

# The Worldviews of the so-called 'Nones'

## Listening, Understanding & Teaching in Rural Lincolnshire

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# Rural Lincolnshire: Problems

**Demographics:** ageing population, out-migration of young people

**Poverty:** hidden, dispersed; lower take up of benefits; cost of living crisis

**Housing:** lack of affordable housing; poor housing stock

**Employment:** pay; seasonal working; labour markets; unemployment

**Transport:** inadequate public transport

**Access to Services:** childcare, health, education etc.

**Connectivity:** broadband and mobile signal infrastructure

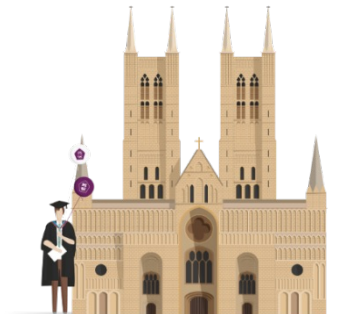
**Wellbeing:** isolation; loneliness; young people; inward migration



# Rural Lincolnshire: Possibilities

## ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)

- everyone can play a full part in their community
- vibrant village halls
- affordable housing for every generation
- access to care
- opportunities for all, especially young people
- local economy enables everyone to contribute to their full potential
- living within environmental limits
- connected to each other and the world
- generous, welcoming and inclusive
- engaged in UK's policies and ambitions



# Rural Lincolnshire: Cultural Lag



**Pride is...** an excessive belief in one's own abilities, one of the seven deadly sins

**Pride is...** the promotion of the self-affirmation, dignity, equality, and increased visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and more (LGBTQIA+) people as a social group

**Pride is...** a magazine delivered free of charge to Lincolnshire homes in the top three council tax bands, guaranteeing it has an affluent readership commensurate with its content



# Rural Lincolnshire: Census Data

2021 Census: Christianity a minority faith in England & Wales

## Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland

Christian	594,834 (52%)	(2001, 81%)
No Religion	448,029 (40%)	(2001, 12%)
Not Stated	67,733 (6%)	(2001, 7%)
Other Religion	25,469 (2%)	(2001 <1%)



## How do Lincolnshire RE teachers attend to the ‘non-religious’?

### Substantive Knowledge

What do they explicitly teach in the curriculum?

### Disciplinary Knowledge

How do they understand the ‘non-religious’?

### Personal Knowledge

How do they attend to the needs and perspectives of non-religious students?





## The Worldviews of the So-called 'Nones' Listening, Understanding & Teaching in Rural Lincolnshire

### Teaching

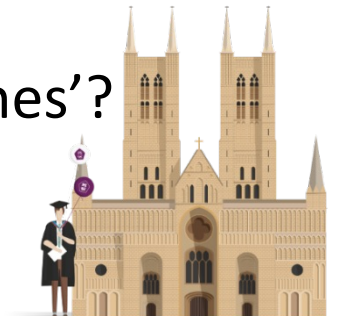
Substantive Knowledge: What to explicitly teach about the 'nones' in the curriculum?

### Understanding

Disciplinary Knowledge: How to better understand the 'nones'?

### Listening

Personal Knowledge: What are the worldviews of students who identify as 'nones'?



# Listening (personal knowledge)

## What are the worldviews of non-religious students?

### **Institutional**

- Humanists UK
- National Secular Society

### **Commission on RE: Humanism, Secularism, Atheism**

- Religious Humanists! (e.g., Christian Humanists: Incarnation)
- Religious Secularists! (e.g., Amish, Mennonites)
- Religious Atheists! (e.g., non-theistic Buddhism)





# Listening (personal knowledge)

## What are the worldviews of non-religious students?

### Categorical Ambiguity

- Positive: not God & afterlife (ontology)
- Negative: respect, freedom, tolerance (ethics)

### Theos Report

Hannah Waite 'The Nones: Who are they and what do they believe?'

