



Curriculum Map 2024–2025

Mission Statement: The Religion, Self and Society department is committed to the Personal Development of all Sheringham High School students. By embedding Religious Education, Critical Thinking and Citizenship into our curriculum offer we take a holistic approach to our students' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and equipping them with the Cultural Capital necessary for them to grow into responsible, respectful, active citizens who can contribute positively to society, appreciate diversity and celebrate our common humanity whilst respecting the protected characteristics of individuals and our responsibility as stewards of the natural world.

The Religion, Self and Society department also takes the lead role in the planning and delivery of Relationships and Sex Education ensuring that one RSE unit of work is delivered to each year group, by a small but dedicated team of staff, in a spiral curriculum that builds upon prior knowledge and responds to the increasing complexities of challenge faced by our students as they mature into young adulthood. This serves as a comprehensive foundation for SRE which is complimented and consolidated by links to RSE in the wider school curriculum with the support of outside agencies and promotes the confidence and independence of our students and their ability to stay physically and mentally healthy.

Please Note: This is a working document and may be subjects to change and improvement throughout the year. As the current year 10 is the first cohort to be offered Religious Studies GCSE as an option subject GCSE content will be marked 'GCSE' and core Religion, Self and Society content will be marked 'Core'.

TERM	CONTENT AND SKILLS				
	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11
AUTUMN	<p>Content: Why should we look after the world? A consideration of religious perspectives on the challenges facing our environment and religious responses to them. PD: to recognise changing historical attitudes to humanities relationship to the natural world and their impact on environmental activism</p>	<p>Content: Can we prove the existence of God? What is Philosophy of Religion? Is God the Designer of the Universe? The cosmological argument. How can our decisions be influenced? Do miracles only exist if witnessed? Can religious experiences prove the existence of God</p>	<p>Content: Religion and the Modern world: The Year 9 Philosophy and Ethics Curriculum aims to consolidate the skills (PEEL paragraphs, evidence, balance argument and evaluation) to prepare students for the full range of GCSE questions in the context of Global Issues of 'Peace and Conflict' and 'Wealth and Poverty'</p>	<p>Content: Core: Extremism Topics include Subcultures and misogyny Religious prejudice Extremism Right Wing Extremism Internet awareness and safety</p>	<p>Content: Core Careers: What are my employability skills? Post 16 choices Decision making: Choosing your post 16 pathway Researching volunteering and paid work</p>

