**The Judd School**

**Department of Religious Education**

Religious Education has a very positive profile at Judd, where students know that they are free to express their beliefs and opinions and that they will be respected by teachers and students alike. As a result of this liberal ethos many of the students who go on to choose Religious Studies as one of their exam options are agnostics and atheists. We make it clear that what makes an outstanding RS student is someone who can give reasons supporting their beliefs but who can also appreciate why not everyone agrees with them.

Years 7 and 8 follow a KS3 curriculum which anticipates that almost all students beginning in Year 7 will already be working at QCA (Non-Statutory) Level 5 and that most will be working at or above Level 7 by the end of Year 8.

In Year 7 students: study and evaluate arguments for and against belief in God; investigate the festival of Christmas and the meaning of the Incarnation for Christians; investigate Holy Week and the meaning of the Resurrection for Christians; study and consider the implications of Christian and Hindu beliefs about what happens when we die.

In Year 8 students: engage in a major study of the origins and practice of Judaism; discover the origins of the early Church; examine different types of Christian worship and practice. All Year 8 students visit 3 local churches and design an ecumenical church which could fit the beliefs and requirements of all three groups.

In Year 9 all students study Edexcel RS GCSE Short Course in Hinduism which they sit in June of that year. Although most Judd students come from a Christian or secular background, there are a significant minority from Hindu families. There are five sets of about 27 students each with a generous allocation of four 50 minute lessons a fortnight. During the year we have visited the Shree Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden and organised a cross-curricular Diwali Day featuring workshops in batik, Indian dance, Sanskrit and yoga. This is the first year we have taught Year 9’s to GCSE standard or followed a GCSE Short Course so it’s an exciting development!

The current Year 10’s and 11’s still follow Edexcel RS GCSE Full Course with a total cohort of 125 students. In addition to Hinduism they study Religion and Life based on a study of Christianity (which is broadly Christian and secular ethical issues). From September 2010 we expect to have three sets of about 25 students in Year 10 making their Short Course up to a Full Course GCSE. GCSE options have an allocation of five lessons a fortnight in Year 10 and six lessons in year 11. We have been very pleased with recent results at GCSE, including 100% A/A\* in 2008 and 65% A\* in 2009.

From September we will be offering a department elective in addition to GCSE. This will be a non-examinable course designed to broaden the KS4 curriculum on an allocation of two double lessons a fortnight. The RE elective will be ‘The Mind’ and will cover elements from philosophy and psychology.

At A Level we provide a stimulating and increasingly popular scheme of study with topics including Religion, Philosophy and Science (until 2011), Religion, Art and the Media and Philosophy of Religion. These are taken from the AQA RS specification. Highlights this year included visits to St Paul’s Cathedral, ‘The Sacred Made Real’ exhibition at the National Gallery and Marcus Brigstocke’s stand up comedy ‘God Collar’. We are also expecting a visit from Professor John Polkinghorne at the end of March. In 2009 57% of AS students were awarded an A grade and 85% gained A or B grades; 46% of A2 students were awarded an A grade and 86% gained A or B grades. There are currently 25 students in two sets in Year 12 and we are expecting to maintain and slightly increase on this in September 2010.

The department currently consists of three full-time specialists. All are passionate about their subject and can teach to the highest academic standards but are also able to ‘get alongside’ their students (who, although academically gifted, can be just as challenging as school students anywhere). Special qualities in this job include: classroom skills such as using resources and discussion creatively to bring the subject alive; the ability to maintain an impartial religious position within the classroom; the ability to praise students for making an effort rather than for being bright; empathy and resourcefulness when teaching students with special needs; a continuing interest in professional development.

Applicants should have a keen interest in and/or background in world religions and philosophy. It would be of benefit if experienced applicants were willing to become a mentor to a GTP student who will be starting with the department in September.

“For me, RE gives an insight into other religions which helps me to recognise the importance of their beliefs to them. Also, when I meet a person of another religion I know how to treat and understand them. RE also provides opportunities through Gifted & Talented and I have been fascinated by philosophy.”

A KS3 RE student

“RS at Judd is enjoyable as we are free to express our opinions. It is a great opportunity to improve the way we look at the world and events surrounding us.”

A GCSE RS student

“RS at A Level offers students the opportunity to explore and develop their understanding of religion’s role in modern day society. Lessons provide an excellent forum for discussion of ideas and opinions and the course allows us to get out of the classroom and learn in different environments.”

An AS RS student