

Head of Religious Education Department

Salary dependent on experience

Starting date dependent on availability of successful candidate

Full-time



The School

Grace College is an 11-19 secondary school serving nearly 1200 students in central Gateshead. The school is entering an exciting new phase having recently joined the Emmanuel Schools Foundation. Grace College is the fifth school within the Foundation, which seeks to contribute to economic regeneration, prosperity in the north-east, and quality of community life through its work with young people. Our schools exist to impart wisdom to the next generation by educating young men and women in a culture which prioritises the pursuit of knowledge and the development of character. We serve communities of students, staff and parents who hold many different religious and ideological positions who unite around our core beliefs and core values, which are underpinned by our Christian ethos.

We value academic excellence, but we hold personal best to be of far greater importance. It is our experience that by developing a strong work ethic, holding a growth rather than fixed mind-set, and being provided with outstanding tuition, students may go on to achieve considerably more than they might have imagined possible. We seek to be intentional about character education, our aim being that our students will, in the future, become servant-hearted leaders. Students starting here encounter consistent rules, role models and traditions, which help them feel part of the school community and to begin to take responsibility for others. As students grow older we expect more of them and in the Sixth Form expect our students to take on at least one formal leadership role within the school as well as beginning to serve in the wider community.

As part of ensuring rapid school improvement, Grace College will be working closely with Emmanuel College, which is one of the very best non-selective, co-educational, comprehensive schools in the country. Emmanuel College has a history of excellent academic results with a 2018 progress 8 figure of +0.52 and at A Level 68% of all grades at grade A* to B. We believe working together will ensure similar academic outcomes for the students at Grace College in the coming years. Grace College will maintain its own distinctive identity as it partners with Emmanuel College, and benefit from the extensive educational leadership capacity across the Emmanuel Schools Foundation.

We are committed to an extensive, high quality programme of professional development and to provide opportunities for career progression. As such, this opportunity is ideal for ambitious educators who aspire to future senior leadership and will benefit from input through our National Teaching School designation. The successful candidate will also be eligible to apply to undertake the National Professional Qualification for Middle or Senior Leaders, whichever is deemed to be more appropriate.

Department

The Emmanuel School Foundation has a non-denominational Christian ethos which underpins the emphasis the multi-academy trust (MAT) places on *Character Education*. To support this our schools, seek to develop in students, an understanding of philosophy, ethics and theology from Year 7 through to Year 13. Part of this instruction involves more direct teaching towards achieving a GCSE in Religious Education. All our schools do not apply a religious test on entry, so our student populations are mixed in terms of religious outlook, broadly reflecting the makeup of the various faith communities found locally.

Grace College is in the process of establishing a Religious Education department similar to our other schools. The Religious Education department will place an emphasis on the interconnectivity of philosophy, theology and ethics. The department is not yet at full complement but will grow to a team of about six full-time members as the subject grows year on year. We anticipate the new intake of Year 7, to have either two or three periods of RE

per week, and be taught in sets with students of a similar ability. We currently have one Year 10 class and one Year 11 class doing GCSE RE. Moving forward each year we will look to grow the complement of teachers in the team so that the school is in the position to deliver GCSE Religious Education to whole year cohorts.

Our intention is to enable students develop an informed understanding of biblical Christianity; and how this has shaped our nation, and arguably the Western world. This basis provides the starting point for students to develop their understanding of other religions and philosophies as they move on through their education. They are encouraged to critique faith positions, to identify similarities and differences between alternative religious views and to articulate their own emerging ideas in a coherent manner. This is done in an atmosphere of openness, honesty and mutual respect.

The RE syllabus in Years 7, will begin with an introduction to the Christian faith. Through systematic study of Bible passages, students will be encouraged to consider the moral, ethical, religious and social relevance of Christianity before developing a historical and cultural understanding of the development of other major religions and world views such as Judaism, Islam, Eastern mysticism and atheism.

The study of philosophical issues and debates about the world's 'great questions' – Who am I? Where did I come from? What is the purpose of my life? What happens when I die? How then should I live? – are looked at directly, and the individual's right to come to their own informed and considered view is respected. Proper debate will be expected, not simply encouraged, and all discussion will be held in an atmosphere of clarity and mutual respect. Students will be challenged to think through the implications of various worldviews and religions on everyday life and on their own outlook. The primary intention is to consider the philosophical and ethical interactions within and between various worldviews, faith and truth claims, as opposed to simply learning about each religion's traditions and rites of passage.

As we develop the subject, we anticipate that students in years 9, 10 and 11 will be instructed towards the AQA Religious Studies Specification A (8062). Within Paper 1 students will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Judaism. Within Paper 2 students will complete two textual studies themes based in Mark's gospel, as well as two ethical themes exploring the religious and ethical response to issues presented by life in the world today. We plan for all students to undertake this qualification so the development of effective resources, to best deliver this new course, will be at the heart of the work of the department.

In the sixth form, we plan to continue this thinking and debate with students studying, an in-house course which examines a number of differing world views alongside a range of substantial moral and ethical issues, encouraging logical argument from first principles. Students are challenged to formulate and articulate their own views, participate in formal class and year group debates, write extended properly referenced essays and to submit an academic poster on any aspect of the two-year course.

