

## **Whole school policy: Religious and Moral Education**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In religious and moral education (RME), the policy, practice and curriculum used within the Cedars School are firmly based upon the guidelines set out in 'A Curriculum for Excellence' (ACfE) and upon the principles which underpin it. By taking cognisance of these principles and related documents we have developed clear programmes of study in RME as well as writing the following policy on learning and teaching.

This policy introduces and outlines our general aims and practice in RME.

### **AIMS**

The over-arching aim of all learning and teaching in Cedars School of Excellence is to provide an educational experience that enables all young people to become:

- successful learners;
- confident individuals;
- responsible citizens;
- effective contributors.

The general aim of religious and moral education in Cedars School is to enable children and young people to explore the world's major religions and views which are independent of religious belief and to consider the challenges posed by these beliefs and values. It supports them in developing and reflecting upon their values and their capacity for moral judgement. Through developing awareness and appreciation of the value of each individual in a diverse society religious and moral education engenders responsible attitudes to other people. This awareness and appreciation will assist in counteracting prejudice and intolerance as children and young people consider issues such as sectarianism and discrimination more broadly.

RME in Cedars School is a process where children and young people engage in a search for meaning, value and purpose in life. This involves both the exploration of beliefs and values and the study of how such beliefs and values are expressed.

In the primary department, RME is taught through religious assemblies, circle time and RME lessons once a week. In the secondary department, RME is taught alongside Guidance, Careers and Personal and Social Education in a four-term rotation. In addition to this, one assembly a week focuses on an aspect of religion, and another assembly focuses on the diversity of Scottish culture and understanding those of different backgrounds and experiences. We aim to provide a curriculum that is coherent and relevant to the needs of the young people and the society they live in. As Cedars School is a Christian school, young people experience RME through the perspective of the schools faith community. Through their learning in RME all children and young people will develop an understanding of Christianity, which has

shaped the history and traditions of Scotland and continues to exert an influence on national life

Specifically, learning experiences should enable pupils to:

- recognise religion as an important expression of human experience
- learn about and from the beliefs, values, practices and traditions of Christianity and the world religions selected for study, other traditions, and viewpoints independent of religious belief
- explore and develop knowledge and understanding of religions, recognising the place of Christianity in the Scottish context
- investigate and understand the responses which religious and non-religious views can offer to questions about the nature and meaning of life
- recognise and understand religious diversity and the importance of religion in society
- develop respect for others and an understanding of beliefs and practices which are different from their own
- explore and establish values such as wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity and engage in the development of and reflection upon their own moral values
- develop their beliefs, attitudes, values and practices through reflection, discovery and critical evaluation
- develop the skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking and deciding how to act when making moral decisions
- make a positive difference to the world by putting their beliefs and values into action
- establish a firm foundation for lifelong learning, further learning and adult life.

Religious and moral education is therefore an essential part of every child or young person's educational experience.

## **LEARNING AND TEACHING**

A variety of teaching approaches are used as are appropriate to each specific class and context. These include assemblies, whole school projects, whole class direct teaching, cooperative group work, paired work and individual work. We also draw on our extensive links within the wider community and frequently have visiting speakers sharing their expertise and experience. Visits have so far included:

- annual visits from the Gideons Bible Society
- visits from former drug addicts whose lives have been changed through faith
- visits from local church elders
- assemblies conducted by a mission team from Times Square Church, New York
- talks given by missionaries to places including the Cameroon and Zambia

Whilst RME is seen as a discrete area of the curriculum in both primary and secondary, it is also linked to other subjects and topics being studied in class, and skills that are useful in other subjects are also developed in RME.

Examples of RME in other subjects:

- understanding the motives of conscientious objectors in world wars in social studies
- studying the birth of Islam in a topic on Islamic Civilisation in social studies
- studying Greek gods in a topic on the Greeks in Primary 4/5
- studying Roman gods and Viking gods in social studies
- examining the American Civil Rights Movement in the 60s in social studies.
- understanding the apartheid movement in South Africa in Social Studies.

Examples of skills developed in RME:

- listening skills when visitors give talks
- communication skills in solo talks on a famous Christian, using the same assessment sheets used in English solo talk assessments
- listening skills in circle time
- written communication skills in various topics studied in RME

As Cedars is a P1 - S6 establishment we maintain strong links between the primary and secondary departments and there are yearly transition meetings to ensure smooth progression and continuity. There is also opportunity for informal liaison at any point as is required. Teachers in secondary are encouraged to visit and spend time with the P7 class to ensure both progression and an understanding of their individual abilities and needs. Every effort is made to ensure that all records are disseminated amongst appropriate staff.

### **Forward Planning**

In the Primary department, individual class teachers are responsible for ensuring RME experiences and outcomes are built into the curriculum.

In the secondary department RME is taught alongside Guidance, Careers and PSE.

### **Assessment and Recording**

Assessment is essential in order to ensure effective learning and teaching in RME.

Examples of Summative Assessment

- observations
- written tasks
- samples of pupils' work
- wall displays
- photographs
- multimedia materials
- computer generated materials.

- presentations

#### Examples of Formative Assessment

- AifL strategies, e.g. ‘traffic lights’, ‘thumbs’, setting learning goals, key words, assessment games, etc
- observations of individual/group activities
- multimedia materials / presentations
- regular target setting and review
- peer and self assessment strategies regularly employed

RME is not offered as a certificated subject, but learning programmes in RME, Careers, Guidance and PSE involve all learners from P1- S6.

#### **Reporting**

Progress in RME is reported to parents through report cards and individual interviews at parents’ evenings twice a year. Progress may also be monitored through the blogs and any homework tasks relating to RME.