Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Religious and Moral Education 3-18

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Transforming lives through learning

Foreword

Scotland's children and young people live in a society which is becoming increasingly rich in its religious and cultural diversity. The principles of Curriculum for Excellence reflect our national commitment to embracing diversity, equality and inclusion so that people of all faiths and those with no faith are respected and able to contribute fully to Scottish life. Exploring and sharing our own viewpoints, beliefs and values and having them sometimes challenged by others contributes greatly to our sense of who we are, where we belong and how we see ourselves in relation to others. Religious and Moral Education provides a key context for exploring values and beliefs in this way and therefore plays a central role in preparing young Scots for their future.

When delivered well, Religious and Moral Education supports all children and young people to develop their viewpoints, beliefs and moral values through motivating learning experiences with a strong focus on higher order thinking skills and space for personal reflection. The Curriculum for Excellence framework for Religious and Moral Education provides guidance on how best to achieve this within non-denominational schools and within Roman Catholic schools. It acknowledges the particular faith dimension which underpins the aims and purposes of Roman Catholic education and the key role that Religious Education plays in that context. This report highlights strengths and aspects for development across both sectors.

Of course we should not forget that parents and other partners play a key role in successful Religious and Moral Education. Their views are very much a part of this report and this reaffirms our vision of high quality parental engagement and strong partnerships within and across learning communities. Their contributions often bring to the classroom real life experiences of how faith, beliefs, viewpoints and values shape individual lives and society more broadly.

This report is able to point to a great deal of positive practice that has developed in schools across Scotland and some significant improvements in Religious and Moral Education that have come about as a result of Curriculum for Excellence. It also sets out a clear agenda for future partnership work as collectively we seek to address the aspects for development which the report identifies.

I hope you find the report helpful and thought provoking. It contains much to challenge our practice and our thinking and in that respect it reflects the very nature of the subject itself.

Bill Maxwell
Chief Executive
Education Scotland

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Introduction

This curriculum impact project report evaluates current practice in Religious and Moral Education in Scotland. Curriculum for Excellence supports two frameworks for learning, teaching and assessment within the Religious and Moral Education curriculum area. This acknowledges, within the Scottish context, the different aims and purposes of Religious and Moral Education (RME) in non-denominational schools and Religious Education in Roman Catholic (RERC) schools. This report sets out to encourage professional learning across the two approaches. It identifies good practice and highlights important areas for discussion and further development.

The report comes at a time when Scottish schools are implementing Curriculum for Excellence and the findings reflect this changing landscape. Education Scotland will continue to support these changes and share emerging innovative and thought-provoking practice as part of its contribution to a national professional learning community. It is intended that this report acts as a stimulus for ongoing professional dialogue and development. Practitioners are encouraged to engage with each other and with Education Scotland staff to discuss and share practice and address areas requiring development via Glow and other professional networks locally and nationally. Further links and regular updates will be added over time so that this report should be seen as just the foundation of a live professional learning resource for Religious and Moral Education.

The report is one in a series designed to gauge the impact of a changing curriculum on learners' experiences and achievements. It builds on the messages of: *Religious and Moral Education: A Portrait of current practice in Scottish Schools (2008)* and *key messages within* the RME and RERC *Principles and Practice (2009)* papers. These publications set out the aims and purposes of learning within the Religious and Moral Education curriculum area. This report outlines an ambitious agenda for staff and the entitlements of all children and young people in Religious and Moral Education. Its messages should be considered along with those of other national reports and relevant publications as listed in Appendix 4.

Evidence to support the findings of this report came from:

- A series of focused evidence gathering visits to a number of pre-school centres, primary, secondary and special schools during the period August 2012 to June 2013. Appendix 1 gives a list of all establishments visited.

- Analysis of relevant evidence from general inspections and other professional engagement visits carried out over the past three years.

- Analysis of the patterns of uptake and performance by school students in Religious Studies and Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies in SQA national qualifications and other relevant Awards which accredit achievement in this curriculum area. Statistical data is contained in Appendix 5.

- A review of relevant literature to take account of key messages pertinent to RME and RERC. National reports and other useful resources are listed in Appendix 4.

- Engagement in professional dialogue with practitioners, local authorities, specialists across Education Scotland and members of the RME and RERC community from within and outwith schools.

The report is structured around three key themes each of which contribute to an overall understanding of current practice. These themes are:

- children and young people's **learning and achievement** in Religious and Moral Education: section 1, pages 9 to 24;
- **support** for children and young people to develop and learn in Religious and Moral Education: section 2, pages 24 to 31; and
- approaches to **continuous improvement** within Religious and Moral Education: section 3, pages 31 to 37.

Subject specific terms used throughout the report:

Religious and Moral Education: when used in full this term refers to the overarching curriculum area within Curriculum for Excellence.

RME: this abbreviation is used to specifically refer to religious and moral education within non-denominational schools.

RERC: this abbreviation is used to specifically refer to religious education in Roman Catholic schools.

RE: this abbreviation is used to refer to Religious Education in denominational schools

RMPS: Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies, used when referring to SQA national qualifications within this curriculum area.

RS: Religious Studies, the title used for Standard Grade qualifications.

This report presents findings which are relevant to non-denominational schools and to Roman Catholic schools. With regard to teaching, learning and assessment many of the points made in the report apply equally well to both sectors. However, there are some sector specific aspects relating to learning, curriculum development and leadership which are appropriately highlighted in each section. The executive summary gives an overview of strengths and aspects for development overall as well as particular aspects specific to each sector.

Executive Summary

Strengths in Religious and Moral Education across Scotland

Overall:

- Scotland has a strong internationally recognised values based framework for learning and teaching in Religious and Moral Education.
- Most children and young people value their learning and enjoy their lessons.
- The majority of children and young people contribute confidently to classroom discussion and debates about local, national and international religious and moral issues.
- In the majority of schools, children and young people's learning is active and engaging. Many teachers use a range of teaching and learning approaches effectively to motivate learners.
- Children and young people often have good opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing through Religious and Moral Education.
- Increasingly, effective learning takes place outdoors or with partners in the wider community.
- Schools are using an increasing range of awards to accredit achievement in Religious and Moral Education.
- There is continued growth in the number of young people in the senior phase studying national qualifications courses in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (RMPS).

Specifically in non-denominational schools:

- Children and young people increasingly engage in learning about religions and beliefs relevant to their local community as school's continue to de-clutter the curriculum.
- Children in pre-school often engage in learning which encourages them to share beliefs and family traditions.

Specifically in Roman Catholic schools:

- Most children and young people think that Religious Education supports them well in their own faith development.
- Children and young people are increasing their understanding of the importance of prayer and reflection. Most children at the primary stages are developing well their knowledge and understanding of Catholicism.
- Schools have a clear progression framework for RERC through This Is Our Faith.
- Religious Education is often central to the life and work of the school as a community. Consequently, children and young people often demonstrate strong awareness of social justice and the need to serve others.
- Almost all schools deliver an appropriate broad general education and senior phase entitlements for Religious Education.
- Young people in the senior phase have responded very well to the very successful introduction of the Caritas Award.

Aspects for development in Religious and Moral Education across Scotland

Overall:

- Not all children and young people experience high-quality teaching and learning. There is scope in many schools for children and young people to engage in more active, independent and collaborative learning.
- Children and young people need more learning that supports them to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Too often, children and young people are not clear enough about the purposes of their learning and how to improve their achievements.
- The development of information and communications technology (ICT) skills is not consistently a well-planned aspect of learning in religious and moral education.
- In most schools, arrangements for assessment and moderation of Religious and Moral Education are at an early stage of development.
- Parents require more information about how they can support learning in RME and RERC.
- There is much scope for local authorities to improve arrangements for quality assuring RME and RERC to bring about sustained improvements. The current variation in levels of support for this subject area are leading to inequity within the quality of delivery and in the amount of time given to the subject across Scotland.
- There are insufficient opportunities for subject specific career long professional learning for teachers of RME and RERC.

Specifically in non-denominational schools:

- In a significant number of schools, children and young people need more opportunities to develop their own beliefs and values through learning about a range of religions and other beliefs.
- Staff's planning using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence is not consistently well enough planned to ensure children and young people have a sound grasp of the significant aspects of learning within RME.
- Young people's learning from S1 to S3 often lacks sufficient depth and challenge to ensure young people develop the knowledge and skills embedded within the third and fourth level experiences and outcomes.
- Across Scotland, there are very few examples of effective planning for progression from P7 to S1.
- In most secondary schools, young people are not receiving their entitlement to religious and moral education in the senior phase. Only a few schools have appropriate arrangements in place for S5 and S6. Increasingly young people in S4 do not have enough experiences of RME.

Specifically in Roman Catholic schools:

- Improvements to RERC in the senior phase are at an early stage in most schools. Young people from S4 to S6 require better planned opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Roman Catholic faith, Christianity more widely and of other world religions.
- In many schools, there is scope to further strengthen partnership working with parents and the parish community to extend learning and achievement.

Context

What can Religious and Moral Education bring to Scotland's children and young people?

Learning about who we are and how we deal with questions of meaning, value and purpose in life is at the heart of Religious and Moral Education. Children and young people have an enormous appetite for wonder in relation to these issues. On a daily basis learners arrive at school already experiencing all sorts of complexities which impact on their views of life. Religious and Moral Education does not take place in a vacuum separate from the rest of these aspects of life but it can make a unique and valuable contribution to helping children and young people make sense of their experience. The curriculum content of Religious and Moral Education is grounded in that which is integral to human living. It provides a range of learning contexts which are significant and relevant to children, young people and adults in every community across Scotland particularly our open, multi-faith and multi-racial communities. For children and young people in our Roman Catholic schools, Religious Education supports their personal journey of faith and reflection on issues of religion and morality as well as enabling them to engage with a wider range of beliefs, viewpoints and values they may encounter in life.

This curriculum area has two overarching aims, the recognition of which is at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence and Getting It Right for Every Child, two key policy drivers for improvement for the futures of Scotland's children and young people:

(a) To ensure that children and young people can individually and collectively develop the personal beliefs and values, resilient attitudes and life skills to support them through the complexities of human existence and co-existence.

(b) To ensure all children and young people achieve well and that their learning and achievement impacts positively on their individual life chances.