	<p>Who and How do I want to be? Reflections on personal identity, beliefs and morals. Students consider how they best learn, how they interact with others and how the habits and behaviours they imbed now can help them prepare for the future.</p> <p>PD: Students develop self-awareness and reflect on traits and behaviours that can have positive and negative impacts on the progress they make towards their chosen goals. Students reflect on their personal strengths in relation to potential careers, ambition and fulfilment.</p> <p>Careers Education Who am I? Exploring possibilities: Dream Jobs What is a career? What is an entrepreneur? What is work-life balance? Careers in the future?</p>	<p>Does God have control over all evil? PD: Students engage with and reflect upon timeless philosophical questions, engage in debate and critique the arguments of some the world's most prominent thinkers.</p> <p>Careers And Finance. Topics include: What are my interests? Job applications: Superhero CVs Challenges and rewards of work Creating the life you want: Making a vision board What does success mean to me? Careers and the climate</p> <p>PD: evaluating practical skills ('hard' and 'soft') for the workplace. Students identify their own strengths and areas for development, reflect upon their aspirations and plan steps to achieving them</p>	<p>Religion, Peace and Conflict. Origins of conflict in Northern Ireland and the Middle East. Introduction to the costs of war. Introduction to Just War Theory and its use the evaluation of choices engage in recent conflicts. Christian and Muslim Attitudes to war including consideration of Pacifism as well as greater and lesser Jihad. Forgiveness and reconciliation. The aims of punishment and evaluation of Justice.</p> <p>Skills: Philosophical enquiry, critical thinking, debating extended writing skills, generating balanced arguments. Empathy and emotional skills. PD: Cultural capital is developed through the examination of real world case studies of ongoing conflicts and the evaluation of various causal factors Key Questions: To what extent is religion a 'causal' factor in global conflicts? What is Just War Theory? What is Pacifism? What is Jihad?</p>	<p>GCSE: Christianity Beliefs: The nature of God, Creation, Jesus Christ Salvation, The Afterlife. Forms of Worship: Sacraments Pilgrimage and Celebration. Christianity in Britain and the Church in the Local Community The Worldwide Church</p> <p>Skills: Philosophical enquiry, extended writing skills, generating balanced arguments.</p> <p>PD: Students draw on and knowledge and skills gained in KS3 to examine the core beliefs and practices of Britain's dominant faith with specific reference to the impact of Christianity of 'Fundamental British Values'</p> <p>Key Questions: What is 'monotheism'? What is the trinity? What is the nature of God? What is 'Sin'? What is 'Salvation'?</p> <p>GCSE Content:</p>	<p>Money talks: Apprenticeships vs Higher Education</p> <p>Is AI a threat to our jobs?</p> <p>Islam: Key practices The Five Pillars of Sunni Islam: practices in Britain and elsewhere. Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam: practices in Britain and elsewhere. Skills: Greater knowledge and understanding of another world faith, Philosophical enquiry, modern issues of faith and belief in Britain. PD: Cultural capital is developed through an understanding of core beliefs in Islam and their corresponding practices with specific references to the challenges facing Muslims in modern Britain Key Questions: What do Muslims believe about God? What is 'Prophethood'? Why is the Qur'an so important?</p> <p>What is Predestination (Al-Qadr)?</p>
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			<p>Careers: My future, keeping myself safe / Choosing options. Students reflect on personal tastes, interests, dreams and ambitions and use them to consider a range of scenarios in which certain decisions may 'help' or 'hinder' their ability to achieve their goals. Topics include: What are my skills? What comes after school: The main school learning pathways. Decision making: Choosing what to study at KS4 Taking control of your career journey Working and Earning: Managing your money What is the labour market and why is it important?</p> <p>PD: Students use the Unifrog and 'Help You Choose' platforms to research careers and enterprises; use this knowledge to help inform their options.</p>	<p>Issues of Relationships, Sexual Relationships, Issues of equality, gender, prejudice and discrimination. Topics: Adultery, divorce, cohabitation, commitment, contraception, gender equality, responsibilities, and roles.</p> <p>Skills: Ethical enquiry into modern moral issues. PD: A focus on key skills with specific Students build on knowledge and skills gained in RSE and discuss them in relation to religious attitudes to family and relationships including contraception, same sex relationships, gender roles, pressures on relationships and relationship breakdown. Key Questions: Is there such a thing as a typical family? Should same sex marriage be allowed in places of worship? Do men and women have equal roles in leading worship?</p>	<p>What challenges do Muslims face living in Britain? What is the difference between 'Greater' and 'Lesser' Jihad?</p> <p>RSE: The impact of sex in the media, Managing unhealthy behaviour in relationships. Consent and coercion, Pregnancy and parenthood. . The aim of this unit is to ensure that all students feel: Ready to make informed choices about their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. Respectful of the needs and rights of others. Safe and confident in their ability to find and access help and advice if necessary.</p> <p>PD: Building on prior learning, students identify the pressures of unhealthy behaviour or unplanned pregnancy and use this knowledge to reflect on the value of making informed personal choices regarding their own well-being and the well-being of others and discuss how and when to</p>
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					access support services available to them
SPRING	<p>How do Buddhists respond to the problem of Suffering?: An introduction to Buddhism including reflection on the life of Siddhartha, the middle way, the Four Noble Truths, the eightfold path, meditation, Buddhist ethics and practices.</p> <p>PD: To recognise the benefits of moral codes on pro-social behaviour, mental health and wellbeing. To identify similarities and difference between Eastern and Western beliefs systems, celebrate diversity and common humanity</p> <p>RSE: module, examines Healthy Relationships and what constitutes bullying in its various forms. Use of acceptable terms related to sex, gender and sexuality.</p> <p>PD: The aim of this unit is to ensure that students are: Ready for the personal and social expectations of high school.</p>	<p>The problem of Evil: The issues of Rights and responsibilities is introduced with an examination of religious reflections of the problem of evil and suffering and its implications for the existence of God within the context of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Students consider ‘injustices’ form a religious perspective and reflect on Theodicies including the free will defence to discuss whether responsibility for lies with humanity or God.</p> <p>PD: to recognise controversy within the faith debate evaluate the qualities of a ‘convincing’ philosophical argument.</p> <p>Key questions: Why is there suffering? What implications does human suffering have on belief in God? Do humans have ‘free will’? What makes a strong argument? What is a ‘balanced’ argument?</p> <p>RSE in Year 8 Covers: Diversity in Gender and</p>	<p>Content: Religion, wealth and poverty. Relative and absolute poverty. Causes of poverty. Fair trade. Religious responses to global poverty. World debt and global finances. Occupational morality. Exploitation (with specific reference to modern slavery, grooming and County Lines. Homelessness. Salvation army, Tear fund, Christian Aid.</p> <p>Skills: Philosophical enquiry, critical thinking, debating extended writing skills, generating balanced arguments. Empathy and emotional skills.</p> <p>PD: An evaluation of the impact of belief on pro-social behaviour. Students plan and propose their own solutions or awareness campaigns, highlighting the issues associated with, homelessness, county lines and modern slavery.</p> <p>Key Questions: Who is responsible for poverty? What does the bible say about Wealth and Poverty?</p>	<p>Content: Core: Careers Reflecting on my career journey: past present and future Exploring employer profiles What type of career is best for me? Preparing to go on work experience In person, hybrid and remote: What works best?</p> <p>GCSE Islam: Key Beliefs The nature of Allah, Prophethood, Foundations of faith.</p> <p>Skills: Greater knowledge and understanding of another world faith, Philosophical enquiry, modern issues of faith and belief in Britain.</p> <p>PD: Cultural capital is developed through an understanding of core beliefs in Islam and their corresponding practices with specific references to the challenges facing Muslims in modern Britain</p> <p>Key Questions: What do Muslims believe about God?</p>	<p>Content: Issues of Life and Death. The World, The Origin and Value of Human Life, Afterlife: environmental sustainability euthanasia, evolution, abortion, quality of life, sanctity of life, soul, beliefs about Death and the Afterlife.</p> <p>Skills: Constructing balanced arguments on modern ethical topics, including various views. Empathy and emotional skills.</p> <p>PD: students examine real world case studies of abortion, euthanasia and environmental sustainability and discuss them in the context of religious and non-religious attitudes with specific reference to the ‘sanctity’ vs the ‘quality’ of life.</p> <p>Key Questions: Do humans have an immortal soul? When does ‘life’ begin?</p>

