

Faith, Belief, Culture and Society (FBCS) Curriculum Statement



Intent

Our school ethos (*Intellect, Courage and Empathy*) and the 10 characteristics of the IB learner profile (*Knowledgeable, Balanced, Open-minded, Reflective, Principled, Caring, Thinker, Risk-taker, Communicator and Inquirer*) are at the core of our intent throughout our curriculum, at every key stage.

In FBCS we want students to know:

- That people are all different but all equal;
- That knowledge gives rise to understanding, and that understanding can lead to acceptance;
- How humans 'work', at an individual (psychological), group (anthropological) and analytical (philosophical) level.

We want students to be able to:

- Consider before judging;
- Reflect on their own lives and those of others;
- Show compassion and understanding;
- Question instead of mindlessly accepting;
- Develop as well-rounded human beings.

In offering KS3 FBCS, GCSE RS and Psychology, and IB Psychology, Philosophy and Social & Cultural Anthropology, we believe we provide many and varied opportunities for students to develop their understanding of what it means to be human.

Implementation

a) Content & Skills

KS3 FBCS

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
FBCS KS3 Curriculum Overview						
Year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 7	Abrahamic Religions Christianity	Islam	Hinduism	Sikhism	Humanism	Independent project
Year 8	Identity, Diversity and Equality		Human Rights, Justice and Democracy		Sexism and Gender Based Violence	
Year 9	Promotion of RS - standalone lessons	Cross Curricular Project	Ethics	Abortion	Media	TBC

GCSE Religious Studies (AQA)

For this course, students are required to study Christianity and one other religion. The second religion chosen for this course is Islam, as not only this is the second most important religion in the UK but also the fastest growing in the world, and unfortunately one that is often misrepresented and misunderstood.

The topics from the Thematic Studies paper have been selected by the students from the list of possible topics, as we aimed at making the course as relevant as possible to their own interests and needs.

In lessons, students engage in important and interesting debates, ranging from more theological questions (for example on the nature of God) to current issues such as equality, abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, whether the use of violence is ever justified, and the use of nuclear weapons as deterrence.

GCSE RS			
Autumn	Christianity		Christianity
Spring	Islam		Islam
Summer	Mock Exams	Relationships and Families	Relationships and Families
Autumn	Religion and Life		Mock Exams Religion, Crime and Punishment
Spring	Religion, Peace and Conflict		Revision and exam practice
Summer	Revision and exam practice	External exams	External exams

GCSE Psychology (AQA)

The course has been planned in order first to give students a grounding in Research Methods, which they can then apply across the rest of the content. Following this are the three other Paper 1 topics: Perception; Memory; Development (more accessible than Paper 2 topics: Brain and Neuropsychology; Social Influence; Language, Thought & Communication; and Psychological Problems). The order of topics has been chosen based on their increasing complexity and the ease with which students have, historically, developed their understanding.

Skills, such as analysis, logical thinking, evaluation and application, are developed throughout the course, both implicitly as the material is learned and explicitly as students practise answering exam-style questions.

IB Psychology

The course has been planned in order first to give students a grounding in research methods, which they can then apply across the rest of the content. HL students will then study Human Relationships, considering first personal relationships and then group dynamics, while in SL lessons they will start with the cognitive approach to understanding behaviour, which is more accessible than some other parts of the course. After the cognitive approach comes the Internal Assessment, a 2000-word report on an experimental investigation that is conducted by students in the second half of the Y12 Spring term.

The exact structure of the course depends each year on the nature of the groups and the availability of staff. There is flexibility in what we do - the syllabus is sufficiently open to allow for various approaches.

IB Social and Cultural Anthropology:

Social and cultural anthropology fosters intercultural awareness and understanding, which embodies the essence of an IB education, and the development of citizens who are globally aware, internationally minded, and ethically sensitive. In other words, it is transformative: transforming the way students see others, the way they view themselves, and ultimately how they act in the world.

The course has been planned in order to give students an overview of the main concepts that underpin all the topics studied, and to progressively build up the skills and knowledge required.

