues.	Epistemology 3.1.3 Reason Innatism: Plato slave-boy, Leibniz; empiricist replies (Locke, tabula rasa). Intuition/deduction: Descartes' cogito, God, external world; Hume's Fork-style objections. Moral 3.2.2 Applied ethics Apply theories to stealing, simulated killing, eating animals, lying.	Epistemology 3.1.4 Limits Nature and role of scepticism; local vs global; three waves; responses: Descartes, empiricists, reliabilism. Moral 3.2.3 Meta-ethics Cognitivism vs non-cognitivism; realism: naturalism, non-naturalism, intuitionism, Moore; challenges (Ayer, is-ought, motivation, Mackie). Anti-realism: error theory, emotivism, prescriptivism; issues (language use, progress, nihilism).	Epistemology: Innatism vs empiricism recap; intuition and deduction; global vs local scepticism; responses from Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Russell; reliabilism drills. Moral Philosophy: Meta-ethics overview map; realism vs anti-realism checkpoints; quick applications to stealing, simulated killing, eating animals, lying. Exam technique: Weekly 25-mark planning clinics; mixed AO1 knowledge audits; 12-minute paragraph sprints.	Reteach and interleave: Targeted fixes from QLA across hardest Epistemology and Moral items. Bridge to Y13: ● Metaphysics of God taster: attributes, freedom and foreknowledge, Euthyphro. ● Metaphysics of Mind taster: indivisibility vs conceivability; what counts as qualia.
	Assessment 1 Format:	Partial Paper 1 90 minutes		Assessment 2 Format:	Full Paper 1:3 hours	

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
U6th	Mind 3.4.1–3.4.2 Dualism I What is mind; phenomenal/intentional properties; qualia. Substance dualism: indivisibility and conceivability arguments; key replies. God 3.3.1 Concept and nature Attributes: omniscience, omnipotence, omnibenevolence; God and time; incoherence challenges: stone paradox, Euthyphro, freedom vs foreknowledge.	Mind 3.4.2 Dualism II + issues Property dualism: zombies, Mary; responses. Problems for dualism: other minds, Ryle’s category mistake, interaction and epiphenomenal worries. God 3.3.2 Arguments I Ontological, design, cosmological arguments; logical form and assumptions; headline objections (Gaunilo, Kant; Hume on analogy/unique case; infinite series, composition, necessary being).	Mind 3.4.3 Physicalism Behaviourism (hard/soft) with issues; type identity theory and multiple realisability; eliminative materialism and self-refutation/predictive power challenges. God 3.3.2 Arguments II: Problem of evil Moral/natural evil; logical vs evidential; Plantinga’s Free Will Defence; Hick’s soul-making; issues.	Mind 3.4.4 Functionalism Roles and multiple realisation; challenges: inverted qualia, Block’s China; Mary applied to function. God 3.3.3 Religious language Cognitivism vs non-cognitivism; verification/falsification (Ayer); Hick’s eschatological verification; Flew–Mitchell–Hare “University Debate” and issues.	Interleave God + Mind: - God: ontological, design, cosmological arguments with counter-moves; logical vs evidential problem of evil. - Mind: dualism vs physicalism vs functionalism; Mary, zombies, China thought experiment. Exam technique: Weekly 25-mark essays under time; conclusion drills; synoptic comparisons.	Final revision: Spiral of weakest topics; mixed essay sets; timed introductions and conclusions.
	Mock Format:	Full Paper 1 and full paper 2 (3 hours each)				

Key Vocabulary

KS3

(Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Ethical Theories, Philosophy intro, Comparative Religion)

- **Judaism:** covenant, Torah, mitzvot, synagogue, Shabbat, kosher, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Messiah, diaspora
 - **Islam:** tawhid, Qur'an, prophet, Muhammad, akhirah, ummah, shahadah, salah, zakah, sawm, hajj, mosque
 - **Hinduism:** Brahman, atman, dharma, karma, samsara, moksha, puja, mandir, guru, avatar, ahimsa
 - **Ethical Theories:** utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, duty, consequence, character, relativism, absolutism
 - **Introduction to Philosophy:** logic, argument, premise, conclusion, scepticism, free will, identity, thought experiment
 - **Comparative Religion:** authority, ritual, community, symbol, diversity, ethics, belief, tradition
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GCSE

- **Christianity:** Trinity, incarnation, atonement, salvation, resurrection, eschatology, sacrament, liturgy, mission, evangelism
 - **Buddhism:** dukkha, anicca, anatta, Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, arhat, bodhisattva, karma, samsara, nirvana, meditation
 - **Theme B (Religion & Life):** stewardship, dominion, sanctity of life, quality of life, abortion, euthanasia, evolution, Big Bang, environment, animal rights
 - **Theme C (Existence of God & Revelation):** design argument, cosmological argument, miracle, vision, revelation, enlightenment, omnipotence, omniscience, transcendent, immanent, verification, falsification
 - **Theme D (Peace & Conflict):** just war, holy war, pacifism, forgiveness, reconciliation, terrorism, nuclear deterrence, WMD, peace-making, justice
 - **Theme E (Crime & Punishment):** retribution, deterrence, reformation, corporal punishment, capital punishment, forgiveness, justice, evil, suffering, law, hate crime
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A-Level

