Religious Education at New Line Learning
At New Line Learning Academy, Religious Education plays a vital role in helping students make sense of the world around them. Our curriculum is guided by the Kent Agreed Syllabus for RE, which places an emphasis on developing religious literacy and encouraging students to explore their own beliefs and values while learning about a wide range of worldviews. Through RE, students develop critical thinking, empathy, and respect, essential skills for life in a diverse and rapidly changing society. They are encouraged to ask big questions about meaning, identity, ethics, and the role of faith in personal and public life. Our curriculum across Key Stage 3 is designed to be engaging, challenging, and relevant. In Year 7, students explore the theme of **Faith and Identity**, asking questions like "What problems are facing British teenagers?" (focusing on Sikh and Muslim perspectives), "How is spirituality expressed through the arts?", and "Can you live a good life without religion?" through an introduction to Humanism. In Year 8, they move into **Belief in Action**, considering what it means to live out a faith today. They examine beliefs from Abrahamic religions, Eastern traditions, and Humanist perspectives, tackling questions about morality, life after death, and the interpretation of sacred texts. In Year 9, students explore **Big Questions** such as "Should suffering exist?", "Do we need to prove God's existence?", and "Can justice and forgiveness work together?". These enquiries prepare them to engage with complex ethical, philosophical, and social issues, laying strong foundations for GCSE studies and beyond. At New Line Learning, we believe that RE is not just about learning facts; it is about developing open-minded, thoughtful, and compassionate young people who are ready to contribute positively to their communities and to the wider world.

Year 8 Religious Education	
Term One: What does it mean to believe in...? (Abrahamic religions)	
Big Picture	This topic invites students to explore the core beliefs and values at the heart of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It encourages them to understand similarities and differences, and how these shared traditions shape identity, community, and ethical living today.
Zoom in	Students examine: • key beliefs such as monotheism, covenant, prophets, revelation, and salvation. • They explore sacred texts (Torah, Bible, Qur'an), key figures (e.g., Moses, Jesus, Muhammad), and central practices like prayer, charity, and festivals. • They also consider how these beliefs influence everyday life and moral decisions.
Pitch it up	Students act as interfaith ambassadors, creating presentations or resources that explain shared values and differences to promote understanding and reduce prejudice.
Pre-requisite knowledge	Basic awareness of these religions from Year 7 and KS2 (main festivals, core practices).
Wider framework next steps	Provides a strong foundation for GCSE study of Christianity and Islam as main religions and supports discussions on ethics and philosophy in KS4 (Short Course AQA GCSE)
Curriculum hinterland	Deepens cultural literacy, enabling students to understand references in literature, media, and public life.
Authentic connections inc. SMSC	Social: Promotes dialogue and understanding across faiths. Moral: Explores ethical teachings on compassion and justice. Spiritual: Encourages personal reflection on belief and meaning. Cultural: Appreciates Abrahamic faiths' contributions to global and British culture.
Resources	
Read: BBC Bitesize Abrahamic faith summaries, extracts from sacred texts. Watch: "My Life, My Religion" BBC episodes on Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Do: Compare belief mind maps, create shared values posters.	
Assessments	
Formative assessment. Students create a comparative presentation or essay explaining shared and unique beliefs and how these shape the lives of believers.	

Term Two: Does religion make you good?	
Big Picture	This topic examines the link between belief and morality. It asks whether religion is necessary for goodness, encouraging students to think deeply about the sources of moral guidance.
Zoom in	• Students explore teachings on morality from Christianity (e.g., Ten Commandments, Jesus' teachings), Islam (e.g., Five Pillars, Sharia), and Humanism (reason and empathy). • They discuss concepts of conscience, duty, and virtue, and compare religious ethics to secular moral frameworks.
Pitch it up	Students act as ethics panelists, debating scenarios such as honesty, charity, and forgiveness, using both religious and non-religious arguments.
Pre-requisite knowledge	Awareness of basic moral concepts and Golden Rule ideas from KS2 and Year 7.
Wider framework next steps	Prepares students for GCSE ethical studies and philosophy of religion, where moral reasoning is central.
Curriculum hinterland	Connects to PSHE and Citizenship by encouraging discussion on personal responsibility and moral choices.
Authentic connections inc. SMSC	Social: Promotes understanding of how different people make moral decisions. Moral: Explores ideas of right and wrong from multiple perspectives. Spiritual: Encourages students to reflect on their own values. Cultural: Recognises diverse moral frameworks in society.
Resources	
Read: Case studies from Humanists UK, sacred text extracts on moral teachings. Watch: Animated ethics videos (e.g., BBC Teach), Humanist perspectives on morality. Do: Moral dilemma role-plays, design an ethical code.	
Assessments	
Alongside more formal assessment, students write an argumentative essay or deliver a speech on whether religion is necessary to live a good life.	

