

**Head of Religious Education
Information Pack
Alcester Grammar School**

Welcome from the Principal - Mr Clive Sentence

I am very proud to be the Principal of this wonderful school. We are one of the country's highest performing state schools, and we pride ourselves on being an uplifting place to work and study and a community where everybody is happy and valued.

Teachers who work here have been heard to say it is the best job they have ever had and many choose to remain with us for a long time. If you do join us you will be part of a like minded community who enjoy their teaching, make a huge contribution to extracurricular activities, and obtain a great deal of job satisfaction.

I can safely say that teaching here is a huge amount of fun. There is virtually no poor behaviour or disruption in lessons and the children exhibit a voracious appetite for learning. One of the many joys of working here is that you can focus on your teaching and on bringing your subject to life. You do not need to have had any experience of the selective sector, either as a student yourself or as a teacher. Indeed some of our teachers have joined us having developed their skills in the non-selective sector, and what they find to be different here is simply the overwhelmingly positive attitudes to learning and appetite for hard work amongst the students. This truly is a place where you can do the job you trained to do, with every opportunity to try out new teaching techniques and ideas in lessons.

The Senior Leadership Team are supportive, broad minded and keen to see all staff and students succeed. Our vision is that the school should always be a place for professionals who would like to refine their teaching skills and implement innovative and creative ideas. Central to our philosophy are the key concepts of professionalism, autonomy and consultation, all within a sensible and reasonable framework of accountability. We operate light-touch monitoring, with few graded lesson observations, and you will enjoy the freedom to focus on education rather jumping through hoops to meet the supposed demands of OFSTED.

We are located in a highly convenient location in South Warwickshire, just over half an hour's drive from Birmingham and easily commutable from Worcester, Stratford, Coventry, Warwick or Cheltenham. It is a beautiful part of the country with superb amenities and eminently affordable housing, including plenty of good quality new build developments nearby. Anybody joining us is likely to see not just a significant increase in the quality of their professional life, but a commensurate increase in the quality of life outside of school.

We always seek to identify talent and support professional development, so do not be deterred if this would be your first application to lead a department. Prospective candidates are encouraged to visit the school and I am confident that if you do so you will very much want to come and work for us!

I look forward to receiving your application and meeting you soon.



About Alcester Grammar School

AGS is a forward-looking, selective state school with academy status and an outstanding record of promoting high achievement. Whilst we have achieved outstanding judgements in our last four Ofsted inspections, we regularly analyse our performance and seek new ways to enhance learning opportunities for our students.



It is worth noting that we are selective at 11-16 but we offer wider access to post-16 students. With 1205 students on roll, including over 500 in the sixth form, we are in a position to offer a wide curriculum; including a choice of two out of three languages in Years 7-9 and a requirement to study a modern language at KS4. In the 6th Form we offer a choice of around 25 different A levels.



A major strength of our school is our pastoral support structure. Our students are supported by form tutors and Heads of Year. We also have access to other external support agencies. Behaviour and attendance are excellent at AGS and

our students are highly motivated, keen and enthusiastic. They are warm, welcoming and have a good working relationship with staff, which is built on mutual trust and respect.

AGS is an exciting place to work. Staff have high standards, both of themselves and our students. We have a large number of support staff who work alongside teachers and there are many opportunities to develop their skills and careers through research projects, working with trainee teachers, participation in school development groups and working with staff from other schools, locally, nationally and internationally.



What our current staff say:

“There's a real sense of working as a team, and a great warmth and humour I haven't experienced in any other workplace.”

“AGS has a unique vibe. There is such a positive atmosphere around the school; staff and students respect each other, support each other and demonstrate genuine care.”

“The students are never afraid to ask ‘why?’
They are vibrant and challenging”

Please do have a look at our website at www.alcestergs.co.uk and view our prospectus to find out more about our school.

AGS Religious Studies Department

RESPONSIBLE TO: Senior Leadership team

SALARY: MPS/UPS+TLR 2c (£2664)

The Current RE Team

Caroline Wells (Head of Department)

Patrick Carr (Full Time Teacher i/c Philosophy)

The Head of RE Post (from Sept 2018)

This is a rare opportunity to lead and shape a department in your own image. Our long serving Head of Department is retiring and the second member of staff is leaving the school for a promotion. Our new Head of RE will have the opportunity to appoint a colleague and to bring their own approach to this popular subject area.