- **Epistemology:** justified true belief (JTB), Gettier, infallibilism, reliabilism, virtue epistemology, direct realism, indirect realism, idealism, scepticism, a priori, a posteriori, empiricism, rationalism, intuition, deduction
- **Moral Philosophy:** utilitarianism, hedonism, preference, categorical imperative, universalisability, good will, eudaimonia, virtue, habituation, phronesis, applied ethics, cognitivism, non-cognitivism, realism, anti-realism, error theory, emotivism, prescriptivism
- **Metaphysics of God:** omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, eternal, everlasting, free will, ontological argument, cosmological argument, teleological argument, problem of evil, theodicy, verification, falsification, eschatological verification, blicks
- **Metaphysics of Mind:** qualia, intentionality, substance dualism, indivisibility, conceivability, property dualism, philosophical zombies, Mary argument, other minds, category mistake, behaviourism, type identity theory, multiple realisability, eliminative materialism, functionalism

Suggested Reading List

Key Stage 3

- Nigel Warburton — *A Little History of Philosophy*
- Karen Armstrong — *A Short History of Myth*
- Mal Leicester & Stephen Tudor — *Introducing Ethics: A Graphic Guide*
- Anne Rooney — *Ethics: The 100 Most Important Ideas*
- DK Eyewitness *Islam, Judaism, Hinduism*
- R.K. Narayan — *The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version*
- Geraldine McCaughrean — *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*
- Kevin DeYoung — *The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden* (accessible Biblical narrative)
- Richard Holloway — *A Little History of Religion*
- Christopher Phillips — *Socrates Café* (asking questions, philosophy for young minds)

- Mel Thompson — *Philosophy for Life* (short intros to major philosophers)
 - Marcus Weeks — *Philosophy in Minutes* (bite-sized overviews for Year 8 curiosity)
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Key Stage 4

- Peter Vardy — *The Puzzle of Ethics*
 - Peter Vardy — *The Puzzle of God*
 - Damien Keown — *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*
 - Bhikkhu Bodhi — *The Noble Eightfold Path*
 - Tenzin Gyatso (Dalai Lama) — *Ethics for the New Millennium*
 - Rowan Williams — *Being Christian*
 - Michael Wilcockson — *Issues of Life and Death*
 - Karen Armstrong — *The Case for God*
 - Alister McGrath — *Christianity: An Introduction*
 - Richard Glover — *Philosophy of Religion: A Very Short Introduction*
 - Sarah Clark — *Ethics Made Easy: A Step-by-Step Guide for GCSE Students*
 - John Bowker — *World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*
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A-Level Philosophy

Core & Classic

- Michael Lacewing — *Philosophy for A-Level*

- Nigel Warburton — *Philosophy: The Basics*
- Thomas Nagel — *What Does It All Mean?*
- Bertrand Russell — *The Problems of Philosophy*
- David Hume — *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
- René Descartes — *Meditations on First Philosophy*
- Aristotle — *Nicomachean Ethics* (Books I & II)
- Immanuel Kant — *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Ethics & Moral Theory

- J.L. Mackie — *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*
- Philippa Foot — *Virtues and Vices*
- Peter Singer — *Practical Ethics*
- Bernard Williams — *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*
- Jonathan Glover — *Causing Death and Saving Lives*

Philosophy of Religion

- John Hick — *Evil and the God of Love*
- Anthony Kenny — *The God of the Philosophers*
- Alvin Plantinga — *God and Other Minds*
- Richard Dawkins — *The God Delusion*

Philosophy of Mind & Consciousness

- Gilbert Ryle — *The Concept of Mind*

- J.J.C. Smart — *Philosophy and Scientific Realism* (identity theory)
- David Chalmers — *The Conscious Mind* (hard problem, zombies)
- Daniel Dennett — *Consciousness Explained*
- Frank Jackson — *Perception: A Representative Theory* (and “Mary” argument)
- Patricia & Paul Churchland — *Neurophilosophy*
- Ned Block — *Consciousness, Function, and Representation*

Modern Philosophy, AI & Technology

- Nick Bostrom — *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*
- Nick Bostrom — *Anthropic Bias: Observation Selection Effects*
- Max Tegmark — *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*
- Yuval Noah Harari — *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*
- Luciano Floridi — *The Ethics of Information*
- Susan Schneider — *Artificial You: AI and the Future of Your Mind*
- Erik J. Larson — *The Myth of Artificial Intelligence*
- Hubert Dreyfus — *What Computers Still Can't Do* (classic critique of AI)

Fun & Engaging Extensions

- Julian Baggini — *The Pig That Wants to Be Eaten*
- Stephen Law — *The Philosophy Gym*
- Mark Rowlands — *The Philosopher and the Wolf*
- David Edmonds — *Would You Kill the Fat Man?* (trolley problem and ethics)
- Kwame Anthony Appiah — *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*

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