

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The work of the religious education department is wide-ranging and varied. It includes general religious education, GCSE Religion, Philosophy and Ethics, and A-level Theology, Philosophy and Ethics. The Religious Education Department at Balcarras aims to produce religiously educated and aware pupils who also value truth, seek justice and honour, respect themselves and others and who care about British values and the world they live in. Our aim is to educate pupils so that they are interested in and can understand the religious beliefs, values and traditions of others whilst also being willing to assess their own beliefs against conflicting opinion. To this end, we are committed to delivering effective, informative and challenging religious education lessons throughout all year groups.

The department is made up of three experienced, specialist religious education teachers with three newly, purpose built classrooms, one with a computer suite that all of the department make regular use of. We are proud of our facilities and place a great emphasis on creating a stimulating working environment. Some of our classrooms have been the winners of the school display competition. However, we also look for opportunities to expand learning outside of the classroom, and this involves annual visits to places of worship, whole school curriculum days, a whole school 'Philosophy Fortnight', Sixth Form philosophy conferences and residential trips to Berlin and New York. We also have representatives from religions in to discuss their faith with the pupils. At key stage 3, we broadly follow the Gloucestershire agreed syllabus and all of the six major world religions are studied throughout the key stage. Our approach to KS3 is to make it enjoyable and challenging to enable students to engage with religious education and build up their skills in preparation for GCSE.

Recruitment for GCSE religious education is very strong with three full groups opting for the subject since we became an options subject five years ago. We started teaching the reformed GCSE in September 2016 and we are following the OCR specification with Christianity, Buddhism and the Philosophy and Ethics papers being our focus. As part of the Philosophy and Ethics course, we run, in conjunction with the history department, a six-day study trip to Berlin in Year 10 to support the students in their learning. As a department we fully resourced the course with high quality PowerPoints, activities and exam style material and pupils, and staff, are enjoying the challenges that the reformed course has brought. Our GCSE results are very strong and we are extremely proud of the reputation we have built within the school and local area because of them. In 2018 we achieved 93% grade 4 and above, 80% grade 5 and above, 50% grade 7 and above and 29% grade 8 and above.

We are also a popular options subject with A Level pupils and have 60 A Level pupils currently studying the course. We study the OCR Philosophy, Ethics and Theology course. As part of the A level course we run a bi-annual trip to New York with the history department. We again, have good results at A Level, and last year 88% of pupils achieved above or on their target grade. In 2018 85% of pupils achieved A*-C with 30% achieving an A or A*. Our A Level pupils are passionate about the subject and we have had a number of pupils have go on to study the subject, or linked subjects, at university over the years, including Oxbridge and Russell Group universities.

This is an exciting opportunity to join an experienced, dedicated and successful religious education and philosophy department. We are seeking a passionate, dynamic and engaging teacher to join our well established and respected department. We welcome applications from NQT level candidates who are committed to the teaching of high quality teaching of religious, social, moral, ethical and philosophical education of pupils, promoting outstanding progress and attainment for all. Candidates will be required to teach Religious Education to Key Stages 3 & 4 (and possibly Philosophy, Ethics and Theology at Key Stage 5).

Harriet Ebanja
Head of Department
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