Our students are keen to engage in discussion on contemporary moral issues. They are aware and informed, and respond well to engaging and inspiring teaching. If you have a vision for this subject and how it relates to the twenty-first century, then we would like to hear from you.



At the moment, RE is a core subject (1 hour per week) for every student in Y7-9. At KS4 RE is taught as part of a PSHE rotation, with the option to top up to an examined half GCSE at the end of Y11 for those who choose. RE is a popular choice in the sixth form, where we currently deliver the OCR specification.

Our ideal candidate will be enthusiastic and passionate about their subject, with the necessary skills and charisma to engage a largely secular student body. They will be confident in the classroom, from delivering academic rigour at A level, to managing lively student debates in the lower school.



Whilst we would welcome staff who have previous leadership experience, this is not essential. AGS is a supportive environment with a dynamic culture and you will get all the support you need to become a highly effective middle leader.

Department facilities

The department currently has two dedicated classrooms where all RE teaching takes place. A conveniently located Department office is opposite. Both classrooms have projectors and interactive whiteboards.



The RE Curriculum

We currently follow our own syllabus developed in line with the National Framework for Religious Education.

In order for students to understand the development of religious belief we start year 7 with a systematic look at Judaism. This is a religion with a lot of festivals, rituals and religious artefacts which the students can relate to in a very direct way. As well as learning about different beliefs within Judaism, students are encouraged to reflect on their own life experiences. At the end of the year we visit Singer's Hill synagogue.

In Year 8 we look at the life and teachings of Jesus in the context of the time and place that he lived and the impact of his teaching on our lives today. We also study the life of the Prophet Muhammed and the Five Pillars of Islam that developed from his teaching.



In Year 9 we introduce subject content from the AQA GCSE RE Short Course using thinking and reasoning skills. In Year 9 this includes presenting, understanding and evaluating arguments for the existence of God and contrasting these with secular views and non-theistic religious beliefs found in Buddhism.

In Years 10 and 11 students continue to follow the AQA GCSE Short Course begun in Year 9 as part of the PSHE programme. They consider ethical arguments involved in personal relationships and war, peace and forgiveness. They have the option of taking an exam in May of Year 11 to gain a half GCSE in Religious Studies.

Religious Studies and Philosophy are popular options in the Sixth Form and many of our students choose to continue their studies at university level, including Oxbridge. At AS Level students study Philosophy of Religion, Ethics and Theology.



We currently have fifteen y12 students studying for AS philosophy and we have made arrangements to cover their teaching to A level in year 13.

The successful candidate would initially be required to teach Key Stage Three, GCSE and A level RE.

The department's aims are always to stimulate and sustain enthusiasm for the subject. We hope that this will develop into a lifelong interest in Religion as we prepare our students for life in the 21st century.

This is an excellent opportunity to work in a positive environment with supportive colleagues and keen, well-motivated students.

Person Specification

It is expected that the successful applicant will be able to fulfil the following criteria:

Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Teacher Status • Good Honours degree in RE or related discipline
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to teach RE across the age range of the school and up to A level • Awareness of effective and engaging teaching and learning strategies. • Evidence of being a high quality classroom practitioner • Evidence of improving and sustaining high outcomes for students • Evidence of strong leadership skills • CPD or experience pertaining to middle leadership
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the NFRE curriculum requirements at KS3 • Familiarity with the revised curriculum being delivered at KS4 • Familiarity with the requirements of teaching Religious Studies at A level and understanding of the recent changes to the revised A/AS level courses. • Ability to develop revised schemes of work
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to inspire and motivate students by creating a stimulating and challenging learning environment • Commitment to students as individuals • Sensitivity to the requirement to meet the learning needs and challenges of students of all abilities in all key stages • Ability to secure the commitment and respect of students, staff and parents • Ability to motivate and inspire colleagues as part of a team
Personal Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm for Religious Education • Adaptable and able to respond to and initiate change • Friendly, approachable team member • Sensitive and supportive • Excellent organisation and an effective communicator • Hard-working and flexible • Ability to review own performance • Willingness to contribute to the success of the school both intra- and extra-curricular • A good sense of humour and a sense of perspective! • A commitment to safeguarding children's well being

Head of Religious Education: Job Description

In addition to the duties of a subject teacher, the Head of Department will be responsible for the strategic direction, development and management of the department and be accountable for the standards of teaching and learning and student progress.