> "***Due attention paid to the religious dimension of intercultural education can make a significant contribution to peace, openness to other cultures, tolerance and respect for human rights in Europe. Religious differences continue all too often to be a source of tension, conflict and discrimination.*"**
>
> Micheline Milot, in *Religious Diversity and intercultural Education: a Reference Book for Schools*, Council of Europe, 2007.

The values of compassion, wisdom, justice and integrity that underpin Curriculum for Excellence are also reflected in the shared values of the world's major religions and belief systems. Deepening children and young people's understanding of these values and the behaviours that emanate from them is a key outcome of effective Religious and Moral Education. The framework for Religious and Moral Education in Scotland promotes strong emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing alongside increasing intellectual capacity. This is achieved through the significant focus on the development of personal beliefs and moral values and higher order thinking skills from 3-18 embedded within the experiences and outcomes for RME and RERC.

Across Scotland, Religious and Moral Education is most effective when teachers demonstrate an openness to and respect for the child at the centre of the learning. For at least the last decade there has been a marked increase internationally in the importance of education in religion. Scottish society is rich in both religious and cultural heritage and diversity. Media headlines on a weekly basis confirm this and recent debates around for example, marriage, sectarianism and capitalism emphasise it further. To contribute fully to the communities in which they live young people must understand this diversity and to truly understand diversity, one must first and foremost understand individuals. Central to that is the need to understand oneself deeply and fully as a unique and valuable individual who is joined to other individuals. Through effective Religious and Moral Education, Scotland's children and young people can engage with these important debates and to understand the tensions which sometimes arise between individual, family and community viewpoints.

Since religious diversity is a fact of life in Scotland and across the world, responsible citizenship demands an understanding of where we stand in relation to religious beliefs and practices. The questions which religion attempts to answer and the claims of truth which religions make are therefore meaningful ones to address within the classroom. This is recognised and celebrated within the model of Religious and Moral Education in Scotland. Religious and Moral Education helps young people to understand when it is good and right to compromise one's beliefs and values and when it is good and right to stand firm against attempts to force compromise. This sort of knowledge and understanding is crucial if young people are to know how they can positively shape their own future and the future of society and their world. Through the curriculum in RME and RERC, children and young people develop the skills of reflection, analysis and evaluation which support them in making well informed judgements about their own stances in life.

In denominational and non-denominational schools, many young people come to their learning in Religious and Moral Education from a standpoint of faith. Others approach their learning from a personal viewpoint that is independent of religious belief. This is well recognised by skilled teachers. The continual growth of the number of young people voluntarily sitting national examinations in religious, moral and philosophical studies is testimony that the subject is very popular when it is led by skilled teachers. Without question children and young people across Scotland recognise Religious and Moral Education as an important aspect of learning for life.

There is currently, not only in Scotland but right across the UK and Europe, a tremendous emphasis on equality and human rights and much debate about what this means for individuals and groups nationally and internationally. Too often this debate is surrounded by the assumption that religion is the problem and therefore cannot be part of the solution. If we develop a culture which teaches only a broad

respect and tolerance of others we can also create a culture which too often remains silent for fear of offending others. The Scottish model of Religious and Moral Education is built on the premise that to respect the beliefs and values of others if we do so only from a position of distance, is not good enough. This curriculum area provides children and young people with meaningful opportunities for genuine dialogue about faith and beliefs, including those which are not grounded in religion, through grappling with these challenges for themselves. Across Scotland we undoubtedly have many teachers who are skilled in this work. The inclusion of Religious and Moral Education within the Curriculum for Excellence framework is a national acknowledgment that this type of learning is significant for our children and young people as part of their journey from 3-18.

The events of September 11th 2001, prompted the Council of Europe to promote more teaching and learning about and through faith. Within a document known as the Toledo Guiding Principles (see appendix 4) a framework for developing approaches to Religious and Moral Education across Europe has been established. The aim of the 'Toledo Principles' is to contribute to an improved understanding of the world's increasing religious diversity and the growing presence of religion in the public sphere. Their rationale is based on two core principles: first, that there is positive value in teaching that emphasizes respect for *everyone's* right to freedom of religion and belief, and second, that teaching *about* religions and beliefs can reduce harmful misunderstandings and stereotypes. This message is also conveyed in the principles and practice papers of RME and RERC in Scotland through recognition that parents are the first educators of their children. Therefore home/school partnerships are especially important to support the development of beliefs and values. Partnerships developed across the wider school community are also important. Through implementing the Curriculum for Excellence guidance on Religious and Moral Education, local authorities and schools have tremendous opportunities to equip the children and young people of school to live out the values of wisdom, compassion, justice and integrity in a modern democratic Scottish society. This report aims to provide support and challenge to schools and local authorities in their continual work to improve children and young people's experiences of Religious and Moral Education.

1. How well do children and young people learn and achieve in Religious and Moral Education?

This section focuses on the quality of children and young people's learning experiences and how well they achieve. Aspects covered are:

a) Relationships, ethos and climate for learning
b) Teaching, learning and assessment
c) Achievement and accreditation

a) Relationships, ethos and climate for learning

In **RME and RERC** relationships between teachers and learners were found to be most effective in classrooms where children and young people recognise that their teachers are also exploring the questions and issues which they as learners are exploring. Effective learning is therefore often characterised by attention to the values of Curriculum for Excellence and a shared awareness between teachers and pupils that all are engaged in a personal search for meaning, value and purpose in life. In best practice, teachers are clear that their role is not just about imparting knowledge but is also about accompanying, challenging and guiding children and young people in this personal search. In early years and primary stages such relationships are generally evident and improve the quality of children's learning experiences. In secondary schools this is more challenging to achieve and the quality of the learning environment is more variable. Overall, in most schools most young people speak highly of their teachers of RME and RERC and feel that they have positive relationships with them.

I really enjoy the discussions and debates we have in RME. You can share your views openly in this class.

Our teacher encourages us to listen and respect each other. RE sometimes makes me change my opinion about the issues we explore.

We have children from all different religions in our school. Learning about each other's beliefs helps me understand my own beliefs.

My family is not religious at all but I still enjoy RME. We investigate lots of really important issues and things which are often in the news.

Through their learning in **RME and RERC**, children and young people are often given ownership of their learning and encouraged to discuss issues of a sensitive and personal nature. Whilst this can be challenging at times, most children and young people participate very well in such discussions. Teachers and learners often work together to establish mutually agreed ground rules and respectful behaviours. Consequently, most children and young people confidently express their opinions on a range of religious and moral issues. Whilst in many secondary schools, learning is stimulating, enjoyable and challenging for young people it remains true that this is not consistently the experience of young people across Scotland. Some young people described their experiences as boring and questioned the value of the subject. For these young people this is a significant issue which needs to be addressed through improvements in curriculum, self-evaluation and professional learning to explore appropriate approaches to learning and teaching in Religious and Moral Education.

Across **Roman Catholic** schools, most children and young people feel that their religious education supports them well to grow in faith and increases their understanding of what it means to belong to the wider Catholic community of faith. This is most evident in schools where the aims and aspirations of the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland is reflected within the shared aims and values of the school. A few schools had effectively used Shining the Light of Christ in the Catholic School to help them achieve this. In a significant number of schools, religious education is central to the life and work of the school. Learning experiences are often rich and rewarding. Children and young people often say that their learning in religious education positively affects behaviour and attitudes across their school. Those who belong to other denominations, faiths and stances for living feel included and supported to reflect on their own beliefs and values within most religious education lessons and as part of their wider Catholic school community.

b) Teaching, learning and assessment

All **pre-school education** in Scotland is, non-denominational. In most pre-school classes children learn about religion and morality through celebrations of religious festivals and by sharing family stories and traditions. They explore cultural diversity during stories and play activities. They often ask each other relevant questions which are beginning to help them understand aspects of religious belief for example, what people mean when they talk about God or what prayer is for. There are a few very good examples of children learning about religious beliefs and customs whilst out in the wider community. Examples include visits to local places of worship, identifying aspects of beauty in nature during a woodland walk and helping to design and develop a peace garden within their school grounds. At this stage, children are often involved in planning their learning activities. The best learning experiences arise out of ideas which have come from the children and build on their early experiences of faith, beliefs and values acquired in the home. Most children in nursery classes are developing an appropriate understanding of values such as equality, fairness and respect for others as they play and learn together. As a result they are acquiring a basic understanding of what faiths and many other stances for living regard as the Golden Rule – i.e. "Treat others as you would like them to treat you". In most nursery classes a few children find these aspects of learning difficult to sustain and some find it hard to engage in discussions about home and family traditions. Staff should ensure that individualised planning supports children in this aspect of learning.

Click here to find out how Rosshall Nursery, Glasgow, delivers RME in a multi-cultural context.

Religious and moral education is often a strength of children and young people's learning in the **special school sector**. Staff use a range of active, experiential approaches which engage children and young people in learning about and from religious artefacts, prayer and meditation and worship as appropriate to the context of the school. The most effective learning and teaching includes the use of role-play, drama, art and music to engage children and young people in exploring questions of meaning, value and purpose. Where such effective practice exists children and young people with additional support needs increase their understanding of themselves and their relationship with others in their school and community. Learning in religious and moral education is often embedded within the ethos and culture of the school in that all activities are focused on exploring and demonstrating values such as integrity, justice and compassion which underpin most religions and

belief systems. There is a strong focus on developing communication skills and children and young people's abilities to reflect on their learning, often through the effective links to the expressive arts. Children and young people engaged in **RERC** provision are well included in parish life through for example, preparation for sacraments, participation in Lenten activities and church visits. They feel valued within the faith community and supported in deepening their relationship with God through prayer. They are learning to understand the needs of others and increase their personal knowledge of the Catholic faith.