Both SL and HL start off with some introductory sessions on the language of anthropology and the Big Anthropological Questions, which helps students gain some of the skills assessed in paper 1. They read some ethnographic texts and apply what they have learned

so far. They then move on to research methods and social theories, which will be needed by both SL and HL students in order to start planning and implementing their IAs.

We then start looking at the different Areas of Inquiry (AOI): we start off with The Body - building on from what students have learned in the introductory lessons; we then move on to Belonging, which has some areas of overlap with the previous AOI; next, we look at Conflict, which builds on the previous two AOIs but also links in very well to the final AOI (HL only), Health, Illness and Healing.

The choice of AOI wasn't an easy one, as all of them were incredibly interesting, but I decided to choose the most relevant topics to the lives of the students, and those they will easily appreciate the importance of in the real world. For each AOI, students need to read a key ethnography, and some shorter ethnographic articles. The texts were chosen carefully on the basis of their relevance to the AOI but also bearing in mind what students would find interesting. For each AOI, students also need to be able to link the topics studied to real life examples (eg migration crisis, gender based violence, body modifications...).

Throughout the course, students are required to explain, apply, analyse, and evaluate critically.

IB Philosophy

All IB Philosophy students study the Core Theme, 'Being Human', one optional theme and a prescribed text. Higher Level students study an additional optional theme and are also required to reflect in greater depth on the nature of philosophical activity.

The Core Theme focuses on what it means to be human, covering the following key issues: the relationship between the mind and the body, the relationship between the self and the other, personhood, human nature, identity and freedom. The Core Theme is taught in conjunction with the first optional theme, Ethics.

The Core Theme and Ethics strand of the course is structured in a roughly historical way to give students an understanding of the development of ideas and of the influence of historical context on philosophical perspectives. One important skill in philosophy is the sensitive interpretation and evaluation of philosophical texts, which requires an approach that is historical, as well as literary and logical.

We begin by looking at ancient philosophy in the Greek world and in China, giving equal weight to the Chinese philosophical tradition and also noting that Greek philosophy is only retrospectively regarded as 'Western'. We then proceed to analysing moral concepts as an introduction to the first optional theme, Ethics.

The next major Core Theme topic we cover is mind and body, with a focus on the contrast between Plato's dualism and Aristotle's hylomorphism. With background knowledge of ethics, philosophy of mind, and ancient Greek philosophy students are now well-placed to

begin close study of the prescribed text, Plato's Republic. From this point on sequences of lessons on the Republic are interleaved with Core Theme and Ethics lessons.

In the second year of the course, we move on to modern and contemporary philosophy, with a particular focus on existentialism, and especially the contributions of Beauvoir and Fanon to our understanding of the relationship between freedom and another Core Theme concept, identity. This in turn leads on to the culminating unit of the Ethics strand of the course, Applied Ethics.

Philosophy of Religion is the additional optional theme studied by Higher Level. In Higher Level lessons, we begin by examining religious language, the nature of religious faith and definition of religion. Then, turning our attention to the traditional metaphysical understanding of religion, we consider different conceptions of the divine, and arguments for and against the existence of God. In the second year of the course we explore religious experience and practice from a broader perspective, taking account of psychological and sociological interpretations of religion. This means we can return to the original question of the meaning of religious language and the nature of religious faith, with a richer understanding of the diversity of religious life.

b) Learning environment

All subjects are taught within the department's accommodation except where four lessons are being taught concurrently, or when a student's particular needs are better met elsewhere. Each of the three classrooms in the department have tables around which students sit (in groups of four or six), rather than the more traditional classroom layout. These tables were chosen to facilitate group work, and are also on wheels and can be flipped up, making our use of the space more flexible.

Expectations in terms of behaviour, work ethic and presentation are consistently high across teachers and subjects. There are few disciplinary matters to deal with, and most students meet most deadlines. There is a departmental detention run when necessary.

