

Religious and Moral Education Policy

Rationale

“Scotland is a nation whose people hold a wide range of beliefs from the many branches of the Christian faith represented throughout the land to the world’s other major religions and to beliefs which lie outwith religious traditions. Such diversity enriches the Scottish nation and serves as an inspiring and thought-provoking background for our children and young people to develop their own beliefs and values.

Religious and moral education enables 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.

Children and young people must become aware that beliefs and values are fundamental to families and to the fabric of society in communities, local and global. There is an intrinsic value in learning about religion as well as learning from religion, as children and young people develop their understanding of diversity in our society and their own roles in it. The skills of reflection and critical thinking and an enhanced understanding of the beliefs and values of others are all crucial in assisting in this process.

Learning through religious and moral education enables children and young people to:

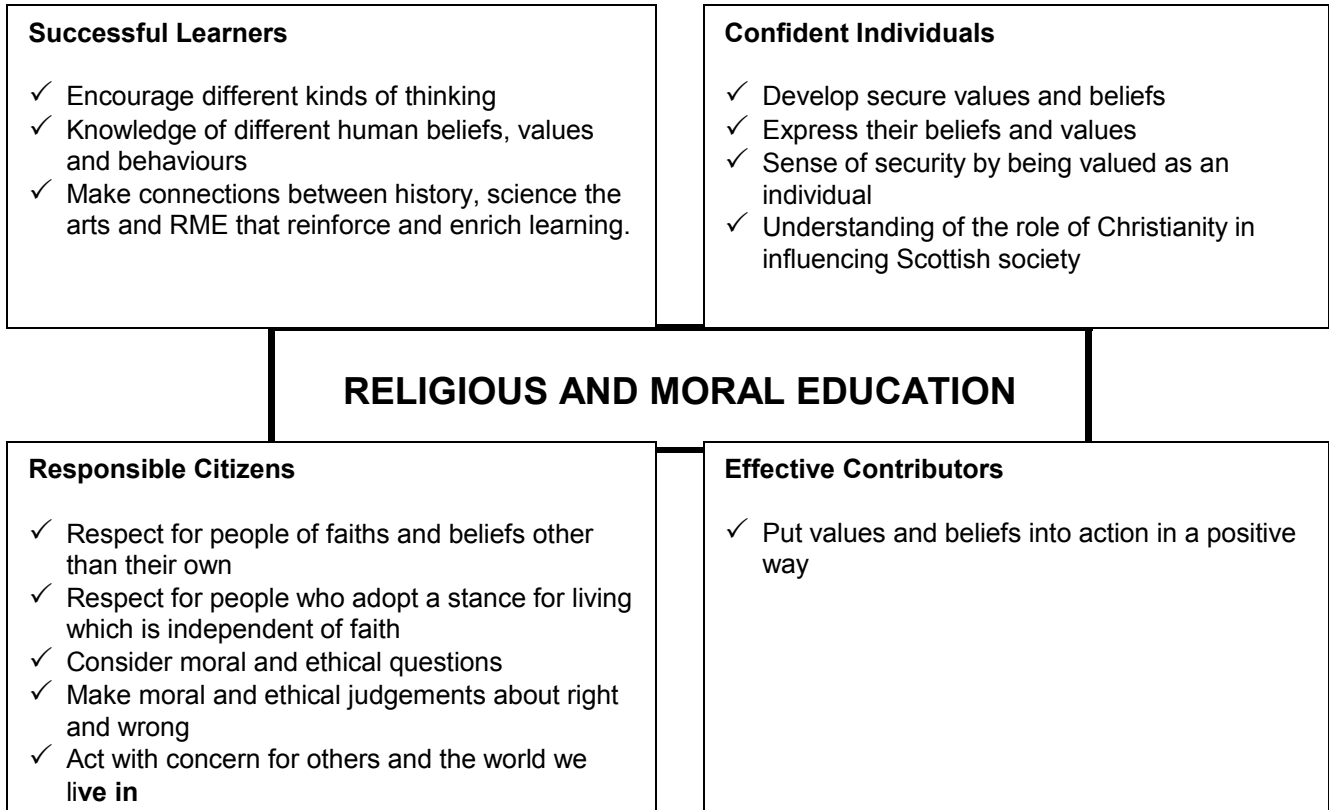
- recognise religion as an important expression of human experience
- learn about and from the beliefs, values, practices and traditions of Christianity and the world religions selected for study, other traditions, and viewpoints independent of religious belief
- explore and develop knowledge and understanding 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.

Aims

We aim to deliver a RME programme which allows teachers flexibility and scope to plan for a wide variety of experiences which will enable young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Through our programme of work, we aim to develop the following skills and abilities in our pupils:



Planning and Delivery

With input from local chaplains Activities have been planned for Early, First and Second Level based on the RME outcomes and experiences from Curriculum for Excellence. These have been structured under 3 organisers:

- Beliefs
- Values and Issues
- Practices and Traditions

A cohesive programme has been organised from Nursery to Primary 7 with children building on previous skills and knowledge. Planning also allows flexibility for interdisciplinary learning where possible e.g. Learning about the Holocaust when studying World War II, Learning about the Hindu festival of Lights when studying the theme of Light etc.

The school studies two other world religions in depth – Buddhism and Islam.

Teachers are expected to identify appropriate learning and teaching styles to suit the needs of their pupils while recognising the importance of active learning and the capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching cycles. We undertake assessment that is:

- Well matched to clearly identified purposes and encourages learners
- Emphasises the formative, celebrating what has been achieved and identifying what has still to be achieved to progress
- An appropriate blend of self, peer and teacher review
- Both formal and informal

Religious and moral issues are often quite controversial and involve personal decision and commitment. It would be quite wrong to assess personal stances of pupils in such matters.

At Hill of Banchory Primary School, assessment in RME takes two forms. On going assessment of pupils' work, and, assessment of specific identified tasks/activities

Religious Observance

The aims of religious observance are:

- To promote pupils' spiritual development
- To increase their understanding of religious practices such as prayer and meditation and the religious experience which underlies them
- To promote the ethos of the school through the expression and celebration of shared values
- To provide the opportunity for individual reflection on spiritual and moral concerns

Assemblies are held weekly led by the Head Teacher, School Chaplains and other visitors to school. Themes are often linked to the school calendar, to emphasise moral values or are linked to the Bible and Bible stories. Classes regularly participate in delivering an assembly which may relate to moral values or religious study.

Whole School services take place at Harvest, Christmas and Summer. The school participates in an Easter Service at a local Church annually. Children take an active role in the delivery of these services.

Any parent who wishes their child to be withdrawn from religious observance should make this known to the Head Teacher.