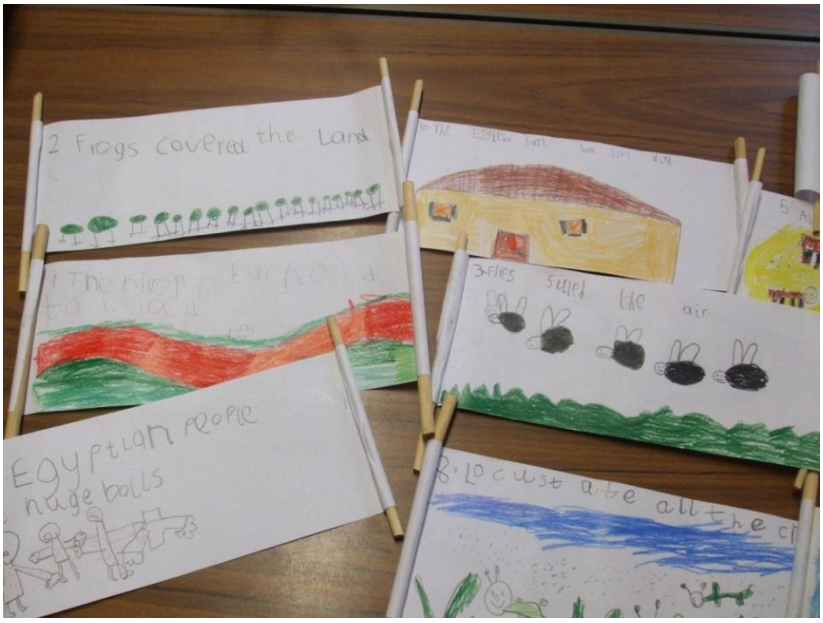
Click here to find out how St Kevin's Primary School, Glasgow, supports children with additional support needs to reflect on their Catholic faith.

Click here to find out how Kersland School, Renfrewshire, delivers RME through effective interdisciplinary learning and partnership with the local community.

In **primary and secondary** schools children and young people often experience teaching and learning approaches which ensure they enjoy **RME and RERC** and develop the four capacities promoted through Curriculum for Excellence. Collaborative and co-operative learning approaches are common. Where co-operative learning challenges are used effectively, children and young people learn well together, think deeply about issues of belief and morality and develop important skills for learning, life and work. In the majority of schools, teachers use a range of strategies well to involve children and young people in planning and assessing their learning in **RME and RERC**. Learners can usually describe the activities they are expected to undertake and what they will learn. They are less able to explain the purposes of their learning and not often clear enough about how well they are progressing. Almost all schools are still in the early stages of developing appropriate assessment arrangements for **RME or RERC**. Local moderation arrangements for Religious and Moral Education have yet to be established in some areas. Further to the advice on assessment within the principles and practice papers, schools will find further helpful guidance on assessment in Planning for Learning. Teaching and assessment in RME and Planning for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in RERC, Assessing Progress and Achievement in RME and Assessing Progress and Achievement in RERC.

Where secondary schools have made good progress in implementing the Curriculum for Excellence framework for Religious and Moral Education young people in S1-3 build well on the skills they have developed in primary school.

However, there are still too many examples of learning which lacks challenge, enjoyment and depth. During class and group discussions in **RME and RERC** the majority of young people demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates related to important aspects of society. This includes human rights, crime and punishment, equalities, sustainability, medical ethics and globalisation. They are not always well enough informed about how religious and other viewpoints might influence such debates within the public domain. In the best lessons, young people demonstrate skills of analysis and evaluation through for example, comparing and contrasting within a religion and across Christianity, world religions and other stances for living and shift their own thinking as a result. In **RME and in RERC**, the majority of young people confidently respond when asked to share where they stand in relation to the views of others. Where this doesn't happen it can often be because lessons are too teacher directed and overly dominated by teacher talk. Young people engage best in lessons when teachers provide clear and succinct explanations and exposition, well placed questions which promote higher order thinking and carefully judged interjections to move young people's dialogue on. In a few pre-school centres, primary and secondary schools learning experiences are outstanding. Overall, however, the quality of children and young people's learning experiences is inconsistent and there is scope for more active, independent and collaborative learning to support the development of higher order thinking skills. An increasing number of children and young people learn Religious and Moral Education through the **medium of Gaelic.**



Learning in the outdoors is becoming a more common feature of children's experiences in both **RME and RERC** which is helping children in the primary stages to develop as responsible citizens with some understanding of sustainability issues. Children in rural and urban settings are more often encouraged to develop their sense of awe and wonder through exploring aspects of nature. In the best examples children and young people use their time outdoors to reflect on their own and other people's beliefs and they are able to reflect on their own response to the natural world. Increasingly, these experiences are very well planned and managed so as to take account of the beliefs and family background of individual children. Children and young people often demonstrate strong awareness of their responsibilities for

the environment both now and in the future. Older children in primary schools and young people in a few secondary schools, say this way of learning challenges them to think about the relationship between humans and other living things. They can talk about the consequences of natural events and humankind's impact on the world and reflect on how this links to ethics and morality.

Click here to find out how Nesting Primary School, Shetland, uses the local context to explore aspects of religion and belief in the outdoors.

Click here to find out how St Dominic's RC Primary School, Perth and Kinross, use a local forest environment as a context for learning in RERC.

Click here to find out how Forres Academy, Moray, use the Standing Stones at Calanais as a context for learning about spirituality.

Non-denominational schools: significant aspects of learning in RME

Curriculum for Excellence guidance papers on assessing progress and achievement in **RME** highlight the following significant aspects of learning as important outcomes of learning across the broad general education. With high quality teaching and learning, it is be expected that most young people would be able to demonstrate these significant aspects of learning by the end of S3 and continue to build on them through RME in the senior phase.

Learning and achievement in RME should be characterised by:

- a deepening understanding the religious and cultural diversity of Scotland and across the world.
- recognising religion as a significant factor which has shaped our social, political and spiritual heritage.
- investigating religious beliefs, values, issues, traditions and practices through a range of primary and secondary sources.
- encountering religious diversity through contact with people of faith.
- being able to describe and explain features of moral issues and moral decision making.
- experiencing a sense of awe and wonder about what it means to be human.
- appreciating the importance of respect for the beliefs, values and traditions of others and being able to demonstrate this.
- developing skills and attributes to make well-judged moral and ethical decisions and to justify personal beliefs and values.
- engaging in a process of personal reflection leading to a deeper understanding of personal beliefs and ideas about meaning, value and purpose in life.

In most **non-denominational primary schools**, important strengths in children's learning are evident. Children are clearly experiencing learning linked to the outcomes described above. Children's learning in **RME** supports their developing understanding of school and community values and traditions. Through exploring the religious beliefs and practices evident in their local community, most children have a broad understanding of the impact of religious beliefs, values and traditions on the daily lives of those who adhere to a particular faith. However, their learning sometimes lacks depth. In a few schools, this is because children are being asked to learn too much about the different religions in a limited amount of time. To cope well with the complexities of religion and viewpoints independent of religious belief, children need time and space to reflect, ask questions and to effectively consolidate their understanding. Schools that have taken good account of Curriculum for Excellence ensure the curriculum is not overladen with learning about lots of different religions but focused on achieving deep learning through well-chosen contexts.

Exemplar – two different examples of investigative learning:

In one school children in a composite P6/7 class worked very well in co-operative learning groups each to investigate a different religious festival. They planned their learning, selected appropriate resources and presented their findings to the class after a few weeks of working together. They set their own homework and discussed their learning as they kept coming back to it. Their depth of knowledge was impressively demonstrated during their presentations as they skilfully answered questions from their peers. The class as a whole were then able to draw comparisons across the different festivals thus developing important analytical skills.

In contrast in another school children in P6 were given a similar task but each group was asked to investigate three or four festivals over a similar length of time. At the end of their investigations, most children in this class had only a superficial knowledge of what happened during each festival. They were unable to relate this knowledge to understanding the beliefs and concepts which underpinned the practice of celebrating the festivals. They relied heavily on reading from scripts when presenting information to their peers and were not confident when asked questions they had not anticipated.

In a growing number of **non-denominational** schools, children and young people learn about moral issues and demonstrate their own developing values through community involvement. Whilst this learning actively promotes local and global citizenship often it could be more explicitly linked to **RME**. The Curriculum for Excellence framework for **RME** states clearly that learning experiences should offer children and young people opportunities to develop their own beliefs and values as an integral aspect of learning about Christianity and world religions. The principles and practice paper refers to this as "learning from religion", however, this is not yet a consistent feature of learning. Teachers could do more to make the links between learning about religion and learning from religion more meaningful.

"A child or young person should be exploring his or her developing beliefs and values throughout the process of learning in religious and moral education. This exploration should permeate learning and teaching, and should take full account of the background, age and stage of the child or young person. Knowledge and understanding are an essential element of this personal reflection and exploration but they are not its only components."

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This might be through visitors to their school or through visits to places of religious interest. In best practice, children and young people take responsibility for aspects of this learning through effective research of their local community and inviting

speakers into their classroom. Schools should seek and follow clear local authority guidance for visiting speakers. Children and young people often feel ownership of their learning and show interest and enthusiasm when listening and engaging with visitors. Young people in one non-denominational secondary school talked enthusiastically about their visits to places such as the local mosque and the Samye Ling Buddhist temple. In addition they visited the St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art and Edinburgh Dungeons to investigate beliefs about life after death. The Education Scotland Testimony resource gives schools some ideas of places to visit. Other partners also produce useful resources to support this aspect of learning. In many secondary schools practicalities such as limited staffing for **RME** combined with the need to provide for whole year groups make this aspect of learning a challenge. However, such experiences should be regarded as significant aspects of learning within RME which senior managers should support. Creative solutions include interdisciplinary approaches and involvement of appropriately vetted parents and partners in the wider community to support teachers. Whilst such approaches may be appropriate to support learning across the four contexts of Curriculum for Excellence, they should be developed and implemented to complement subject specific learning and not as a replacement to it. Further advice on ensuring national entitlements for RME can be found in the Curriculum for Excellence Briefing papers.

Roman Catholic school: Significant aspects of learning in RERC:

Curriculum for Excellence guidance papers on assessing progress and achievement in RERC highlight the following significant aspects of learning as important outcomes of learning across the broad general education. These aspects of learning are also embedded throughout the guidance within This Is Our Faith. With high-quality teaching and learning, it is be expected that most young people would be able to demonstrate these significant aspects of learning by the end of S3 and to build on them in the senior phase.

Learning and achievement in RERC should be characterised by:

- a deepening knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- understanding the relevance of the Catholic faith to questions about truth and the meaning of life.
- fostering the values, attitudes and practices compatible with a positive response to the invitation to faith.
- developing the skills of reflection, discernment and critical thinking.
- being able to make well informed moral decisions.
- feeling nurtured through engagement in prayer as an individual and as part of the school and parish community.
- being able to understand and appreciate significant aspects of other Christian traditions and major world religions.
- making a positive difference to self and the world by putting beliefs and values into action.

