



**BISHOP
GROSSETESTE
UNIVERSITY**

REPORT TO SACRE

22 March 2022

Recent and ongoing RE projects

Mark Plater

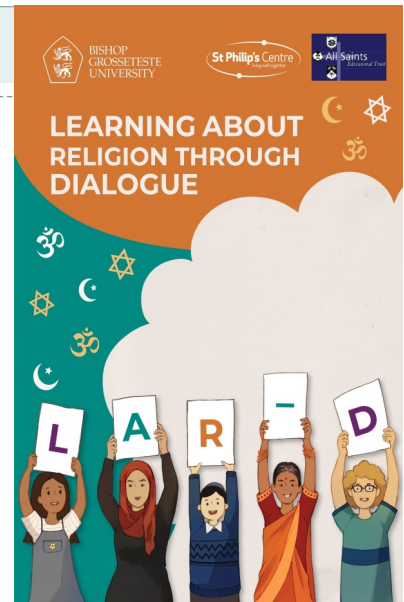
1. LAR-D PROJECT (*LEARNING ABOUT RELIGION THROUGH DIALOGUE*)

2. SURVEY OF SECONDARY RE ITE STUDENTS 2020-21

3. FARMINGTON SECONDARY RE TEACHER SUPPORT GROUP

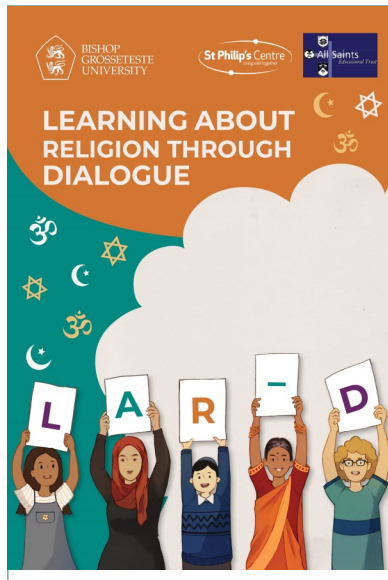
4. LINCS RE HUB & EMAIL GROUP

5. GCSE & A LEVELS IN LINCOLNSHIRE



REPORT ON A SURVEY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ITE COHORT 2020-21





IMPACT OF LAR-D

In spite of Covid cancellations, a **range of activities** were carried out:

- 14 lessons, involving 430+ children
- 2 faith centre visits
- Video and email questions answered
- Whole school assembly input
- Staff & governors CPD
- 33 teachers involved + TAs
- Diwali cards made & sent
- School tour and lunch with staff
- School displays
- School website & Social media engagements

"This project was amazing! It's one of the best things we've ever been involved in" (Primary teacher)

"The whole programme has been really useful, and I know that our students— particularly our GCSE students... where they've been a little bit more switched on, and engaged more, and with more maturity... been able to ask lots of really thoughtful and thought-provoking questions, both of XX, and of themselves" (Secondary teacher)

LAR-D timeline: July 2018 proposal developed and funding sought; Sept. 2019 training day & project begins; Dec. 2020 concluding conference and feedback sought from participants; 2021 Final Report published.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The project was initiated, developed and administered by **Mark Plater**, Senior Lecturer in Education and Theology at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln.

All Saints Educational Trust provided funding to enable the work to proceed.

Riaz Ravat, Deputy Director of the St Philip's Centre Leicester, selected and supported the faith practitioners, also managing issues around police-vetting, training and ongoing funding.

Prof Rob Freethy, University of Exeter, attended and provided training about the RE-searchers approach to RE at the Sept 2019 launch event.

Participating schools:

Lincoln Christ's Hospital School. (Secondary)

Magnus CE Academy* (Secondary)

Pinchbeck East CE Primary school*

Priory Academy LSST. (Secondary)

South View Community Primary school.

Utterby Primary Academy.

[* For various reasons, both of these schools were unable to complete the project.]

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HOW DID THE LAR-D PROJECT WORK?

The project works quite simply by linking a faith practitioner from a selected religion/culture to a school, and then provides teachers with pedagogic tools for engaging in ongoing dialogue with that person over an extended period of time. It is hoped that they will become friends and want to maintain contact even after the period of the funded part of the programme.

Contact theory, developed by Gordon Allport in the 1950s (Allport, 1954), advocates that the best way to challenge attitudes of prejudice and bigotry is for people to enjoy extended and ongoing contact with people whom they consider to be different from themselves. This project makes provision for such ongoing contact, as a means of fostering religious understanding and appreciation.

The pedagogic method offered is that of the RE-searchers programme, developed by Freethy and Freethy in Exeter. This provides a framework methodology for children to explore religions from a range of different social science disciplines and other perspectives. The RE-searchers programme encourages pupils to research and explore ideas for themselves using an EBL (enquiry-based learning) approach.

Funding for the project enables schools to release staff for training and covers costs of travel and resourcing, etc. It also funded the St Philip's Centre costs and provided an honorarium for faith practitioners, enabling us to engage highly qualified and engaged participants.



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Access the Final Report here:

<https://bgro.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/id/eprint/884/>

RE ITE COHORT SURVEY SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There are arguably no great surprises in the results of this survey. Overall, it reflects a group of RE teachers who are varied, world-and-work experienced, and with a wide range of personal interests.