3 distinctive types or clusters

- **Campaigning Nones**: self-consciously atheistic & hostile to religion
- **Tolerant Nones**: broadly atheistic but accepting of (sometimes warm towards) religion
- **Spiritual Nones**: a range of spiritual/religious beliefs/practices



# Understanding (disciplinary knowledge)

## How better to understand the 'nones'?

### Commission on RE: Worldviews

- way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world
- a philosophy of life or an approach to life
- an understanding the nature of reality and our place in the world
- related to values, behaviours, experiences, identities & commitments.
- 'institutional worldviews' are organised and shared among groups
- 'personal worldviews' are individual ways of making sense of the world



# Understanding (disciplinary knowledge)

## The 'world' viewed by worldview viewers?

- The ultimate nature of reality
- Our place in the ultimate order-of-things
- The ultimate meaning and purpose of life
  
- Natural world
- Sentient human minds
- Human culture
- A greater transcendence reality?



# Understanding (disciplinary knowledge)

## Philosophies of Life & Religious Creeds

Worldviews as deep primal implicit assumptions

‘Below the surface of speech and behaviour are beliefs and values that generate what is said and done.... and beneath these lie basic assumptions and images that provide a more-or-less coherent, though not necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world’ (Hiebert)

A worldview ‘need not be fully articulated: it may be so internalised that it goes largely unquestioned; it may not be explicitly developed into a systematic conception of life; it may not be theoretically deepened into a philosophy; it may not even be codified into creedal forms’ (Sire).



# Understanding (disciplinary knowledge)

## *Individuals & Institutions*

**No purely individual worldviews:** ‘World views are always shared, they are communal. Indeed, true community is possible only when people are bound together by a common way of life rooted in a shared vision of life’ (Walsh & Middleton)

**Not all worldviews are institutional:** e.g., shared worldview assumptions within the LGBTQ community, Black Lives Matter, the Arab Spring communities are primarily driven by social media rather than institutions; ‘Shared worldview assumptions are reflected in a complex range of interactions between individuals, groups and broader society which take diverse forms irreducible to a crude binary division between individuals and institutions.’ (A. & E. Wright)



# Understanding (disciplinary knowledge)

## *Identifying Worldviews*

**Stories:** Scratch the surface of any narrative and worldview assumptions will emerge

**Questions:** Ultimately: Who am I? Where am I? What is the Problem? What is the solution?

**Symbols:** Artefacts, ceremonies, events

**Praxis:** A person's choice of life-aim, whether 'to make money, to raise a family, to pursue a vocation, to change society or the world in a particular way, to live in harmony with the created order, to develop one's own inner world, to be loyal to received traditions,' will reflect their underlying worldview assumptions (T. Wright).



# Teaching (substantive knowledge)

Lincolnshire Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

KS3 Additional Unit: In-Depth Study of another Religion or Belief System (Humanism)

## The questions we might ask:

- What are the key principles, beliefs and practices of Humanism?
- What sources of authority underpin a Humanist way of life?
- How do Humanists mark key events in life?
- What are atheism, agnosticism and secularism and how do they relate to Humanist worldview?





# Teaching (substantive knowledge)

## The ideas we might explore:

- Atheism, agnosticism, and secularism
- Key principles: scientific worldview, rejection of the supernatural, making ethical decisions based on reason, empathy and a concern for humans/other sentient animals, lack of discernible purpose in the universe and no afterlife, so humans can give meaning to life by seeking happiness for themselves and others
- Key sources of authority: personal experience, scientific investigation, influential Humanist thinkers
- Humanist practice: naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals and memorials
- Humanism in modern Britain: humanism and ‘no religion’



## The Worldviews of the So-called 'Nones' Listening, Understanding & Teaching in Rural Lincolnshire

Promoting attentive, intelligent, reasonable & responsible:

**Listening...** to the worldviews of rural Lincolnshire students who identify as 'nones'

**Understanding...** of 'worldviews' as a heuristic conceptual framework

**Teaching...** hands-on curriculum development: explicitly teaching about the 'nones'