	<p>Respectful of themselves and others (particularly with regard to difference).</p> <p>Safe (confident in their knowledge of how to access help and support.)</p>	<p>Sexuality, Romantic and Sexual Relationships, Marriage and the Law, Sexting and Peer Support. What are my goals in life and what do I have to do to achieve them?</p> <p>PD: students have the opportunity to reflect upon the nature of a healthy relationship, ask questions about diversity, gender, sexuality and how to safeguard their own well-being in a safe, supportive environment</p>	<p>Is there such a thing as a 'moral' or 'immoral' job?</p>	<p>What is 'Prophethood'? Why is the Qur'an so important?</p> <p>What is Predestination (Al-Qadr)? What challenges do Muslims face living in Britain? What is the difference between 'Greater' and 'Lesser' Jihad?</p> <p>Issues of Good and Evil Crime and punishment, Forgiveness, Good, Evil and Suffering: good and evil, free will, justice, morality, punishment, sin, suffering. PD: students examine real world case studies of Capital punishment, prison reform and forgiveness and discuss them in the context of religious and non-religious attitudes with specific reference to the vs the aims of punishment (deterrence, protection, reform and retribution) and forgiveness.</p> <p>Key Questions:</p> <p>What makes and act 'wrong'? What are the aims of punishment? Why do people suffer? Is it really possible to forgive?</p>	<p>Should we be able to ask someone to help us die? Are the lives of people more important than the lives of animals?</p>
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				Is it ever right to execute someone?	
SUMMER	<p>Content:</p> <p>RS/ Citizenship We have more in common than that which divides us: Students consider things that humans have in common and reflect upon our common humanity. They then contrast this with concepts that have divided humans historically with reference to Race, Gender, Ability, Sexual Orientation, Nationality and Religious identity as well as examples of efforts to build bridges of belonging, cooperation and unity.</p> <p>PD: To recognise example of prejudice and discrimination in the widest sense, including racism, ableism, sexism and LGBTQ+ concerns. Students reflect on common humanity and celebrate diversity.</p> <p>Religious Journeys: Students consider why are some journeys are special with a focus on religious</p>	<p>Content:</p> <p>Spirited Arts: Students engage in the NATRE Spirited Arts competition for young artists and writers to explore creativity and faith through artistic expression. Those demonstrating the best effort will be entered into the national spirited arts competition. Themes include: Animals and Spirituality. Animals and Science. Animals and the world of work. Animals in art and intro to Spirited Arts. PD: Students have the opportunity to express a range of spiritual, religious and ethical perspectives through the medium of art, poetry or music and engage in a national event.</p> <p>Why do we need government?</p>	<p>RSE: Self-esteem and Relationships, Media Messages and Body Image, Consent and contraception Accessing help and support. This unit provides the foundation of empathy upon which students can develop and more mature, complex understanding of what it means to be Ready, Respectful and Safe. PD: Students learn the importance of consent as an integral part of a healthy relationship. Including their responsibility to obtain consent before engaging in sexual activity and being confident in their right to withhold or withdraw consent with special reference to grooming and healthy relationships.</p>	<p>Content:</p> <p>CORE RSE: Body Image and the Media, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexuality. Healthy relationships. Contraception (and when contraception fails). The aim of this unit is to ensure that all students feel: Ready to make informed choices about their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. Respectful of the needs and rights of others. Safe and confident in their ability to find and access help and advice if necessary. PD: students reflect on the impact of the media on mental health, gender identity. Keeping themselves safe with contraception and accessing sexual health services when necessary</p> <p>GCSE Christianity Practices The nature of God Creation Jesus Christ Salvation The Afterlife. Forms of Worship:</p>	<p>Content: Revision for all topics and preparation for final exams.</p>

