

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES



**Would you like to learn to think critically and learn to argue persuasively?**

This course offers an opportunity to explore questions of philosophy, ethics and religion.

It is an introduction to philosophical thinking and its application to religion. You will study ultimate questions of a philosophical and ethical nature such as what makes an action morally good, how as a society should we make decisions about right and wrong, how we can use philosophical arguments to explore the existence of God and how we can explain the existence of suffering in the world? These are the questions we have inherited from the ancient Greek philosophers that all people continually ask.

We follow the Edexcel Syllabus for A level Religious Studies which consists of three areas:

1. **Philosophy of Religion** – rational reflection on faith today and a study of 'big' questions.
2. **Ethics** – consideration of different approaches to moral issues with application to specific issues.
3. **New Testament Studies** – an examination of the context, authorship, interpretation and revelation of Jesus in the New Testament.

**Candidates for A-Level** study three modules (each worth 33.3% of the qualification) across years 12 and 13 which will be examined (in three 2 hour exams) in June of Year 13.

The following topics will be studied:

### **Philosophy of Religion**

- Philosophical issues such as the existence of God
- The nature and influence of religious experience
- The Problem of evil and suffering
- Philosophical Language
- Key philosophers
- Influences and developments in philosophy

### **Ethics**

- Significant concepts in issues and debates
- Utilitarianism, Situation Ethics and Natural Moral Law
- Applied Ethics: War and Peace and Sexual Ethics
- Ethical Language
- Aristotle and Immanuel Kant's ethical theories

# ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC GRAMMAR SCHOOL

- Medical Ethics

## **New Testament Studies**

- Contexts of the New Testament
- Texts and Interpretation of the Person of Jesus
- Interpreting the text, the purpose and authorship of the 4th Gospel
- Ways of interpreting scripture
- Texts and interpretation
- Scientific and historical challenges in faith and history

## **Enrichment and trips**

**Year 12 students will have the opportunity to attend an A level lecture day or an enrichment day visiting exhibitions related to the topics studied. Last year the year 12 students visiting the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust exhibition to complement their topic on war, peace and justice.**

## **REQUIREMENTS**

You must be able to express yourself clearly and logically in an intelligent argument and to reach a critical evaluation of different positions. You must enjoy reading and should read widely around topics to develop different perspectives, as well as stay abreast of ethical and philosophical topical stories in the media. This is an essay-based course so you should have excellent writing skills! You will need to have achieved at least a grade 7 in GCSE Religious Studies.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Work is assessed through essays. Questions follow the style set by the exam board and are of varying lengths, building up from shorter one side responses to longer essays. These are graded in accordance with the criteria of the examining board so that you can assess your own progress. Tests and mock exams will again follow the format and structure set by the exam board to enable you to get plenty of practice.

## **WHAT DOES THE COURSE OFFER YOU?**

Students of Religious Studies come from a range of religious and non-religious backgrounds. It provides an opportunity for everyone to explore questions of belief, philosophy, ethics and religion enabling you to gain a mature insight into these areas whatever your own background is.

Some students have chosen to study Philosophy at university and this A level has given them an excellent grounding. Additionally, some students pursue subjects such as PPE or Maths and Philosophy and again this A level equips them well for that. The skills you will gain of logical and critical thinking are also invaluable for study at degree level and universities recognise this. You will also find that Religious Studies has an impact and relevance in many careers including law, medicine, the civil service all welcome philosophical skills as of great value.

