



Religious and Moral Education / Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools

Professional Learning Paper

Career-long Professional Learning: Islam

The purpose of this professional learning paper

This professional learning paper aims to support Career-long Professional Learning (CLPL) in Religious and Moral Education specifically in relation to teaching about Islam. This paper has been produced collaboratively by Education Scotland and the [Muslim Council of Scotland](#) and the [Alwaleed Centre at the University of Edinburgh](#) to support practitioners to develop and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Islam and so support the delivery of high quality learning and teaching about Islam in the Broad General Education.

This briefing paper aims to support practitioners through Career-long professional Learning (CLPL) around Islam and Muslim belief and life. It is important to note that CLPL is a career-long process and that there is no expectation that practitioners can answer all of the questions contained in this paper now. Instead these questions should guide practitioners through reflecting and evaluating their own knowledge and understanding. This should support practitioners in planning and delivering high quality religious and moral education which addresses learning about Islam accurately and authentically.

This will assist learners in developing their understanding of Muslim beliefs, values, practices and traditions and so contribute to improved understanding of Islam, and a greater awareness of the diversity of belief in modern Scotland. It is considered that understanding Muslim beliefs, values and practices and traditions will contribute significantly to a Scotland where everyone is valued and respected.

What do I know and understand about Islam?

The [Route Map through CLPL in RME](#) provides broad guidance around developing professional knowledge and understanding in RME, and is a good starting point for practitioners in considering how to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding of a topic area in RME. Practitioners would benefit from exploring this document in relation to Islam and so considering how best to develop and deepen their understanding of this world faith.

It is important to be aware that learning is a career-long process: The following prompt questions are there to guide practitioners – it is not expected that practitioners should know the answer to all of these – since they are fairly comprehensive. They give a guide to a learning process which will take time to build and incorporate into learning and teaching.

- How far do I understand the spread and variety of religious belief – including Islam - in Scotland?
- To what extent am I aware of diversity of belief and practice within Scotland's Muslim community?
- To what extent am I aware of the contribution of Islam in shaping Scotland's social, political and spiritual heritage?
- How familiar am I with the key primary sources used by Muslims?
- To what extent am I familiar with key secondary sources in relation to Islam?
- How do I critically evaluate published textbooks, online and other resources in relation to Islam?
- What principles guide my use of visiting speakers from within Islam, and how do I ensure that such speakers are representative of the Muslim community?
- To what extent do I understand key Muslim values and Muslim responses to moral issues?
- How far do I understand Muslim perspectives on human nature and the natural world?
- In what ways do I support learners to appreciate and show respect for the beliefs, values and traditions of Muslims?
- How do I assist learners to develop their own beliefs and values through encounter with Muslim beliefs, values, practices and traditions?
- How do I guide learners towards researching questions about Islam which I cannot immediately answer?
- How best can I support Muslim learners in understanding their own developing beliefs and values?
- How aware am I of the contemporary experience of being a Muslim in my local community, nationally and internationally?

For each of the questions above, practitioners may wish to consider how they might develop further their understanding in relation to each prompt question:

- How might I approach answering this question?
- How will I evaluate different perspectives on each question?
- How will I use what I have learned to support learning and teaching?

Learning in RME and RE should involve breadth, challenge and application:

How might these apply to the practitioner's knowledge and understanding of Islam?

Breadth

- How do I support learners in engaging with a variety of sources around Islam?
- How do I support learners in understanding and evaluating the diversity of beliefs, practices and traditions within Islam in Scotland and worldwide?
- How do I support the development of learners' skills in researching, analysing and evaluating Muslim life and belief?

Challenge

- To what extent do I engage learners with increasing complexity of sources, concepts and ideas in relation to Islam?
- How do I nurture learners' independent research skills in relation to Islam?
- How do I support learners in confidently but respectfully expressing their own views on aspects of Islam?
- How do I encourage learners to engage in open, honest and respectful questioning around Islam?
- How do I support learners in weighing up evidence, arguments and viewpoints around Islam?

Application

- How do I assist learners in interpreting symbolism and abstract ideas in relation to Islam?
- How do I assist learners to imagine and consider the consequences of being a Muslim, or to develop their understanding of these if they are Muslim?
- How do I support learners in linking arguments and information from a variety of sources to build a fuller picture of Islam?

These broad aspects of understanding and supporting learners to understand Islam can be further refined by considering the key knowledge, understanding and skills required when exploring Islam with learners in line with the Experiences and Outcomes for Religious and Moral Education. When exploring Islam with learners, as with all aspects of RME, practitioners should consider carefully why this is a topic for exploration and how learners will benefit from learning about it. It is important that progression in RME involves supporting learners to move beyond the external expressions of religious beliefs and practices to developing their deeper understanding of the reasons behind these beliefs and practices. For example, while it is relatively straightforward to explore with learners how Muslims pray, as learners progress through the Broad General Education, they should increasingly reflect upon why Muslims pray – what praying means to them and how learners themselves respond to the concept of prayer.

As with any world faith, it is important to avoid sweeping phrases such as 'Muslims believe', since, like all world faiths, there is a great variety of beliefs, values and practices and traditions within Islam. As learners progress in their understanding of Islam, the subtleties and nuances of Muslim beliefs should become more central to learners' exploration of this faith.

In the *World Religions selected for study* and the *Development of beliefs and values* sections of CfE RME (which should be approached in ways which are intrinsically intertwined rather than discretely) there are three organisers below for practitioners to consider the reflective questions linked to each.