	<p>pilgrimages including the Camino De Santiago, Hajj and Kumbh Mela.</p> <p>PD: Students reflect on the diversity and commonality of different religious traditions and the benefits of dedications, resilience and goal setting.</p>	<p>Students will learn about Political Philosophy considering what the ideal form governance is. They will critically assess the ideas of philosophers from Ancient Greece through to the enlightenment considering the impact of their ideas on society. Some groups will have the opportunity to plan their own group party political campaign and participate in a mock election.</p> <p>PD: Students will consider their role as citizens, what rights we should have and why they should be protected.</p> <p>Key Questions:</p> <p>What is government? Why are governments needed? What makes a government legitimate? What rights and freedoms should a government protect? What duties do citizens owe to a legitimate government, if any? When may a government be legitimately overthrown, if ever?</p>		<p>Sacraments Pilgrimage and Celebration. Christianity in Britain and the Church in the Local Community The Worldwide Church</p> <p>Skills: Philosophical inquiry, extended writing skills, generating balanced arguments.</p> <p>PD: Students draw on and knowledge and skills gained in KS3 to examine the core beliefs and practices of Britain's dominant faith with specific reference to the impact of Christianity on 'British Values'</p> <p>Key Questions:</p> <p>What is a Sacrament? Is Britain becoming more secular? What are the different types of worship? Why are Taize and Walsingham important places for Christians?</p> <p>Issues of Human Rights and Social Justice Prejudice and Discrimination, Issues of Wealth and Poverty: censorship, discrimination, extremism, human rights, personal conviction, prejudice,</p>	
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				<p>relative and absolute poverty, social justice.</p> <p>Skills: Constructing balanced arguments on modern ethical topics, including various views. Empathy and emotional skills.</p> <p>PD: students examine real world case studies of censorship, personal conviction and discuss them in the context of religious and non-religious attitudes with specific reference to the norms and laws of a given society and Christian love (agape).</p> <p>This unit links directly to British values with reference to the 'Rule of Law' Democracy, Activism and the responsibility to hold power to account.</p> <p>Key Questions:</p> <p>How do religious people support human rights? Should people always be allowed to express their views? Should you always stand up for what you believe in? Are some types of poverty worse than others?</p>	
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<p>Year 12 and 13</p>	<p>The OCR A-Level Religious Studies course studied at Sheringham Sixth Form consists of three components: Philosophy of Religion, Religion and Ethics and Developments in Buddhist Thought.</p> <p>Content of Philosophy of Religion: This component explores philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief.</p> <p><i>Ancient philosophical influences</i> provides important foundational knowledge for the study of philosophy of religion. This and <i>Soul, mind and body</i> enable the exploration of philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers.</p> <p>Learners will critically analyse three contrasting arguments regarding the existence of God. Such arguments are a fundamental element of philosophy of religion, as well as key to the personal beliefs of many individuals.</p> <p>Learners will also be introduced to different types of religious experience, and will be encouraged to discuss and debate the significance and meaning of experiences, as well as how they can shape religious belief.</p> <p>The problem of evil and suffering will also be explored. Debated for millennia, this issue is still relevant and problematic for many today.</p> <p>Through studying the nature of God, learners will explore how ideas within philosophy of religion have developed over time, and make comparisons between the ideas presented in works of key scholars.</p> <p>Finally, the two sections that focus on religious language give learners the opportunity to examine issues such as whether religious teachings should be understood symbolically or analogically, or whether religious language should be regarded cognitively or non-cognitively.</p> <p>Personal Development:</p> <p>Linking the outcomes of A-Level Religious Studies with students' personal, spiritual, academic and career aspirations.</p> <p>Cultural origins of western philosophical thought.</p> <p>Spiritual reflection on the acquisition of knowledge via reason and sense experience.</p> <p>Spiritual reflection on the metaphysics of consciousness.</p> <p>Spiritual reflection on the existence of God and the Universe as a purposeful creation.</p> <p>Spiritual reflection on Aquinas' argument that the Universe must be Contingent upon a necessary being for its existence.</p> <p>Spiritual reflection on the predicates of God and evaluation of a priori reasoning</p>				