In all of the **Roman Catholic primary** schools within the sample, important strengths in children's learning were noted. Almost all children are deepening their understanding of Gospel values through personal reflection supported by prayer and liturgy. In **Roman Catholic primary and secondary** schools, there is growing evidence of varied approaches to teaching and learning. This is helping children and young people to explore the Strands of Faith and the relationships between and across strands. In most schools, children and young people find their learning challenging and engaging. Almost all teachers feel that as a result of the guidance within This Is Our Faith, they are more confident in talking with children and young people about faith and what it means to be in relationship with God.

Click here to find out how St Andrew's Primary School, Airdrie, North Lanarkshire, encourage reflection and support children to apply their learning in RE to real-life contexts.

In keeping with the principles of **RERC,** children and young people in denominational schools are developing well their understanding of social justice and their responsibilities to care for others. This is often, but not always, linked to enterprise learning through which children also demonstrate organisation, co-operation and communication skills. In a few schools, learners engage in fundraising which is not necessarily linked to their learning experiences in religious education. Whilst this is recognised as an intrinsically good thing to do, children also need to develop an appropriate understanding of the morality of giving and receiving aid. Children and young people often learn through involvement with the wider parish community. They enjoy visits from their parish priest and develop confidence and skills through participation in school and parish masses. Many children and young people take on responsibilities as readers and altar servers thus extending their appreciation of worship in real and meaningful ways. Where this is not a significant feature of learning, schools need to further strengthen links with the parish community and take greater cognisance of the following advice:

"The experiences and outcomes within each strand (of faith) map progression which is not always linear across levels. They do have their own distinct and intrinsic value which must be addressed in order to develop the next steps in learning. The contexts for learning include self, family, school community, local/parish community, national and international community. The role of the school, parish and diocese as source and witness in the growth of the pupil is central."

RERC Principles and Practice- page 4

Almost all **Roman Catholic primary** classrooms have an area set aside for individual prayer and reflection. Iconography and symbols of the Catholic faith are usually displayed around the school and in classrooms. The creation of a prayerful learning environment extends children's knowledge and understanding of Catholic Christianity. Children often increase their creativity and awareness of sacred space and sacred objects by taking responsibility for designing and maintaining the reflection area in their classroom.

In **Roman Catholic secondary** schools where the school Oratory is most effectively used young people describe it as a special space for prayer and worship which belongs to them as part of the parish community. There are increasing examples of **Roman Catholic secondary** schools where young people are involved in planning school and class masses and retreats. In a few schools, senior pupils have trained alongside staff as Eucharistic ministers. All of these aspects of school life contribute to young people's growing knowledge of the Catholic faith and assist their reflection.

Click here to find out how young people at Notre Dame High School, Inverclyde, are benefiting from a range of experiences which strengthen their faith development.

c) Achievement and accreditation

Through a wide variety of challenging contexts for learning, Religious and Moral Education provides rich opportunities for **skills for learning, life and work**. During the curriculum impact review inspectors gathered evidence of the extent to which learning in RME and RERC is supporting children and young people to develop skills in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing alongside the development of higher order thinking skills and in using a range of information and communication technology. This section of the report applies to both **RME and RERC** and highlights our findings in relation to skills development and the extent to which learners' achievements are reflected in formal accreditation through qualifications and awards.

In many pre-school and P1 classes, children are developing well their early **literacy** skills and aspects of emotional and social wellbeing through Religious and Moral Education. Across the early stages, most children listen attentively to visitors for example, parents whose jobs involve helping others and visitors who share stories of their own beliefs and traditions. They can talk about stories they have heard from scripture and recognise characters who display qualities such as bravery, love, jealousy and forgiveness.

Children can talk about aspects of nature they find beautiful or powerful. They often engage in conversations about for example, the origins of life and ask relevant questions of parents and staff. They are increasing their use of subject specific vocabulary such as the names of religions, festivals, artefacts and places of worship. As they progress through the primary stages, children and young people often make effective use of their literacy skills in **RME and RERC.**

They engage with a range of texts, discuss in pairs and groups and produce written stories and reports of their investigations. Well-chosen texts for class and individual reading often stimulate discussion and deepen children and young people's understanding of religious and moral issues. For example, young people reading *The Divided City by Theresa Breslin* felt better informed about issues around sectarianism and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne* provided a stimulus for interdisciplinary learning about the holocaust.

The quality of young people's written work in Religious and Moral Education from S1 to S3 is not consistently of a high enough quality across Scotland. There are many schools where young people produce high quality work as a matter of course. This includes regular pieces of extended writing across a range of genres. However, in other schools, written work is consistently poor in quality and in a minority of schools young people are expected to produce almost no written work in **RME or RERC**. Religious and Moral Education is rich in opportunities for developing literacy skills to the highest level and all young people should be expected to apply their literacy skills appropriately to demonstrate their learning. This includes opportunities for developing strong religious literacy through an increasing understanding of abstract religious concepts, symbolism and analysis of religious language. In too many secondary schools the feedback young people in S1 to S3 receive about written work is too general and focused on presentation rather than the quality of response. As a result, young people are not sufficiently aware of how well they are doing or how to improve.

Across all sectors, children and young people have some opportunities to apply their **numeracy** skills within the context of Religious and Moral Education. In best practice, teachers are skilled in reinforcing appropriate numeracy skills which fit with the learning in **RME or RERC**. Children often use their numeracy skills to illustrate results of their surveys about religious beliefs, other viewpoints and practices and traditions. They apply knowledge of percentages and fractions when working with population data and engage in problem solving activities for example when exploring ethical issues such as Fair Trade. Numeracy skills are often applied through interdisciplinary learning contexts which include learning in Religious and Moral Education. This might include increasing their understanding of time through an exploration of prayer in Islam or calculating the true costs of commodities such as tea, coffee and chocolate. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in identifying appropriate contexts within Religious and Moral Education through which numeracy skills can be developed. They should continue to build on this.

High quality Religious and Moral Education contributes much to support children and young people's developing **health and wellbeing** through a focus on increasing their understanding of self and others. Most children in nurseries and primary schools participate enthusiastically in celebrations which are important to themselves or others in their school. They understand the importance of caring and sharing and showing respect to others. Most demonstrate this in their treatment of other children. Through learning in **RME and RERC**, children and young people often work together and communicate effectively with each other. They are increasing their understanding of sectarianism and approaches to combat this. They often have opportunities to develop leadership skills. This can include, for example, organising assemblies or buddying younger children to support them in preparation for the sacraments or giving peer support in the playground and wider life of the school. Most children and young people appreciate the importance of giving service to their school and community. In many schools, children and young people present clear examples of how their teachers and others in their community put their values into action through the way they teach and act in school and in the wider community. These aspects of learning contribute significantly to children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing. Increasingly, children and young people in **Roman Catholic** schools understand how prayer, liturgy and reflection contribute to their own faith journey and this supports their spiritual health and wellbeing. There is though scope for schools to plan more effectively to ensure children and young

people achieve through the experiences and outcomes of health and wellbeing as an embedded aspect of **RME and RERC**.

Higher order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation and interpretation of texts and ideas need to be more consistently embedded in the learning experiences of children and young people. Such skills are important to develop the depth, challenge and application of learning that are key features which lead children from learning about religion to learning from religion. Where this is happening well, it is usually as a result of teachers' high quality questioning which challenges children to think critically. In a few primary schools children are familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy and use it effectively to support their own development of higher order thinking skills. In one example where children in P6 were studying Christian parables, they self-assessed their own questions by categorising them against the hierarchy of skills. This ensured they were challenging each other's thinking about the meaning of parables.

Click here to find out how Our Lady of the Missions Primary School, East Renfrewshire, is using This Is Our Faith to introduce more active learning in RERC.

In **Roman Catholic** primary schools there are promising signs that children's knowledge and understanding of Catholicism and of Christianity more widely is improving. Children at all stages demonstrated an appropriate understanding of Bible stories and could explain how the teachings helped to inform their own decisions. For example children in a P2 class could relate the story of David and Goliath to their learning about bullying. In a P6 class children explained how the parable of the Lost Son helped them to understand the concept of forgiveness. In the best examples, children used higher order thinking skills well to increase their understanding of scripture and other types of text. However, this is not yet consistent between or necessarily within schools.

In a few of the primary and secondary schools sampled, children and young people confidently use **information and communications technology (ICT)** to broaden their learning in Religious and Moral Education. Examples include the use of virtual technology to 'tour' mosques, synagogues, churches and temples. More schools could make increased use of such technology to access resources and encourage children and young people to think more about the significance of particular aspects of worship within different world religions. It is quite common for learners to use the internet and other resources to investigate religious beliefs and practices but not so common to see them analysing and interpreting the information they gather.

Most secondary teachers of **RME and RERC** use ICT effectively to enliven their explanations and to give young people access to a wider range of current resources such as news reports, global publications and international figures. Through such approaches, young people are increasing their knowledge and understanding of how religious and moral viewpoints impact on people's behaviours and responses to significant concerns within our society. However, for reasons often linked to timetabling and prioritising of ICT resources within schools, young people's access to ICT for learning in Religious and Moral Education is not consistently good. Consequently, many young people are not improving their ICT skills within the context of Religious and Moral Education. Across all sectors staff should reflect on how to improve this. There is a need to consider how a wider range of ICT including digital recording equipment, games based technology and interactive resources as well as the internet could motivate learners, deepen their understanding of religion and morality. Increased effective use of ICT could connect children and young people to communities across Scotland and internationally to broaden their learning about other religions and cultures.

Children and young people's achievements in **RME and RERC** are recognised and accredited in numerous ways. Learning is often linked to schemes such as Eco Schools Scotland and Rights Respecting Schools leading to whole school accreditation. Other organisations such as the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF), Mary's Meals, Amnesty International and Christian Aid formally recognise the often significant fundraising, campaigning and partnership working achieved by children and young people. A few schools have achieved success in the Church of Scotland's Moderator Medal. Many young people achieve success in local and national competitions and award schemes such as *Learning for Life and Inspire>Aspire* from Character Education Scotland and learning linked to John Muir Award, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Saltire Awards. These achievements are not always well enough recorded and recognised by schools so that all young people can reflect on and build on their achievements in a progressive way. Children and young people can often talk about their contributions to these projects but more could be done to capture this within the RME or RERC section of P7 and S3 profiles so that children and young people demonstrate how involvement in these projects reflects their personal beliefs and values. The Education Scotland website contains some examples of P7 profiles and S3 profiles which include children's reflections about their achievements in RME or RERC.

