

## Title

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### **Does Religious Education Work?**

An Analysis of the Aims, Practices and Models of Effectiveness in Religious Education across the UK

## What this Study Contributes

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This 3 year project is intended to create the single most comprehensive study to date of the state of religious education across the combined jurisdictions of the United Kingdom.

## Team

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**Principal Investigator:** Professor Jim Conroy (Glasgow)

**Co-Investigators:** Dr Philip Barnes (King's College London) Professor Viv Baumfield (Glasgow), Dr Nicole Bourque (Glasgow), Professor Robert Davis (Glasgow), Professor Tony Gallagher (Queen's University Belfast), Mr Kevin Lowden (Glasgow) and Dr Karen Wenell (Glasgow)

**PhD Student:** Mr David Lundie (Glasgow)

## University

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University of Glasgow

## Award

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Phase 1 Large Grant £348,597.28

## Research Partners

Perth Grammar School, Queen Margaret Academy, St Ninian's High School, Alford Academy, Garnock Academy, Kinross High School, Aboyne Academy, St Aidan's High School, John Ogilvie High School, plus teachers and schools from South East England and Belfast.

## Approach

Beginning with an analysis of the documentary and legislative material, we intend to unpack (with some of the key experts in the policy / professional / academic communities) the various kinds of claims made with respect to religious education in the very different contexts of England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Using a combination of philosophical, theological and detailed ethnographic approaches, we intend conducting a study of the local (school focused) social, cultural and pedagogical practices which shape the delivery of religious education.

Central to the project design is the engagement of selected Religious Education teachers as partner 'research practitioners,' with a view to assisting them in evaluating the effectiveness of their own pedagogical practices. Central to the study will be the creation of a detailed ethnographic analysis of students' lived experience of religious education as a direct or mediated shaping influence.

Team members grounded in philosophical traditions will begin by asking what is meant by effective religious education in various contexts and whether or not claims to efficacy are coherent and consistent. Those with a religious education background will critically engage with the very particular ways that social science has approached and interpreted religion and personhood. Those within the humanities and social science tradition will explicate the varied consequences of viewing Religious Education as reflecting certain kinds of social and cultural practice around such matters as control, behaviour and civic virtue.

## Findings

Project finishes **31<sup>st</sup> December 2010**.

We think that what will emerge will be a nuanced and comprehensive map of religious education in Britain which will include politically and pedagogically helpful information on policy coherence, teacher and student dispositions and pedagogical practices.

## Activities and Outcomes

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Vivienne Baumfield 'Does RE work?' *RE Today* Spring 2009

Visit

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/education/research/currentresearchprojects/doesreligioneducationwork/publications/> for information on media appearances.

## Further Information

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This project has also involved engagement with the Quality and Curriculum Authority and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education. Team members have been invited to speak at numerous events.