Reflection on Plato's consideration of the forms as a measure of moral or physical perfection (e.g. the form of the Good)

Spiritual inquiry into the nature of personal identity. Nature vs Nurture and exploration of the self as a social construct.

Consideration of the cultural impact posed by Darwin's theory of evolution and modern scientific discoveries on Mankind's concept of God as creator.

Comparison of the usefulness of the above approaches to religious language

Whether or not the apophatic way enables effective understanding of theological discussion

Whether or not Aquinas' analogical approaches support effective expression of language about God

Whether or not religious discourse is comprehensible if religious language is understood as symbolic

Whether or not any version of the verification principle successfully renders religious language as meaningless

Cultural origins of western philosophical thought.

Spiritual reflection on the acquisition of knowledge via reason and sense experience.

Cultural origins of the scientific method.

Cultural and spiritual reflection on the contrast between Aristotle's deistic view of God with the Theistic view of God offered in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Cultural reflection on the significance of Plato and Aristotle and their impact on enlightenment western thought.

Cultural consideration of Descartes' contribution to western thought.

Cultural reflection on the nature of dualism and materialism as opposing schools of thought in western philosophy.

Cultural reflection on the development of a priori reasoning over time.

Content of Religion and Ethics:

In this component, learners have the opportunity to study key concepts related to religion and ethics.

As part of their study, learners will study four normative ethical theories, providing a range of approaches: deontological and teleological, religious and non-religious. These theories will then be applied to two issues of importance; euthanasia and business ethics. This allows learners to explore contemporary issues and deepen their understanding of the ethical theories.

Within *Ethical Language: Meta-ethics*, learners will explore how ethical language has changed over time and been interpreted by different individuals.

To develop learners' awareness of the importance of significant concepts within the study of ethics, they will be required to examine the significant ethical concept of conscience, through a comparison of the works of two key thinkers; Aquinas and Freud.