Many schools rightly recognise that whilst young people achieve through the wide range of learning opportunities in Religious and Moral Education it is not always appropriate for these to be recognised through formal accreditation. In best practice, children and young people make progress in a wide range of skills and attributes and can articulate the benefits of their achievements for their future. Working with children and young people to plan ways of building on their achievements, all schools should ensure this aspect of the curriculum is developed in ways which meet learners' needs. There is also scope for schools to improve how they ensure that children and young people are able to achieve through working with faith groups and organisations which reflect their own personal beliefs and values.

Over the session 2012-13 a few secondary schools were early adopters of the SQA Award in Religion, Beliefs and Values which is available at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 3, 4, 5 and 6. 538 young people achieved the Award at one of these levels For session 2013-14 more than 2,000 candidates are entered for the Award with almost all entered for SCQF level 4 or level 5. This Award has been specifically developed to support learning in **RME and RERC** in the senior phase. Young people aiming to achieve the Award must demonstrate how they have put their own beliefs and values into action as a result of learning about religious and moral issues. Such personal reflection is a significant aspect of learning in **RME and RERC**.

The introduction of the Caritas Award in session 2011-12 by the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) for young people in their final year of **Roman Catholic** education has proven to be a highly successful initiative. Almost all Catholic schools in Scotland have presented candidates for the Caritas Award and over one thousand three hundred young people have already achieved it. The Award is granted to those who demonstrate personal faith development through high quality reflection of their learning in religious education alongside a demonstration of faith lived through service to others in their school and parish community.

SCES has plans to introduce the Pope Francis Faith Award which will encourage children in P6 and P7 to "*sustain an active commitment to faith in their everyday lives".* It will recognise *"young people who show "signs of love" in their faith-inspired actions"* by engaging in faith witness activities in school, at home and in their parish. Schools and local authorities should monitor the impact of this development in their local area over the next few years.

Data relating to national qualifications highlights some interesting factors worthy of further investigation as this review is continued and updated. Entries for Religious Studies and Religious Moral & Philosophical Studies qualifications offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) have continued to increase over recent years. Overall, attainment is also improving however, this is not the case in each individual establishment. The impact of new qualifications at National 4 and National 5 has yet to be seen although the first presentations will be in summer 2014. Education Scotland has published support materials for RMPS qualifications at National 4, National 5 and Higher level. SQA data show that national qualifications courses are more popular in non-denominational schools than denominational ones, especially at Advanced Higher. At all levels, the subject attracts more girls than boys. Schools should consider this as they develop the new qualifications and aim

to ensure boys and girls of all abilities are aware of the range of skills they will develop through RMPS. Further SQA attainment data is available in Appendix 4.

2. How well are children and young people supported to learn in Religious and Moral Education?

This section focuses on:

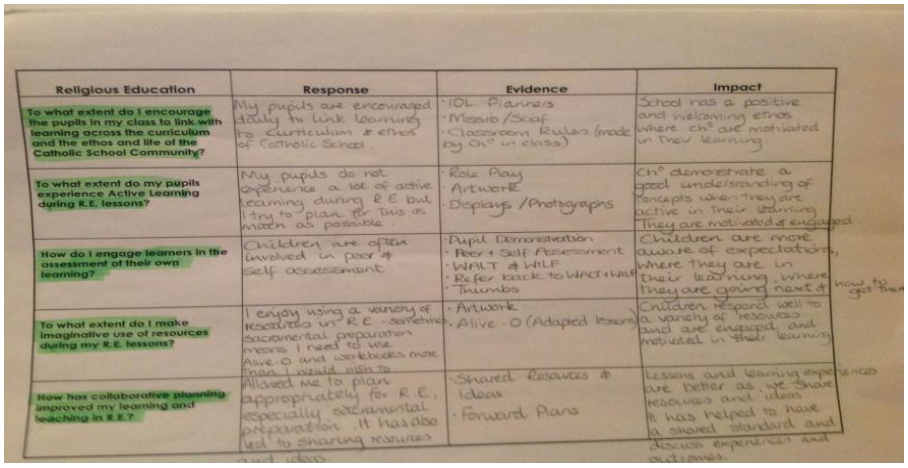
a) Curriculum design
b) The Senior Phase
c) The involvement of partners

a) Curriculum design

Across all schools, courses and programmes in **RME and RERC** from P1 to S3 are linked to the relevant framework of experiences and outcomes. Contexts for learning are usually relevant with opportunities for personalisation and choice built in. Most teachers are aware of the seven **principles of curriculum design:** challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; personalisation and choice; coherence and relevance. Overall, children and young people have opportunities for **RME and RERC** through subject specific learning, interdisciplinary learning, opportunities for personal achievement and the ethos and life of the school as a community, but the quality of planning is not consistently strong. More staff, as they continue to develop the curriculum, should review their practice against the principles of curriculum design. A reflection tool to support self-evaluation of the curriculum against the principles of curriculum design is available as Appendix 6.

The quality of curriculum planning for RME varies greatly across the **non-denominational** sector. Within and across local authorities there is inconsistency and some schools need more guidance on expectations within their local area. Over recent years, in many local authorities primary schools have been asked to focus on developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as the key Curriculum for Excellence priority. In best practice this has been achieved alongside the development of RME. In the strongest examples, planning begins with the experiences and outcomes and includes identification of the skills embedded within them. Aspects of the responsibilities of all are embedded and there is coherence to the overall programme of learning. In the weakest examples, schools have simply audited long standing units of work against the experiences and outcomes and added in a few aspects such as “the Scottish dimension” which appear specific to Curriculum for Excellence but with very little real change from previous 5-14 programmes. As a result children and young people’s learning is sometimes more akin to a series of disjointed chunks of information about religions and moral issues than a progressive coherent journey of deepening understanding. In a growing number of secondary schools RME is being delivered totally through interdisciplinary learning or embedded within cross-cutting themes such as citizenship. Where this is the case, young people’s learning experiences are not sufficiently focused on religious beliefs, practices, traditions and values as outlined within Curriculum for Excellence guidance about planning learning across all four contexts of subject specific learning, interdisciplinary learning, ethos and life of the school community and opportunities for achievement. Schools require more support to address these

issues of curriculum design alongside improved arrangements for planning RME across the transition from primary to secondary school. There are currently only a few examples of primary and secondary colleagues working well together. Where this is working best, programmes of learning from P1 to S3 are being developed in a holistic way. This can be based on agreements about the range of content being delivered at each stage or through the development of a progressive skills framework.



Religious Education	Response	Evidence	Impact
To what extent do I encourage the pupils in my class to link with learning across the curriculum and the ethos and life of the Catholic School Community?	My pupils are encouraged daily to link learning to curriculum & ethos of Catholic School.	· IDL Planners · Mission / Scief · Classroom Rules (made by Ch° in class)	School has a positive and welcoming ethos where ch° are motivated in their learning.
To what extent do my pupils experience Active Learning during R.E. lessons?	My pupils do not experience a lot of active learning during R.E but I try to plan for this as much as possible.	· Role Play · Artwork · Displays / Photographs	Ch° demonstrate a good understanding of concepts when they are active in their learning. They are motivated & engaged.
How do I engage learners in the assessment of their own learning?	Children are often involved in peer & self assessment.	· Pupil Demonstration · Peer + Self Assessment · WALT & WILF · Refer back to WALT + WILF · Thumbs	Children are more aware of expectations, where they are in their learning, where they are going next & how to get there.
To what extent do I make imaginative use of resources during my R.E. lessons?	I enjoy using a variety of resources in R.E. sometimes sacramental preparation means I need to use Alive-O and workbooks more than I would wish to.	· Artwork · Alive-O (Adapted lessons)	Children respond well to a variety of resources and are engaged and motivated in their learning.
How has collaborative planning improved my learning and teaching in R.E.?	Allowed me to plan appropriately for R.E. especially sacramental preparation. It has also led to sharing resources and ideas.	· Shared Resources & Ideas · Forward Plans	Lessons and learning experiences are better as we share resources and ideas. It has helped to have a shared standard and discuss experiences and outcomes.

Roman Catholic schools are using the guidance within This Is Our Faith to support planning for progression, depth and challenge. Overall, this has been well received and is making a positive difference to the quality of curriculum planning and the subsequent learning opportunities for children and young people but it is a work in progress. Across Scotland how well the guidance is being implemented depends on the quality of support from local authorities, deployment of resources to support necessary cluster development work and the quality of partnership working between the local authority, the local Diocese and the school. A few local authorities have a specific member of staff with responsibility for supporting RERC. In these local authorities, cluster working is common and schools feel well supported. In those local authorities where there are no Catholic secondary schools, there is a need to ensure arrangements for progression in RERC beyond P7 are appropriate and working well for Roman Catholic young people.

b) The Senior Phase

For schools across Scotland planning for the senior phase includes two particular aspects of Religious and Moral Education that are important to get right for young people.

- effective provision for RME and RERC.
- appropriate opportunities for achievement through national qualifications in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

Non-denominational schools: developing the senior phase

Curriculum for Excellence guidance for **non-denominational** schools has introduced and encouraged greater flexibility and creativity in secondary school curriculum structures. However, the national expectation remains that all young people receive

their entitlement to meaningful and progressive programme of RME to the end of S6. This is embedded in Scottish Government advice issued in February 2011.

> ***"It remains that schools and local authorities must provide religious and moral education in non-denominational schools to every child and young person in accordance with legal requirements. This is statutory for all pupils attending primary and secondary education and includes those in S5 and S6. Children and young people deserve the opportunity to have this taught in a meaningful and progressive way."***
>
> Scottish Government advice letter: Section 9 (Feb 2011)

Only a minority of **non-denominational** schools deliver this national expectation for RME in the senior phase. As the senior phase curriculum continues to develop, staff in non-denominational schools should seek to build on the following strengths which exist to varying extent within the senior phase:

- build on their learning about Christianity, world religions and viewpoints independent of religion from the broad general education;
- often demonstrate the depth of knowledge and application of skills illustrated in the fourth level experiences and outcomes;
- experience learning across all four aspects of the curriculum with a balance of subject specific and interdisciplinary learning;
- have increasing opportunities to choose how and what they learn taking account of their own developing beliefs and values;
- take responsibility for organising aspects of their learning for example inviting speakers and running conferences;
- deepen their understanding of the challenges which religions often present to society at local and national level;
- develop confidence and resilience through sharing and debating personal opinions and beliefs and
- increase their understanding of themselves and their roles and responsibilities.