Beliefs

- What are the key beliefs within Islam and what varieties of opinion exist within Islam around these beliefs?
- What places in Scotland, Britain and the wider world are specifically linked to Islam?
- What artefacts are specifically linked to Islam and how can/should these be used with learners?
- Who are the key figures in Islam and what is their contribution to this world faith?
- What variety of belief is there in Islam about the human condition, the natural world and 'ultimate questions'?
- How has Islam contributed to the development of modern Scotland?
- What writings are linked to Islam and how can I develop my understanding of these?

Values and Issues

- What varieties of belief are there in Islam about caring, sharing, fairness and cooperating?
- What different views are held within Islam about key moral and social issues?
- How do Muslims make moral decisions?
- How do Muslims put their values into action in their daily lives?
- What variety of positions do Muslims take on equality and human rights?
- How do Muslims work to create a more just, equal and tolerant society?
- In what ways might Muslim values challenge others in Scottish society?

Practices and Traditions

- In what different ways do Muslims celebrate important times of year, events and life-events and why do they do so?
- In what different ways do Muslims worship and why do they do so?
- What variety of Muslim ceremonies and customs is there around the world and what are the explanations for this variety?
- How does Muslim life and belief contribute to Scotland's religious and cultural diversity?

Development of Beliefs and values

- How can I best help learners to learn about as well as learn from Islam?
- How do I support learners to develop respect and understanding of all religions?
- How do I support learners to learn from Islam when they explore moral issues?

How can I develop and deepen my knowledge and understanding of Islam?

Developing your professional knowledge and understanding around Islam can be achieved in a number of ways: For example, by:

- Building meaningful links with Muslim individuals and groups in the local community. This will result in a two-way process where establishments gain from their insight and expertise and individuals and groups develop their skills in interacting with children and young people. This community might be the local mosque, or Muslim parents, or Muslim Student Societies in Universities and Colleges for example. This could lead to a meaningful working relationship with the Muslim community where [visiting speakers](#) might be more readily accessed
- Reading texts and engaging with other sources of information on Islam
- Reflecting on practice and [self-evaluation](#)
- Engaging with the Muslim community other colleagues through visits, observation, online networks etc.
- Visiting [sites of religious and cultural interest](#) which are connected with Islam
- Researching and engaging with [religious and cultural artifacts](#) connected with Islam
- Critically evaluating information which can be supported by using techniques such as the [PROMPT](#) technique
- Visiting [museums](#), galleries and other locations where items linked to Islam may be found

Where can I develop and deepen my knowledge and understanding of Islam?

Please note that Education Scotland is not responsible for the content of external websites

- Scottish Government report on [Experiences of Muslims living in Scotland](#)
- Islam in Scotland: [Islamic Tartan](#)
- The [Islamic Society of Britain \(Glasgow\)](#)
- [Glasgow Central Mosque](#)
- [Aberdeen Mosque](#)
- [Alfurgan Mosque, Glasgow](#)
- [Edinburgh Central Mosque](#)
- [Mosque Directory for Scotland](#)
- [Dundee Central Mosque](#)
- [Inverness Mosque](#)

Some websites:

<http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/>

(Online interactive Qur'an tool – also has hadith explorer function).

<http://www.plainislam.com/>

(Information website by Islamic Society of Britain)

<http://www.1001inventions.com>

(Some resources focusing on Islamic civilisation).

<http://www.1001inventions.com/files/scottishsupplement.pdf>

(Islamic civilisation resources for schools in Scotland).

<http://muslimheritage.com/>

(Resource about Islamic civilisation).

<http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/islamic-sects-schools-branches-movements/>

(Infographic about Islamic sects, schools and divisions).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxfjISdXBw>

(“Faith in the City” – animated short film featuring the voices of young British Muslims talking about the ways in which people misperceive Islam).

<http://criticalmuslim.com/home>

(Critical Muslim – significant community of critical scholars and commentators).

<https://www.made.ngo/>

(‘MADE in Europe’ – Muslim campaigning organization focusing on environment and social justice).

<https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk>

(International charity).

<https://muslimhands.org.uk/>

(International charity).

<http://progressivescottishmuslims.blogspot.co.uk/>

(Blog which reflects debate within Scottish Muslim community).

<http://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic>

(Islamic Art section of the David Collection (Denmark) website - offers an overview of Islamic history and culture).

http://www.cbl.ie/cbl_image_gallery/collection/list.aspx?collectionId=2

(Islamic art collection at the Chester Beatty Library –resource for images).

<http://www.aerosolarabic.com/>

(Showcasing the work of one of the UK's most influential Muslim street artists).

<http://www.artofintegration.co.uk/>

(Images of Muslims across the world).

<http://www.srtrc.org/uploaded/ISLAMOPHOBIA%20ED%20PACK%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf>

('Show Racism the Red Card' Islamophobia education pack).

<http://www.acommonword.com/>

('A Common Word Between Us and You' – important initiative by Muslims across the world aimed at building bridges with Christians through shared belief).

www.alwaleed.ed.ac.uk

(Alwaleed Centre website with plenty of resources and lots of events which might be of interest to teachers).

<https://arts.leeds.ac.uk/hajj/>

(British Muslim Experiences of the Hajj)

<http://www.emel.com/>

(Muslim lifestyle magazine)

www.mcb.org.uk

(Website and resource base of UK's largest Muslim representative body.)