Sixth Form students may choose to take Religious Studies as an A level. Here they will work towards the Edexcel A Level Religious Studies specification (9RS0), studying Philosophy of Religion, Religion and Ethics and New Testament Studies. Candidates who can offer some specialist knowledge and/or experience in these fields will be especially welcome, although we recognise that this can be learned, and the predominant academic quality sought is therefore the ability to engage students of all ages and abilities with the serious study of religious faith.

More widely, teachers within the RE department may be required, by mutual agreement, to deliver short addresses in weekly assemblies. The school assemblies are organised daily, and follow the national expectation that they are predominantly Christian in nature. Assemblies normally involve music and singing accompanied by student musicians, a Bible reading followed by simple teaching on the issues raised, and a concluding prayer.

Person

We are seeking to recruit a subject leader who may have a range of educational experience. We therefore invite applications from teachers who may have reached the upper pay threshold, as well as those who are newly or recently qualified.

Your vision for the Religious Education department will resonate with that of the whole school: to provide a character-first education that equips students to be world-changers, using their gifts and opportunities to serve others. Your leadership style will be characterised by gentleness and humility; you will lead by example, making decisions on the basis of what is best for students. Furthermore, you will recognise the unique role that studying Religious Education plays in the life of a school which aims to fulfil this vision; challenging students to consider their place in the school, the wider community and the world.

Grace College is a school without religious designation but functions within and is supportive of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation's non-denominational Christian ethos. As such this role is best filled by an individual who is able to describe their Christian commitment and how their life is consistent with their profession, being characterised by a high level of personal integrity.

We would hope to appoint someone with a thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine and praxis and a deep understanding of other worldviews and faith positions. The incumbent would grow the teaching team as each year group takes on the subject; from September 2019 all of Year 7 will study RE. You will hold to a belief that human beings are created to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever, and that true wisdom consists in a knowledge of oneself allied with a knowledge of God. However, you will understand the different blocks that prevent some from making progress in knowing God, as well as the intellectual and motivational factors that stunt academic development. You will find satisfaction in building the knowledge, skills and understanding of all students, regardless of whether they share your faith. You will not require your students to think as you do, but will accept responsibility for their academic progress, and seek to help each to develop a clear understanding and appropriate response to the material studied. Through meaningful student-teacher dialogue, inspiring biblical teaching and your own personal experience, you will help students to see the relevance of religious education to their lives and to develop a love for the subject in its own right.

Your motivation as a leader will be the positive care and development of those in your department's teaching team and the students in your care. It will be important to see all children as individuals gifted with unique attributes and potential, regardless of socio-economic background, ability or behaviour. Our code of discipline is not built upon personality but upon each teacher's ability to demonstrate genuine care and concern for all students, including through praise and sanction.

As the lead educator, your aim will be excellence in terms of academic outcomes, student development and the overall quality of teaching and learning within the department. A high level of commitment to achieving excellent standards is a pre-requisite for this post. Essentially, the RE department seeks extended professionalism from colleagues who are able to motivate students, generate ideas and translate them into effective and enjoyable teaching and learning. You will take a keen interest in developments in both the subject and in pedagogy and will seek to ensure the department develops a reputation as a leading team within the school, where all students regardless of background or ability make rapid progress.

Standard Responsibilities for all Heads of Department

Heads of Departments are responsible to the Principal for:

- 1) The strategic development of the department through leadership and management of the staff team within the department** with particular emphasis on:
 - The formation and implementation of the department development plan, the sharing of best practice among colleagues and ensuring effective and professional communication with students and parents
 - The appraisal and professional development of colleagues through training, observation, targeted improvement and guidance
 - Effective deployment of the resources of the department including the management of the department budget, maintaining a safe professional and well-presented environment, of an effective and appropriately staffed department timetable.

- 2) The achievement of exceptional academic standards for students studying in the department** with particular emphasis on:
 - Oversight of the curriculum, ensuring that high quality schemes of work that stretch, challenge and take students beyond the examined curriculum are in place, that homework and class work tasks are of a suitably high standard and that provision is made by teachers for those with Special Educational Needs.
 - The scrutiny of academic standards within each department to inform progression and the setting of students, ensuring that departmental policies are being followed and that students' written work is of an outstanding standard and that high expectations are made of students in terms of literacy
 - The management and use of assessment processes within the department, ensuring that high quality feedback is provided to students, parents and senior leaders

- 3) The leadership of character development** with particular emphasis on:
 - Establishing approaches to cultivating responsibility for learning and intellectual discipline within the classroom and beyond, supporting teachers through departmental reports and other strategies to promote exemplary standards of discipline, deportment and dress within and beyond the classroom in line with the College discipline policy
 - Intentional provision of quality opportunities for servant-hearted leadership within the department and the mentoring of Sixth Form leaders who hold positions of responsibility within the department
 - The outstanding provision for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education of young people within the department.

Grace College is committed to the safeguarding of children and all staff are expected to ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment for our students. All applicants are referred to the current Safeguarding Statement which is to be found within the Policy section of the Grace College website.

Please note that this detail is indicative and can be amended, updated or replaced as felt appropriate at any time and in order to remain in line with any future legal requirements or expectation.