Across Scotland most young people in S5 and S6 are missing out on the important learning which RME can offer senior students in non-denominational schools. In a growing number of schools the curriculum for S4 has either limited or no provision for RME. Occasionally this is also the case from S1 to S3. Depending on their circumstances, schools cite different reasons for this:

i) Staffing: limited numbers of specialist staff, an inability to recruit additional staff, other staff who are reluctant to deliver RME and a lack of the necessary professional learning opportunities.

ii) Timetabling structures: perceived tensions between meeting other national expectations and delivering a range of national qualifications, the development of joint RME/PSHE programmes and the view that RME does not need to be delivered through subject specific learning.

iii) Lack of clarity and guidance: senior managers are often unclear about how they should meet the national expectation, lack of certainty about what a "meaningful and progressive" programme might look like and a few headteachers are under the mistaken impression that RME is only required within the broad general education.

This lack of provision potentially has serious consequences for society in that too many young people are not deepening their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of religions and beliefs within Scottish society. As they mature into young adults, the skills and attitudes which RME can uniquely support them to develop are increasingly significant if young people are to become effective contributors and responsible citizens within local and national communities. Understanding religious and moral issues is an essential aspect of young people's political literacy. Local authorities and schools need support to identify and address issues which currently prevent young people receiving their entitlement. As they seek to implement appropriate models for the senior phase curriculum schools must ensure they plan well to include a progressive element of RME from S4 to S6 and continue to ensure the principles of curriculum design are embedded.

Roman Catholic schools: developing the senior phase

The Bishops' Conference of Scotland sets out guidelines established by the Catholic Education Commission on the provision for **RERC**. These guidelines indicate a requirement for a minimum 2 hours per week in all stages of secondary school. In practice this guidance is translated into 2 periods of RE per week in all Catholic schools. The concept of a weekly provision is considered important to ensure regular opportunities for learning and reflection and for staff to support young people's faith development. Almost all Roman Catholic schools provide this. The pastoral element of teaching RERC is an important factor and one which young people value highly. Curriculum for Excellence guidance reiterates this national expectation for RERC and as a result this model of delivery is very much the norm in Catholic schools across Scotland. Overall, the quality of courses and programmes delivered is variable but improving as schools are building on the implementation of This Is Our Faith up to the end of S3. The Catholic Education Commission has developed a senior phase syllabus to build on the core learning of This Is Our Faith within the broad general education. Local authorities and schools should ensure they keep abreast of this development and plan how they will work in partnership with Roman Catholic RE Advisers in their Diocese to take this forward at local level. As the senior phase curriculum continues to develop, Roman Catholic schools should seek to build on the following strengths which exist to varying extent within **RERC** in senior phase:

- a breadth of learning across a range of religious and moral issues which young people find relevant;
- opportunities to explore sectarianism, for example, and other issues of equality, inclusion and diversity through links with non-denominational partner schools and with international partner schools;
- a focus on leadership, responsible citizenship and service to others at local, national and global level;
- partnerships with the wider parish and with other local organisations and faith groups to support RE in the classroom and in the wider life of the school;
- retreat programmes which support senior pupils and staff to reflect and grow in faith;
- pilgrimage to places of religious significance in Scotland and other parts of the world;
- programmes for relationships and moral education embedded within the context of religious education, and
- a broadening of the curriculum to include opportunities for national qualifications in RMPS and the Caritas Award.

Roman Catholic schools should take account of the progress made in implementing This Is Our Faith within the broad general education. In seeking to improve the senior phase, the following aspects for development in **RERC** should be considered:

Young people from S4 to S6 should:

- increase the depth of their understanding of the Catholic faith, Christianity more widely and other world religions;

- be challenged to think more deeply about the big questions and concepts which are central to faith, religion and belief;
- be more involved in planning what and how they learn, taking account of their own faith, beliefs and values;
- engage with the range of religious and moral debates within Scottish society; and
- continue to extend their literacy skills through increasingly complex texts and high expectations of their written and oral work.

In recent years, uptake for **national qualifications in Religious Studies and Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies** has continued to increase particularly in non-denominational schools. Young people have access to well-planned progression routes through the qualifications framework. Schools with experience of delivering previous national qualifications in RMPS are well placed to move forward with the new range of qualifications developed in line with Curriculum for Excellence. However, a significant number of schools still present young people for SQA Unit accreditation using qualifications which were developed many years ago - some date to thirty years ago. Such units often form the curriculum for S3 and S4 RME in non-denominational schools and occasionally in Roman Catholic schools. Where such practice exists, it should be reconsidered to ensure the curriculum is current, relevant and in line with the aims and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and national guidance on presenting young people for national qualifications.

c) The involvement of partners

During focus group discussions many **parents** described how their children instigated discussions at home about religious and moral issues as a result of something which had captured their child's imagination in the classroom. Almost all parents felt that this was good, however they also felt that their schools could work more closely with parents to extend children and young people's learning in religious and moral education beyond the classroom environment.

This is a particular challenge for secondary schools. In working to achieve this, schools and local authorities should ensure reporting arrangements include information on children and young people's progress in Religious and Moral Education. There is also scope for many schools to improve how they communicate the aims and purposes of Religious and Moral Education to parents.

In **Roman Catholic** schools parents are generally well aware of the nature and purpose of RE. They are clear that it is integral to the faith values and ethos of the school and most support this without question. In **non-denominational** secondary schools, in particular, some parents were unsure about why RME was considered an important aspect of their children's learning. However, a few schools have moved forward with parental involvement in classwork and homework and children's learning is enriched as a result. This is more often the case in primary than secondary. In Scotland parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from Religious and Moral Education if they feel the curriculum conflicts with their own beliefs. In practice very few parents feel the need to do so but schools continue to have a responsibility to ensure information about arrangements for withdrawal from Religious and Moral Education are openly shared with parents. Local authorities have an ongoing responsibility to ensure all schools are aware of their legal obligations and that they respond appropriately to the views of parents in the school community.

Click here to find out how Kirkcolm Primary School, Dumfries and Galloway, introduced 'Family Challenges' to engage parents more in RME.

Click here to find out how St Peter's Primary School, West Dunbartonshire developed their parental guide to RE.

All schools recognise the added value that partners can bring to the curriculum. Within all sectors there are many successful partnership arrangements already in place. Schools would benefit from increased sharing of such work both locally and nationally. There is scope for many schools to broaden the range of partners who support Religious and Moral Education to give children and young people broader insights into the range of religious and secular beliefs which are part of our diverse Scottish society. This would help to combat the stereotypical views of religious groups which children and young people are often presented with both in school and through the media.

The range of partners contributing to Religious and Moral Education across Scotland include:

Parents **chaplains** **community police officers** **youth workers**

leaders and lay members of local faith communities

charitable organisations **teachers of other subjects** **prison officers**

pupils from other schools **staff from a local hospice**

equality and human rights organisations

environmental and peace organisations

people with viewpoints independent of religious belief

mediation organisations

armed forces personnel **local and national educational organisations**

3. How well do schools and local authorities continue to improve Religious and Moral Education?

This section focuses on:

a) Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)
b) Self-evaluation and improvement planning
c) Leadership

a) Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)

"Long-term and sustained improvement which has a real impact on the quality of children's learning will be better achieved through determined efforts to build the capacity of teachers themselves to take responsibility for their own professional development, building their pedagogical expertise, engaging with the need for change, undertaking well-thought through development and always evaluating impact in relation to improvement in the quality of children's learning. That is the message from successful education systems across the world."

Teaching Scotland's Future: Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland, G Donaldson, Scottish Government (2011)

Teaching Scotland's Future recognises the importance of high quality, career-long professional learning for all teachers. National partners such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and Education Scotland are working together to take forward the recommendations within the report. This includes a reminder of the important role which subject specialist teachers play in the delivery of the curriculum in Scottish secondary schools and is important for effective delivery of Religious and Moral Education.

On 1 August 2013, the GTCS' suite of revised Professional Standards came into effect. A set of core professional values which stretch across the suite of Professional Standards is central to the continuing development of the education profession, irrespective of individuals' experience and stage in career. Teachers should take account of these new professional values, which encompass social justice, integrity, trust and respect and professional commitment, when considering how best to deliver and support RME and RERC.

In many pre-school centres and schools across Scotland, a supportive ethos, productive partnerships, and a sense of collegiality are creating positive and productive environments for learning and teaching. In most establishments staff exchange ideas and support each other in making improvements to their practice. The development of Teacher Learning Communities in primary and secondary schools has successfully engaged staff in formal exploration of how they can improve approaches to teaching and learning within the context of Religious and Moral Education. Where such networks are embedded within the professional life of a school, teachers take responsibility for their own professional learning and children and young people benefit. However, the blend and high standard of professional learning which *Teaching Scotland's Future* recommends is not yet evident.

Across Scotland, the access to, and effectiveness of, professional learning opportunities within the specific context of Religious and Moral Education is, overall, minimal. In a few local authorities, staff across all sectors feel very well supported by the strong lead shown by central staff or in some local authorities by lead practitioners who are school based. In many other local authorities, staff report a lack of centrally-organised professional learning opportunities in relation to **RME or RERC**. Barriers to such provision that were reported include: the increasing experience that central officers have such a wide range of responsibilities they have limited time to lead Religious and Moral Education; the lack of available funds at

local authority level to offer a wide and diverse range of professional learning activities; and the shortage of supply teachers to allow staff to attend subject network meetings, training or courses.