There is a psychology research group comprising a number of Y13 students. Anthropology students engage in fieldwork beyond the school environment, and Philosophy students will be offered a Religion and Ethics conference to attend.

c) Assessment & Feedback

(From the FBCS assessment policy) As this department delivers a number of differing subjects to different Key Stages various assessment strategies and techniques are in place. Teachers in psychology and philosophy, for example, use a 'code' system to give feedback to students, with different letters linked to specific targets or skills. Students understand these letters and are expected to respond to the feedback given following homework and/or assessments. Assessments are set every half term to measure student progress and formative assessment takes place on a more regular basis in class, giving instant verbal feedback. Teachers in all subjects give good, detailed feedback based on assessment

objectives and with areas for students to improve. Specific areas for improvement are identified and fed back to students through verbal or written comments.

d) Monitoring

All members of the department use spreadsheets to track the progress of students, with marks from formal assessments and in class activities e.g. quizzes, tests entered in order for staff to monitor progress.

The generation of average grades and VA measures is being spread across the subjects and year groups, and is being used to identify those students struggling most to meet their indicative grades.

Observations, work scrutinies and learning walks within the department are being increasingly used across the year.

Impact

Results at both GCSE and IB, in all FBCS subjects, are generally strong.

2019 Results (the most recent grades awarded through public examinations)

a. IB

- i. **IB Psychology** (HL): 7-3 100%, 6/7 **33.3%**, VA **-0.2**.
- ii. **IB Psychology** (SL): 7-3 100%, 6/7 25%, VA **-0.4**.
- iii. **IB Philosophy** (HL): 7-3 100%, 6/7 **25%**, VA **-0.1**.
- iv. **IB Philosophy** (SL): 7-3 100%, 6/7 66.7%, VA -0.5.
- v. **IB Anthropology** (HL): 7-3 100%, 6/7 44.4%, VA **+0.3**.
- vi. **IB Anthropology** (SL): 7-3 100%, 6/7 **66.7%**, VA **+0.4**.

b. GCSE

- i. **GCSE RS**: 9-4 **95%**, 9-5 **84%**, 9-7 35.8%, VA -0.9.
- ii. **GCSE Psychology**: 9-4 97.5%, 9-5 85%, 9-7 40%, VA -0.73.

(**Bold** figures indicate improvements upon 2018 results.)

External results for 2020 and 2021 demonstrate an improvement on all above results.

The KS3 curriculum is designed to prepare students for GCSE RS, and those who study for GCSE with us are well prepared for the related subject(s) in the sixth form. Over 30% of our HL Psychology students have gone on to read Psychology at university, including Bath and Kings College, two of the best UK universities for the subject. None have gone on from our other IB subjects to study them.

What is observable in lessons in all subjects is the level of reflective thinking that students reach. They engage in sensitive and considerate discussions about the nature of human existence, and acquire more different perspectives - and thus greater open-mindedness - than in other subjects. This development of cultural capital in our students is something of which we are particularly proud. Through our willingness to encourage and engage with discussions about big human issues, we have seen students establish a Feminist Society and an LGBT+ Alliance with our support. There is also a student-led Psychology Research Group for sixth form students who want to become more involved with psychology while still at school.

COVID Catch Up

We do not feel that much was lost in terms of course content. Certain topics were re-ordered so as to suit the methods of delivery better, but Y11 and Y13 students were in a fit state to be examined, had they been given the opportunity.

New skills and resources were developed, so that students received a mixture of live lessons (using Google Meets), recordings and guided work. There were specific examples of changes, for example, the use of Oak Academy RE resources - carefully selected - for Y7 lessons.

Assessment tasks were set using scheduled postings in Google Classroom and submission deadlines appropriate to the task. Feedback was given through tailored responses to quiz questions, typed comments on work that had been submitted, and recorded comments for some longer pieces. Rubrics were developed to guide students and support assessment.

Current exam classes should have been relatively unaffected. Y11 RS students missed classroom-based Y9 FBCS lessons, but the delivery of live lessons and the use of breakout rooms enabled a similar experience and the development of the same skills that would have been developed while in school. Anthropology, Philosophy and Psychology are all taught *ab initio*, so any lost learning during lockdown should have a minimal impact.

Certain elements of our approach to teaching and learning during lockdown have become mainstays of our current practice, including wider use of Google Classroom for the setting, submission and assessment of work.