Term Three: Does living biblically mean obeying the whole Bible?	
Big Picture	In this enquiry, students explore how Christians use the Bible as a source of authority and guidance for living today. They examine the complexities of interpreting an ancient sacred text in a modern context, and what it means to "live biblically" when faced with current ethical and social issues.
Zoom in	• Students study different types of writing within the Bible, laws, parables, poetry, and prophecy, and learn how each genre can be interpreted differently. They discuss literal, symbolic, and contextual approaches to reading scripture and explore how different Christian denominations and individuals decide which teachings to follow closely and which to interpret in light of modern values. • They also examine practical examples, such as how Christians respond to environmental stewardship ("care for creation"), social justice, wealth and poverty, and equality issues. Students consider how interpretations may vary in response to debates around gender roles, sexuality, or pacifism, connecting scripture to real-life moral decision-making.
Pitch it up	Students take on the role of church ethics committee members tasked with advising a congregation on how to respond to a current social issue using biblical guidance, for example how to support refugees or how to approach climate change.
Pre-requisite knowledge	Understanding of Christian core beliefs and familiarity with Bible stories from Year 7 and KS2, as well as basic concepts of religious authority.
Wider framework next steps	Prepares students for GCSE studies in Christianity, particularly topics on sources of wisdom and authority, ethics, and Christian responses to contemporary issues.
Curriculum hinterland	Develops skills in critical reading and interpretation, connecting religious literacy to wider cultural and social contexts. Builds understanding of the Bible's historical influence on law, art, and literature.
Authentic connections inc. SMSC	Social: Understanding how faith communities engage with social change. Moral: Debating the ethical implications of following scripture strictly versus adapting teachings. Spiritual: Reflecting on personal values and authority in moral choices. Cultural: Exploring the impact of biblical teachings on British and global society.
Resources	

Read: Bible extracts, for example Sermon on the Mount, Genesis creation accounts, articles on modern Christian ethics. Watch: BBC Teach clips on Bible interpretation and modern Christian living, interviews with believers. Do: Small group debates on "literal versus symbolic" readings of selected passages.
Assessments
Students produce a detailed written report or presentation advising how a church community might use the Bible to respond to a modern ethical dilemma, justifying their recommendations with references to scripture and contemporary Christian thought.

Term Four: Is death the end? Does it matter?	
Big Picture	This enquiry invites students to consider one of the most profound and universal human questions: what happens after we die? It encourages exploration of how different religious and non-religious worldviews offer answers to this question and how these beliefs influence attitudes to life, death, and how we treat others.
Zoom in	• Students explore Christian beliefs in resurrection and eternal life, Buddhist ideas of rebirth and karma, Hindu views on moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth), and Humanist perspectives that focus on legacy and making a meaningful contribution during this one life. • They study funeral and mourning practices from different traditions, considering how rituals reflect beliefs about death and the afterlife. They also discuss how beliefs about what happens after death shape moral choices, personal goals, and attitudes to suffering.
Pitch it up	Students design and present a "celebration of life" event for a fictional character from different worldview perspectives, reflecting on how each tradition might mark their life and passing.
Pre-requisite knowledge	Basic knowledge of beliefs about the soul, afterlife, and rituals from Year 7 and KS2, including general exposure to religious festivals and practices.
Wider framework next steps	Provides a foundation for GCSE studies in philosophy of religion and ethical debates on euthanasia, sanctity of life, and human dignity.
Curriculum hinterland	Encourages deep thinking about existential questions, fostering empathy and emotional intelligence. Builds understanding of global diversity and interconnections between belief and lifestyle.
Authentic connections inc. SMSC	Social: Exploring shared human experiences of loss and remembrance. Moral: Reflecting on how beliefs about death influence ethical living. Spiritual: Contemplating meaning and purpose of life. Cultural: Appreciating varied cultural practices surrounding death and mourning.
Resources	
Read: Articles on funeral rites and beliefs (BBC Religion & Ethics), stories of memorial traditions worldwide. Watch: "My Life, My Religion" episodes on death and funeral customs, documentaries on Buddhist and Hindu funerals. Do: Create symbolic artwork or write "letters to future generations" from different worldview perspectives.	
Assessments	

Alongside the formal assessment - Students write a reflective essay or create a multimedia project comparing and evaluating different beliefs about death and how these might impact daily life and moral choices.

Term Five: What difference does it make to believe in...? (Eastern traditions)	
Big Picture	This topic challenges students to understand how Eastern religious beliefs shape everyday life, moral choices, and community values. It highlights how faith is not just about abstract ideas but is expressed practically through daily habits, social actions, and personal discipline.
Zoom in	• Students examine key concepts from Buddhism (Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path), Hinduism (dharma, karma, moksha), Sikhism (equality, sewa or selfless service, belief in one God), and Jainism (ahimsa or non-violence, ascetic practices). • They explore how these beliefs influence decisions about diet, meditation, festivals, work, and relationships. Students look at stories of religious figures like the Buddha, Sikh Gurus, and Hindu deities, connecting these narratives to lived experiences today. • Students also discuss the importance of community service, environmental responsibility, and simplicity, linking these to broader ethical discussions.
Pitch it up	Students act as cultural exchange hosts or travel guide creators, developing an immersive "faith experience" day for visitors to understand how belief affects daily life and moral choices in Eastern traditions.
Pre-requisite knowledge	Basic familiarity with Eastern traditions, for example karma, reincarnation, festivals, from KS2 and Year 7.
Wider framework next steps	Provides essential context for GCSE comparative religion and ethics topics and builds foundation for global citizenship education.
Curriculum hinterland	Helps students understand global cultural diversity and the practical outworking of belief systems. Links to sustainability, community responsibility, and social justice themes.
Authentic connections inc. SMSC	Social: Promotes respect for different ways of life and shared human values. Moral: Encourages reflection on personal responsibility, compassion, and non-violence. Spiritual: Explores self-discipline, mindfulness, and pursuit of inner peace. Cultural: Celebrates the richness and variety of Eastern cultural and religious traditions.

Resources
Read: BBC Bitesize sections on Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, stories from sacred texts, for example Jataka tales, Bhagavad Gita excerpts. Watch: "My Life, My Religion" episodes on Buddhist, Hindu, and Sikh young people. Do: Meditation practice taster, service or charity project inspired by sewa, design

personal dharma or "life code" posters.
Assessments
Alongside formal assessment, students create a detailed "A Day in the Life" project or diary entry for a young believer in an Eastern tradition, showing how their daily choices and actions are influenced by their faith.