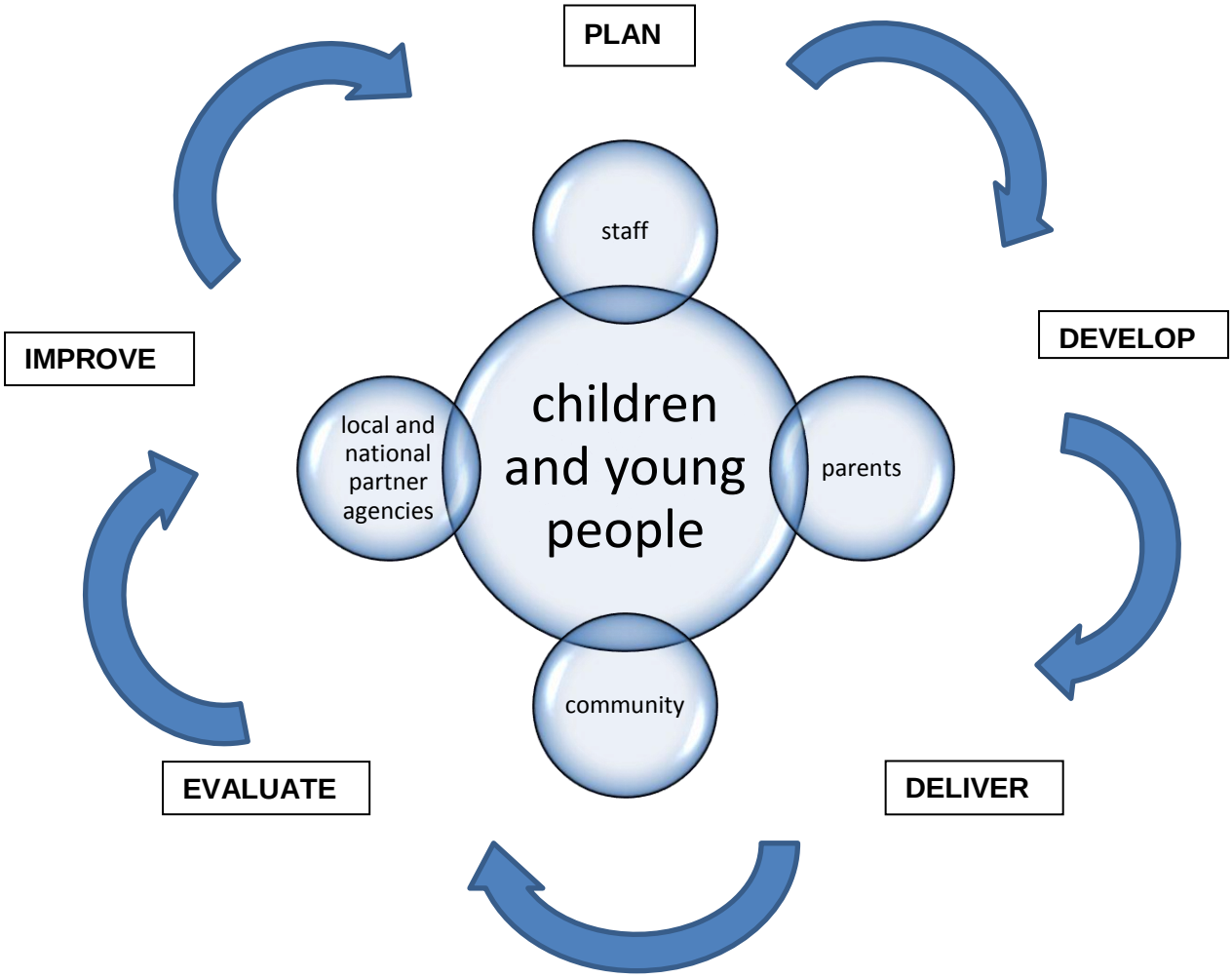
In recent years, most staff have undertaken professional learning in generic aspects of pedagogy such as assessment is for learning and co-operative learning. Whilst the positive impact of this learning is evident in many schools, there remains a further need for staff to deepen their knowledge and understanding of subject content and to consider how they might apply new teaching methodologies within the context of **RME and RERC**. In considering why this had not happened many local authority staff referred to arrangements for prioritising curriculum developments. Resources for professional learning have been concentrated on, for example, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They simply have "not got round to Religious and Moral Education". In many local authorities greater clarity about how improvements within **RME and RERC** will be taken forward through high quality professional learning is required.

For staff in **Roman Catholic schools** the issue of support and professional learning has been well addressed in some areas through the work of the Catholic Education Commission and the Diocesan RE Advisers who have provided professional learning opportunities for staff implementing This Is Our Faith. Staff in Roman Catholic schools spoke highly of this support and commented on how much their confidence to teach the new curriculum had risen as a consequence. However, it remains the case that local authorities are responsible for the quality of learning and teaching in RME and in RERC and have an obligation to support staff in all of their schools. In denominational and non-denominational schools teachers of RME/RERC are entitled to more opportunities for subject specific professional learning than are currently on offer. There is scope for increased partnership between schools, local authorities, universities and national agencies and support groups with a clearer focus on supporting career long professional learning for teachers of Religious and Moral Education. This could be co-ordinated through Glow.

b) Self-evaluation and improvement planning

In early years centres and schools, most staff are reflective and keen to improve their work. The quality of improvement through self-evaluation is, overall, variable. Many staff need more support to consider what is working well in **RME and RERC** and to identify improvement priorities. The Curriculum for Excellence: National Expectations: Self-evaluation resource (August 2013) is a helpful document in this respect. Increasingly, staff seek feedback from children and young people and use this to gauge the impact of the courses, programmes and learning activities they have developed and delivered. In many schools the feedback from learners would be more helpful if the questions staff asked were designed to find out more about the quality and depth of specific aspects of learning or to gauge the impact of new initiatives. Many learner evaluations focus on children and young people's enjoyment of their learning and often the exact same questions are asked repeatedly over the course of a school year. Very few schools seek the views of parents and other partners specifically on Religious and Moral Education as an aspect of self-evaluation and yet headteachers acknowledge the need to take account of family backgrounds and local sensitivities when planning aspects of **RME and RERC**. There is much work to do to move from the current norm of informing

parents and partners about what happens in Religious and Moral Education to the best practice where schools involve parents and partners in planning, developing, delivering, evaluating and improving the curriculum. The diagram below illustrates how this might be seen as an ongoing improvement cycle putting the needs and views of children and young people at the centre of improvement planning. The model is one of collaboration.



In many schools regular peer observation supports teachers well in evaluating teaching and learning. Some secondary teachers have visited other schools to observe practice and network with colleagues across their local authority and beyond. There is scope for more of this partnership working and in the primary sector for more focused attention on **RME and RERC** when planning peer observations. Teachers from all sectors would benefit from increased dialogue about how **RME or RERC** lessons provide challenge and ensure progression in the significant aspects of learning. Religious and Moral Education is rarely a focus of local authority quality assurance visits and quality improvement officers were often unable to provide examples of strong practice within their authority. Improvement plans in almost all **Roman Catholic** primary schools visited included the implementation of This Is Our Faith as a whole school priority however in **non-denominational** schools improving RME is more often down to the commitment of individual classroom teachers wanting to improve their work. There is therefore a

need for more coherent approaches to evaluate the quality of Religious and Moral Education across local authorities. Staff in all sectors should work more closely with local authority staff to plan and take forward aspects for development identified. There is scope for improvements in sharing practice, formalising partnerships and working together on action research so that the impact of improvement work can be measured.

Click here to find out how St Margaret's Academy, West Lothian, used Shining the Light of Christ in the Catholic School as part of their self-evaluation.

c) Leadership

Effective leadership at all levels is a key factor in determining the quality of **RME and RERC** across Scotland. The quality of leadership of Religious and Moral Education is, overall, variable. In primary and special schools where the headteacher or another member of the senior management team takes specific responsibility for this area of the curriculum, there is evidence of much progress with the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. There are also examples of Religious and Moral Education flourishing as a result of the efforts of passionate, committed teachers even sometimes when leadership from the headteacher might be lacking. In the best examples, leaders at all levels demonstrate a clear understanding of the value of Religious and Moral Education and work together to create a successful environment for learning and achievement. In **Roman Catholic** schools, headteachers assume direct responsibility for developing the religious life of the school and this usually permeates all aspects of learning and teaching although the extent of this varies. Class teachers in **Roman Catholic primary schools** are very much aware of their responsibility to deliver RE and to support the personal faith journey of children in their class. How well this is achieved, depends on the leadership of the headteacher and others in the school.

In secondary schools, the main leadership responsibility often sits with Principal Teachers of **RME and RERC**. Principal teachers are often experienced practitioners with a passion for this subject area. They often demonstrate high levels of commitment and fulfil their remits well. In **Roman Catholic** schools RE is usually developed by a small team of subject specialists and often delivered by teachers from across the school. In large **Roman Catholic** secondary schools this can be a sizeable team to support and lead. Senior managers should ensure appropriate arrangements to support professional dialogue, career long professional learning and self-evaluation. Leadership of **RME in non-denominational schools** can also be challenging for different reasons. **RME** departments are often small teams or sometimes sole teachers who carry responsibility for teaching, learning, assessment and reporting of RME for the whole school. The development of a new curriculum and the introduction of new national qualifications has been a particular challenge for many of these small departments and yet commendably many have made much progress with Curriculum for Excellence.

In recent years there has been a growth in the number of curriculum leader posts with responsibility for **RME in non-denominational** schools. This is a result of changes in staffing structures across many local authorities. Curriculum leaders may or may not have a background of experience teaching this subject. Levels of confidence and knowledge vary amongst curriculum leaders as does the quality of their leadership. Whilst there are many strong curriculum leaders who are well informed about all their areas of responsibility it is more the norm that curriculum leaders do not sufficiently engage with subject specific professional learning. They may have undergone a few management training courses but often they find the day to day business of leading a team of subject specialists representing different curriculum areas very challenging. As a result, many subject specialist class teachers feel isolated and not well led. There is scope to improve how curriculum leaders learn about significant aspects of the curriculum areas that they take responsibility for and to ensure class teachers take responsibility for leadership of learning within religious and moral education.

Arrangements to lead and support **RME and RERC** at local authority level are varied. All local authorities have a named person with responsibility for this curriculum area however expectations of the role are very different across the country, depending on staffing structures within each area. Almost all of those with responsibility for Religious and Moral Education have wide ranging remits and no particular experience of RME/RERC. Some local authorities have appointed subject specialists as lead teachers. Again, how these leaders are selected varies. They tend to focus on the secondary sector so that leadership of **RME and RERC** at primary level is less well organised within local authorities. Local RE Advisers appointed by Dioceses and working in conjunction with SCES provide additional leadership for RERC which teachers and local authority staff value. Overall, there is a need for a more coherent leadership of Religious and Moral Education to ensure consistently high quality experiences for children and young people.

