

## **Theology and Ethics at Thomas Hardy**

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The theology and ethics department at the Thomas Hardy School is part of a large humanities faculty and aims to promote open-mindedness, empathy and appreciation of the diverse world in which we live. The size of the school means that we have the opportunity to meet a range of specialisms and recruit staff with different areas of expertise. It is one of the most exciting things about working in the faculty.

The Head of Theology and Ethics has been in post since September following an internal promotion so this is a particularly exciting time to join the team. There are regular team meetings and plenty of opportunities to share resources. The department is involved in several innovative projects including the development of holocaust education and has a strong reputation both locally and nationally. Last year we were awarded the gold mark for religious education in schools.

Teaching takes place in a specialist suite of rooms which are well-equipped and well resourced. Each room is equipped with a projector and ICT facilities in the school, including BYO, are excellent. A team of four ICT technicians and managers provide on-going support and training.

Across Key Stages 3 and 4 all students have three hours of theology and ethics per fortnight with the entire cohort being entered for the full course GCSE. Students begin their studies when they enter the school in Year 9 (the chosen specification of study is AQA Religious Studies A [8062]). Year 9 students have a short introductory unit on humanism to develop their understanding of how non-religious people may attempt to answer 'big' life questions. AQA Units of study in Year 9 focus on Christian and Buddhist beliefs and teachings. Towards the end of the year, students then complete one of the thematic study elements of the GCSE course (Religion, Peace & Conflict).

In Years 10 and 11, students address Christian and Buddhist Practices and explore the themes of Relationship & Families, Life and Crime & Punishment, from both a religious and non-religious perspective.

Religious Studies is a popular choice at A Level: students study the OCR specification [H573] which includes exploration of three components; Philosophy, Ethics and Buddhism. Each of these components have three teaching lessons per fortnight.

The results at both GCSE and A Level are excellent and students view the subject extremely positively.