Responsibilities:

- develop, lead and implement policies and practices throughout the school that reflect the school's ethos and commitment to high achievement through effective teaching and learning.
- produce, maintain and regularly review the departmental Self-Evaluation Form and analysis of examination results & achievement data.
- use performance data to evaluate students' progress and, with appropriate colleagues, set targets for improvement for groups of children.
- use performance data to identify areas of strength/weakness in teaching and take steps to spread good practice/address weaknesses identified with relevant colleagues.
- motivate and enthuse colleagues and encourage a shared understanding of the contribution the subject can make to all aspects of students' lives.
- support the team in managing student behaviour and setting high standards.
- hold regular, minuted departmental meetings with a focus on improving teaching & learning.
- monitor the quality of provision within the curriculum area, including sampling students work, and take appropriate steps to ensure a high standard of provision is in place.
- ensure schemes of work and appropriate assessments are in place. This will require awareness of current trends in curriculum development, teaching techniques and the evolving demands of external examinations.
- carry out the performance management of the team, oversee any delegated responsibility for this and support the professional development of members of the team.
- actively contribute to whole school priorities, curriculum planning and the formulation of the school development plan.
- monitor the departmental budget and bid for curriculum development innovations.
- take charge of Health & Safety issues within the Department.
- liaise with the schools examinations officer to ensure the accurate entry of students for external examinations.
- liaise with partner schools to ensure pupils' progress between phases is smooth & uninterrupted.
- oversee the effective running of extra-curricular activities.

REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974

Amendment to Exceptions Order (2013)

The work for which you are applying will have regular contact with children and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. However, please note that the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers, and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service website. www.gov.uk/dbs

These details should be enclosed in a separate, sealed envelope marked 'confidential' – for the attention of the Chairperson of the appointing body. The envelope should state clearly the name of the school/establishment and the work for which you are applying, and be returned with your application form.

The information you give will be treated in confidence and will only be taken into account in relation to an application where the exemption applies.

The Governing Body is entitled, under arrangements introduced for the protection of children, to check with the Disclosures and Barring Service for the existence and content of any criminal record of the successful applicant prior to the confirmation of appointment.

Therefore, successful applicants will be required to complete a disclosure form to enable a check to be undertaken. Failure to consent to this could prevent the application being considered further. This check involves details being obtained of convictions, including those considered 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, cautions held

at national level and may also include on-conviction information. You will receive the results of the check from the Disclosures and Barring Service, who will also forward a copy to the Authority. Information received from the Disclosures and Barring Service will be kept in strict confidence and will be destroyed in accordance with guidelines laid down by the Disclosures and Barring Service.

The disclosure of a criminal record will not debar you from appointment, unless the Authority considers that the conviction renders you unsuitable for appointment. In making this decision, consideration will be given to the nature of the offence, how long ago and what age you were when it was committed, and any factors which may be relevant.

Failure to declare a conviction, caution or bind-over may, however, disqualify you from appointment, or result in dismissal or disciplinary action if the discrepancy comes to light.

Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 it is an offence for an individual who has been disqualified from working with children to knowingly apply for offer to do, or accept or do any work in a 'regulated position', such as the post for which you are applying.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Alcester Grammar School is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

The school's Equal Opportunities Policy states that it will give equal treatment to all persons within its organisation regardless of sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality, national origin, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age and not allow any individual to be disadvantaged by any other condition which cannot be shown as justifiable.

Application Procedure

Please complete the application form and provide a supporting statement (**on no more than two sides of A4**). The supporting statement should address your particular strengths and how your experience to date has prepared you for this particular role. Applications may be submitted via email to j.dyos@alcestergs.com or by post to Alcester Grammar School, Birmingham Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5ED.

The closing date is 9am on Thursday 19th April 2018; the interviews will take place shortly after this date.

AGS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect all staff to share this commitment. Appointments made are subject to an Enhanced Disclosures and Barring Disclosure.



For more information about AGS see our website www.alcestergs.co.uk
or contact the Principal, Clive Sentence on 01789-762494,
or via j.dyos@alcestergs.com

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