- 662 trainees were enrolled for RE ITT in 2020, 130% of the government target (510). This was the first time that the government target had been met for many years. 152 of the cohort (23%) completed this survey.
- The majority of these RE teachers were trained in universities (54%), or through the school direct route (29%).
- More than half (52%) of the cohort were over 25 years of age, the majority (82%) bringing previous work experience, and many (over 40%) were making a career switch.
- The majority were female (78%), which approximately reflects government figures of 27% male/ 73% female for RE trainees in this cohort.
- The group represent a range of faith traditions, although the largest groups were Christian (34%), and Atheist/Agnostic (33%). 7% describe themselves as Undecided/Don't know. In total, 29% describe themselves as strongly committed to a religious faith perspective.
- 16% of the cohort identify as Black, Afro-Caribbean, Asian or Mixed race, and an additional 9% as Irish or European.
- Most of the group were educated in state schools, although 9% had experienced private education. Some had attended schools overseas, and one had been home-schooled.
- 36% of the group have other family members who are teaching, with 35 (65%) of these being immediate family (parents, partners or siblings).
- 46% of the cohort had a first degree which included Theology/ Religious Studies, and a further 15% have a first degree in Philosophy. The other 40% of the group have degrees in a wide range of subjects, including business, journalism, law, health and social care, etc.
- Nearly 43% of the group completed a subject knowledge enhancement course prior to commencement of their ITE training, and the majority (85%) found this helpful.
- Both personal and social utility factors (such as enjoying work with young people and wanting to make a difference to people's lives) attracted this group into teaching, whereas career value factors (e.g. holidays, job flexibility, fit with family responsibilities, etc.) did not.
- Likewise, fascination with the subject matter, and RE's scope for making a difference to young people's lives, was what specifically attracted them to teach RE, rather than financial incentives (e.g. the government bursary) or social influences (such as doing well in RE at school, or other people suggesting that they might become an RE teacher).
- A range of 'landmarks' contributed to peoples' choice to become a RE teacher, particularly love of philosophical debate (75%), having relevant qualifications (71%), and encouragement from others (51%).
- Respondents have several hopes and intentions from teaching RE, particularly, breaking down prejudice and misunderstanding (71%), helping pupils to discover their own perspectives (51%), and enthusing students in the study of religion and worldviews (43%).
- Trainees appreciated various aspects of their ITE experience, and offer a range of suggestions for improving the initial training year.
- Only 8% of trainees would travel to anywhere in the UK or abroad for a teaching job, and 75% would only travel up to 25 miles for a teaching job.

A copy of the survey report can be accessed here:

<https://bgro.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/id/eprint/881/>



REPORT ON A SURVEY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ITE COHORT, 2020-21

By Mark Plater, Autumn 2021

CHAPTERS

Percentages of responses

Age and Gender

Religion/worldview & commitment

Ethnicity & childhood school

Family & prior life experience

Qualifications & SKE course

FIT-Choice Scale responses

Landmark experiences

Aims/hopes from RE teaching

Feedback on current ITE course - Strengths

Feedback on current ITE course - Areas for development

Employment

Travel & School Preference

Follow-up survey

A follow-up survey is presently being developed for circulation in July 2022.

This will be sent to those who agreed to participate when completing the first survey.

It will focus on whether they gained a teaching post, what support they have had as an early career teacher, and what their plans are for the future.

LINCS RE HUB

The Lincs RE Hub meets termly as a support group for RE 'enthusiasts' (primary & secondary teachers, university staff & students, RE Advisers, etc.).

Meetings usually have a focus, but are a good occasion for finding out what's happening in RE, sharing ideas, meeting colleagues, and being enthused...

Some sessions include food, but all begin with refreshments.

The next one is Tuesday 12th April, 2022, at BGU Lincoln.



Images from recent Hub meetings



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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OTHER PROJECTS IN HAND...

GCSE & A LEVEL RS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

The below is an example of statistics gathered in order to monitor GCSE and A level RS take-up in Lincolnshire.

Another activity involved creation of a chart to show which A level RS Boards were followed by different schools, in order to encourage sharing of resources and working together.

One positive outcome of this is a joint VI form day at BGU (11 March), with outside speakers providing A level RS input.

A level RS in Lincolnshire, 2017 to 2021.

Year	Subject	AgeGroup	Grade	County	Number of candidates	CountyPercent	NationalPercent
2021	Religious studies	Aged 18	C and above	Lincolnshire	215	95.8	91.7
2020	Religious studies	Aged 18	C and above	Lincolnshire	195	91.7	89.2
2019	Religious studies	Aged 18	C and above	Lincolnshire	255	80.1	76.5
2018	Religious studies	Aged 18	C and above	Lincolnshire	280	75.4	78.4
2017	Religious studies	Aged 18	C and above	Lincolnshire	330	80.2	81

Source: <https://analytics.ofqual.gov.uk/apps/Alevel/County/> Map of A level grade outcomes by county in England

FARMINGTON SECONDARY RE SUPPORT GROUP

Farmington Educational Trust has sponsored a programme for 2021-22 in which 9 RE staff from Lincoln schools meet half-termly for an evening meal and a chance to share topics of interest or expertise on a rota basis. The aim is to develop a community of friendship and inspiration, and sharing of ideas and resources.

Each participant is also given a £50 book voucher for professional development.

The group has met three times so far –twice at the Old Bakery, and once at the Rising Café.