Finally, in *Developments in Ethical Thought*, learners will examine areas of sexual ethics, a highly relevant and interesting area of study. Learners will explore how attitudes to pre and extra marital sex and homosexuality have influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs, and also how the four normative theories they previously studied can be applied to these areas.

Personal Development:

Spiritual reflection on the idea of Unconditional love (Agape) being the foundation of a working ethical system.

Meta-ethical Theories:

Naturalism, intuitionism, emotivism.

Whether or not what is meant by the word 'good' is the defining question in the study of ethics.

Whether or not ethical terms such as **good, bad, right** and **wrong**:

- have an objective factual basis that makes them true or false in describing something
- reflect only what is in the mind of the person using such terms
- can be said to be meaningful or meaningless

Whether or not, from a common sense approach, people just know within themselves what is good, bad, right and wrong

Conscience

comparison between Aquinas and Freud:

- on the concept of guilt
- on the presence or absence of God within the workings of the conscience and super-ego

- on the process of moral decision-making

Whether conscience is linked to, or separate from, reason and the unconscious mind

Whether conscience exists at all or is instead an umbrella term covering various factors involved in moral decision-making, such as culture, environment, genetic predisposition and education.

Inquiry into the nature of moral judgements and their origins.

Moral reflection on the application of the theory of Natural Law and the doctrine of double effect.

The moral implications of Kantian Ethics including:

Whether or not Kantian ethics provides a helpful method of moral decision-making

Whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or

wrong can be based on the extent to which duty is best served

Whether or not Kantian ethics is too abstract to be applicable to practical moral decision-making

Whether or not Kantian ethics is so reliant on reason that it unduly rejects the importance of other factors, such as sympathy, empathy and love in moral decision-making

A detailed consideration of the issues surrounding euthanasia including:

The application of natural law and situation ethics to euthanasia

Whether or not the religious concept of sanctity of life has any meaning in twenty first century medical ethics

Whether or not a person should or can have complete autonomy over their own life and decisions made about it

Whether or not there is a moral difference between medical intervention to end a patient's life and medical non-intervention to end a patient's life.

Moral and social reflection on Natural Law theory as an ethical doctrine and modern attitudes to homosexuality and contraception.

Moral and social application of situation ethics to real life examples.

Reflection on the moral and social implications of adopting Situation Ethics as a means of moral decision-making.

A consideration of Utilitarian principles as the basis of social and moral decision making including:

Whether or not utilitarianism provides a helpful method of moral decision-making

Whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which, in any given situation, utility is best served

Whether or not it is possible to measure good or pleasure and then reach a moral decision

The application of Kantian ethics and utilitarianism to business ethics.

Whether or not the concept of corporate social responsibility is nothing more than 'hypocritical window-dressing' covering the greed of a business intent on making profits.

Whether or not human beings can flourish in the context of capitalism and consumerism.

Whether globalisation encourages or discourages the pursuit of good ethics as the foundation of good business

Sexual Ethics

Whether or not religious beliefs and practices concerning sex and relationships have a continuing role in the area of sexual ethics.

Whether choices in the area of sexual behaviour should be entirely private and personal, or whether they should be subject to societal norms and legislation.

Whether normative theories are useful in what they might say about sexual ethics.

Cultural reflection on Aquinas' theory of Natural Law, its origins in the philosophy of Aristotle as well its interpretation by the Catholic Church.

Content of Developments in Buddhist Thought:

In this component, learners have the opportunity to undertake a systematic study of key concepts within the development of Buddhist thought. Learners will explore religious beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections, how they have developed historically and how they are presently discussed.

This component examines the foundations of Buddhism, investigating both the significance and context of the Buddha as a source of wisdom and authority, as well as the importance of the *Three Refuges* in expressing Buddhist identity and acting as the underlying principles of Buddhist teachings.

The key teachings of Buddhism and their interconnections form the basis of the topics *Samsara*, *The Three Marks* and the *Four Noble Truths*. Exploration of these will provide students with insight into Buddhist beliefs about ultimate reality, the self, the meaning of life and death. These teachings also form the foundations of Buddhist practice and key moral principles.

