



Religious Studies Report

Context

- **Stour Valley Community School** is an 11-16 Year old secondary school and currently has 597 students on roll.
- **As an Academy we have created our own syllabus which can be found on our website** <https://www.stourvalleycommunityschool.org/curriculum/religious-studies>

• *Academies and free schools can choose which agreed syllabus to use or create a syllabus of their own following the same guidelines as other agreed syllabus writers.*

- **Stour Valley Community School** recognises the value of Religious Studies in the school curriculum. All students have one RS lesson per week in Key Stage 3, and one per fortnight (shared with PSHE) for all students in Key Stage 4. We offer the RS GCSE (Edexcel Spec B) as an option and currently have 60 students in Years 10 and 11 studying this subject for a GCSE.
- **Stour Valley Community School** also recognises the excellent contribution RS makes to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development across the school.

Legal requirements

The National Curriculum states that:

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life ...

DfE, The National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, September 2013, p.4

Breadth of RS: Stour Valley Community School recognises that RS 'must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)) Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para 5). The breadth of RS is referred to in more detail in the section on 'curriculum' below.

Right of withdrawal: Parents have the right to withdraw their children either partly or wholly from RS. In addition, teachers have the right not to teach the subject. Our approach to RS, however, has been constructed in the hope that parents and teachers will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal.

Those parents who wish to withdraw their child from RS lessons should inform the Headteacher in writing at their earliest convenience.

Stour Valley Community School recognises this right but is pleased that it is almost never used by parents and students.

Aims and purpose of RS

In each school, staff should spend time as a department agreeing the purpose and aims for RE in their school. The statements below will support schools in creating bespoke purpose and aims for RE in their school. Other documents to support this will be the locally agreed syllabus or diocesan guidelines and A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England (Religious Education Council 2013).

Purpose: At **Stour Valley Community School**, RS enables students to engage critically with significant ethical, philosophical and social issues in order to understand the world we live in more fully. Students learn about a wide range of religious beliefs and practices, including non-religious worldviews. They do this for the development of their knowledge, for their capacity to flourish in our diverse society, and for their growing understanding of their own identity and outlook. At **Stour Valley Community School**, students are encouraged to develop their own considered opinion, to articulate their views, and engage in productive dialogue and debate with others.

Aims: In order to fulfil this purpose, RS lessons at **Stour Valley Community School** are aimed at developing, with increasing depth and discernment, students' knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and non-religious worldviews. Students will learn how religious identity influences people's lives and will be encouraged to express their own considered opinions about the nature and value of religion on people and the planet. Students will develop the skills of listening, speaking and discussing, as well as those of enquiry, analysis and evaluation.

SMSC: Although all subjects in the curriculum and the school as a whole have an equal duty to promote students' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, RS is particularly well placed to do this. RS develops students' capacity for cultural understanding and moral enquiry particularly strongly, both through curriculum content and the personal characteristics required to participate in RS.

Community cohesion: RS plays a strong part in promoting community cohesion. In the RS classroom the values of tolerance, respect and openness are essential in all students in order to participate in RS.

Inclusion: RS, as all school subjects, adheres to a policy of inclusion. RS teachers plan lessons and schemes of work to ensure that all students can access high quality RS. To this end, teachers will monitor the success of their provision and differentiation and employ specific strategies when necessary.

RS in the curriculum

Content and approach: At **Stour Valley Community School** our vision for RS is one where students learn to respect themselves and understand their own identity, but also to respect others, and to understand their own and others rights and responsibilities. We acknowledge that Religious Studies plays a key role in creating understanding between faiths, communities and individuals. The subject develops pupils understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices and allows them to engage with questions about the meaning and purpose of life, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human, as well as the importance of being kind to others. Religious Studies plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life and employment as it enables them to develop respect and sensitivity towards others. The subject encourages critical thinking and collaboration and creates opportunities for young people to open a dialogue about current affairs and relevant issues. Students develop their ability to construct well – argued, well – informed and structured written arguments in which they can formulate their own views and opinions about different aspects of belief. Assisting students to become brave and ambitious learners is a key aim and our curriculum builds on prior knowledge to help students be confident in their understanding on Religious Studies.

Assessment: Students are assessed in Religious Studies once every half term in Key Stage three at Stour Valley using GCSE style questions. There is no assessment in Key Stage 4 in compulsory Religious Studies. Our GCSE students complete an assessment at the end of each unit.

Time allocation: All students have 1 hour per week of RS lessons in Key Stage 3 and 1 hour per fortnight (shared with PSHE) in Key Stage 4. GCSE RS students are given 6 hours per fortnight to study the GCSE course.

Religions and worldviews

In Key Stage 3 and 4 at **Stour Valley Community School**, we create our own curriculum that follows most of the recommendations of the Suffolk Local Agreed Syllabus and have selected the following religions and worldviews for focused study: *Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism*. We have also incorporated *Humanist beliefs* into many units of study.

The GCSE course in Key Stage 4 that **Stour Valley Community School** follows is *Edexcel Religious Studies Spec B 1B Christianity Religion and Ethics and 2C Islam Religion Peace and conflict*.