The practice of meditation is studied in detail, with an emphasis on the personal nature of meditative practice and the diversity of methods used by Buddhists.

The development of Mahayana Buddhism was pivotal in the historical development of Buddhism, and the distinctive ideas and philosophy of these schools, including the Madhyamaka, will stretch and challenge learners, introducing them to the truly diverse range of ideas and traditions within Buddhism.

Learners will further develop their understanding of the variety within Buddhist tradition by examining Buddhist practices and ideas in two very different cultural contexts: the Far East and the West. This will enable them to investigate different interpretations of Buddhist teachings and examine the relationship between religion and society.

This investigation continues in the topic considering *Engaged Buddhism and Activism*, which enables students to focus on how this interesting and modern approach to Buddhism responds to issues and ideas highly relevant to learners and the world around them.

The final topic explores the changing roles of men and women across history, societies and Buddhist traditions. These issues will be familiar and relevant to learners, and enable discussion of identity, equality, discrimination, religious freedom and the relationship between religion and society.

Personal Development:

Taking Refuge:

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues related to the Refuges (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha)

including:

Their role in expressing Buddhist identity.

Different interpretations of what each means and how one takes refuge in them in practice.

Why these ideals are seen as the heart of Buddhism.

The Three Marks of Existence: anicca/anitya (impermanence), dukkha/dukkha (suffering), anatta/anatman (no self)

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the three marks, including:

Whether or not all of conditioned experience truly is subject to these marks.

Whether Buddhism is inherently pessimistic, optimistic or realistic about the human Condition.

Whether or not any of the marks are more or less important than the others.

Meditation

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to meditation, including:

- whether or not meditation has to be a religious practice
- whether or not meditation is the most important element of Buddhist practice
- whether or not meditation encourages an unhealthy 'inward looking' approach to life

Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the Four Noble Truths including:

- whether or not the goal of Buddhism can be understood
- whether the Buddhist idea of detachment is positive or negative
- whether any of the Truths, or stages of the eightfold path, are more or less important than the others

Engaged Buddhism and Activism

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to Engaged Buddhism and social activism, including:

- the role and focus of Buddhists in different societies and contexts
- whether or not engaged practice should be central to the Buddhist path, and how this affects the stereotypical view of Buddhism as inward-looking
- whether or not a Buddhist could ever accept the need for war

Buddhism and Gender.

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to Buddhism and gender, including:

- the role and aims of organisations such as the Sakyadhita (Daughters of the Buddha) International Association of Buddhist Women
- why it is that the condition and treatment of women in Buddhism differs so widely across the world

- the significance of contrasting traditional and modern views on the capacity of women to achieve enlightenment

The Buddha

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues related to the Buddha and his role as a source of wisdom and authority, including:

How the example of Siddhartha might be used in teaching and practice, including illustration of the Middle Way

The limitations of the Buddha as an example to Buddhists; the importance of self-reliance and the idea of ehipassiko/ehipaśyika ('come and try'), not blind faith and devotion.

The ways in which the cultural context affects the development of ideas.

The Development of Mahayana Buddhism.

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to key Mahayana ideas, including:

- the differences and similarities between the bodhisattva and the arhat / arahant and their paths
- how the nature of the bodhisattva can be explained
- the implications, in terms of responses to other religious truth claims and diversity within Buddhism, of the idea of upaya (skillful means)
- the development in the understanding of 'Buddha' illustrated by the trikaya doctrine.

Buddhism in the Far East

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to Zen and Pure Land ideas, including:

- whether Pure Land Buddhism is an 'easy' path
- how and if Siddhartha's original teachings can be seen in these two schools
- the implications of Zen's rejection of theory, ritual and the use of language to express truth.

Buddhism in the West

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to Buddhism in the West, including:

- a comparison of the approaches and ideas of Stephen Batchelor and Paul Knitter, and the ways in which they have adopted and 'Westernised' Buddhist ideas
- how the depiction of Buddhism in the Western media, including the fame of figures such as the Dalai Lama, shape (and possibly distort) Western understandings of Buddhism
- a comparison of how figures such as the Dalai Lama are viewed by Buddhists and non-Buddhists, and their significance to each group