Next Steps

The findings of this review will be discussed widely with and amongst practitioners, key stakeholders and partner organisations who support Religious and Moral Education across Scotland. Education Scotland will continue to update this report by adding further links to examples of good practice and professional learning resources. Key messages from the report will be shared with parents and young people and we will continue to engage with them as we seek to build on the strengths identified in the report.

We will continue to work with local authorities, pre-school centres, schools and partner organisations to address the aspects for development highlighted in this curriculum area impact review.

Appendix 1: List of establishments included in the sample of focused visits.

We are grateful to the engagement of children and young people and staff from the following establishments. In all schools, parents and partners focus groups gave of their time to talk to inspectors. Our thanks go to them also.

All Saints Primary School, Inverclyde Council
All Saints Secondary School, Glasgow City Council
Annick Primary School, North Ayrshire Council
Auchenharvie Academy, North Ayrshire Council
Barrhead High School, East Renfrewshire Council
Braehead Primary School and Nursery Class, Stirling Council
Brunstane Primary School and Nursery Class, The City of Edinburgh Council
Campbeltown Grammar School, Argyll and Bute Council
Carluke High School, South Lanarkshire Council
Castle Kennedy Primary School, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Cleish Primary School, Perth and Kinross Council
Craigbank Primary School, Clackmannanshire Council
Cults Academy, Aberdeen City Council
Dalkeith High School, Midlothian Council
Deans Community High School, West Lothian Council
Dunbeg Primary School and Nursery Class, Argyll and Bute Council
Ellon Academy, Aberdeenshire Council
Forres Academy, The Moray Council
Gairloch High School, The Highland Council
Glaitness Primary School and Nursery Class, Orkney Islands Council
Glenburn Primary School and Nursery Class, South Ayrshire Council
Greyfriars RC Primary School, Fife Council
Halyrude Primary School, Scottish Borders Council
Hawthornden Primary School, Midlothian Council
Inverkeilor Primary School and Nursery Class, Angus Council
Inverkeithing High School, Fife Council
James Hamilton Academy, East Ayrshire Council
John Paul II Primary School, Glasgow City Council
Kersland School, Renfrewshire Council
Kirkcolm Primary School, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Kittybrewster Primary School and Nursery Class, Aberdeen City Council
Langbank Primary School, Renfrewshire Council
Larkhall Academy, South Lanarkshire Council
Lourdes Secondary School, Glasgow City Council
Nesting Primary School, Shetland Islands Council
Notre Dame High School, Inverclyde Council
Our Lady of the Missions Primary School, East Renfrewshire Council
Our Lady's High School (Cumbernauld), North Lanarkshire Council
Pencaitland Primary School and Nursery Class, East Lothian Council
Port Glasgow High School, Inverclyde Council
St Andrew's and St Bride's High School, South Lanarkshire Council
St Andrew's Primary School and Nursery Class (Airdrie), North Lanarkshire Council
St Benedict's High School, Renfrewshire Council
St Columba's High School, Inverclyde Council
St David's High School, Midlothian Council

St Dominic's RC Primary School and Nursery Class, Perth and Kinross Council
St Flannan's Primary School, East Dunbartonshire Council
St Francis RC Primary School, The City of Edinburgh Council
St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School and Nursery Class, Falkirk Council
St John's RC High School, Dundee City Council
St Joseph's Primary School, Dundee City Council
St Kevin's Primary School, Glasgow City Council
St Maurice's High School, North Lanarkshire Council
St Peter's Primary School, South Lanarkshire Council
St Peter's Primary School, West Dunbartonshire Council
St Ronan's Primary School, West Dunbartonshire Council
St Sophia's Primary School, East Ayrshire Council
St Timothy's Primary School and Nursery Class, Glasgow City Council
The Royal High School, The City of Edinburgh Council
Turnbull High School, East Dunbartonshire Council

Appendix 2: The Curriculum Impact Review Reference Group.

Education Scotland established a reference group to support the work of the review team. The reference group have provided valuable advice to the review team throughout the process and their feedback has helped to shape this final report. We are grateful to the following for their time and effort:

Elizabeth Gair, Headteacher: Dumfries and Galloway Council
Ellen Walker, Principal Teacher: North Lanarkshire Council
Ewan Aitken, Secretary: Church of Scotland, Church and Society Council
Graeme Nixon, Lecturer in Religious and Moral Education: University of Aberdeen
Isabel Smythe, Chair: Interfaith Scotland
Jim Whannel, Quality Improvement Officer: Glasgow City Council
Kate McKechnie: Scottish Government
Laura McLean, Headteacher: Glasgow City Council
Michael McGrath, Director: The Scottish Catholic Education Service
Scott Duncan, Principal Teacher: Fife Council
Stephen McKinney, Lecturer in Religious Education: University of Glasgow
Susan Leslie, Lecturer in Religious and Moral Education: University of Dundee

Appendix 3: Relevant organisations.

Name of Organisation	Description	Contact Details
SJCRME **(Scottish Joint Committee on RME)** **http://www.sjcrme.org.uk/index.html**	Established in 1914, the SJCRME acts as a pressure group representing both the Churches, Faith Groups and the Teaching Unions to promote RME as an effective experience in Scottish Schools	Mr Lachlan Bradley (Jnt Secretary) The Educational Institute of Scotland 6 Clairmont Gardens GLASGOW G3 7LW Tel: 0141 353 3595 Fax: 0141 332 2778
REMS **(Religious Education Movement Scotland)** **http://remscotland.org.uk/**	REMS has long been concerned with supporting the professional development of teachers of Religious and Moral Education and with promoting an approach to teaching the subject which is challenging for young people and contributes to their search for meaning and purpose in life.	St Stephen's Centre St Stephen Street Edinburgh EH3 5AB 0131 557 9402 info@remscotland.org.uk www.remscotland.org.uk
ATRES **(Association of Teachers of Religious Education Scotland)** **http://www.atres.org.uk/**	ATRES exists to promote and support the teaching of RME at all levels in Scottish education	scotthilary@hotmail.com
SCES **(Scottish Catholic Education Service)** **http://www.sces.uk.com/**	The Scottish Catholic Education Service (**SCES**) was established in August 2003 by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland. **SCES** is the operational arm of the Catholic Education Commission which sets national policy on all educational matters on behalf of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Scotland. While the Bishop of each Diocese is responsible for setting education policy to suit the	Scottish Catholic Education Service 75 Craig Park Glasgow, G31 2HD T: 0141 556 4727 F: 0141 551 8467 E: mail@sces.uk.com

	needs of the Catholic community within the local diocesan context, there are broad issues of national significance on which all the Dioceses agree general policy principles, as advised by the CEC. SCES works within the parameters of these national issues to offer support to schools, parishes and Dioceses.	
Church of Scotland **http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/** **Standing Committee on Education**	Education issues fall under the remit of the Church and Society Council, and include religious observance in schools, social and moral education and sexual health strategies in education. The Standing Committee on Education considers these issues.	121 George Street Edinburgh EH2 4YN Telephone: 0131 225 5722 Mullen, Agnes AMullen@COFSCOTLAND.ORG.UK
Interfaith Scotland **http://www.interfaithscotland.org/**	Interfaith Scotland provides a forum for people from different religions and beliefs to dialogue with one another on matters of religious, national and civic importance. It runs dialogue events for young people, women, faith communities, religious leaders, members of Interfaith Scotland and local interfaith groups.	Interfaith Scotland 523 Shields Road Glasgow G41 2RF Tel: 0141 4206982 E-mail: admin@interfaithscotland.org
Humanist Society Scotland **http://www.humanism-scotland.org.uk**	Humanist Society Scotland seeks to: promote and establish a secular society; promote the provision of secular education;	Humanist Society Scotland 272 Bath Street Glasgow G2 4JR **Tel:** 0870 874 9002.

	promote, provide and develop Humanist ceremonies; extend the contributions made by Humanists to a wide range of social, civic and health care provision; maintain, develop and empower membership of the Society to carry out these activities and any other activities which promote and support the Objects of the Society; and work with other Humanist associations (and like-minded organisations) in the UK, Europe and internationally.	
The National Secular Society **http://www.secularism.org.uk**	The National Secular Society was established in 1866 under the leadership of Charles Bradlaugh, when a large number of secularist groups from around the UK came together to give strength to their campaigns. The National Secular Society campaigns for the separation of religion and state and promotes secularism as the best means to create a society in which people of all religions or none can live together fairly and cohesively.	National Secular Society 25 Red Lion Square London WC1R 4RL Tel: 020 7404 3126 Fax: 0870 762 8971 enquiries@secularism.org.uk

Appendix 4: National reports and useful resources.

Curriculum for Excellence - Building the Curriculum
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/howdoyoubuildyourcurriculum/curriculumplanning/whatisbuildingyourcurriculum/btc/index.asp

Curriculum for Excellence – RME & RERC Principles and Practice papers
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/rme/nondenominational/principlesandpractice/index.asp

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/rme/rerc/principlesandpractice/index.asp

Curriculum for Excellence - briefing papers
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/keydocs/cfebriefings.asp

Education Scotland Religious and Moral Education Resources
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/?iPage=3&strSubmit=True&strSearchText=&id=cfeflat%5C%7CCfE%5C%7CReligious+and+moral+education

Education Scotland Anti-sectarianism Resources
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/supportinglearners/positivelearningenvironments/inclusionandequality/challengingsectarianism/

Scottish Government Guidance on Religious and Moral Education, February 2011
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/920/0113848.pdf

This Is Our Faith, Scottish Catholic Education Service, (2011)
www.sces.uk.com

Religious and Moral Education – a portrait of current practice in Scottish secondary schools, HMIE (2008)
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/rmepcp_tcm4-712864.pdf

Standards and Quality in Secondary Schools: Religious and Moral Education, 1995-2000, HMIE (2001)
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/rame_tcm4-712807.pdf

Conroy, J et al. 2011. *Does Religious Education Work*?
http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/research/currentresearchprojects/doesreligioueducationwork/

Council of Europe, 2008. 'Recommendation CM/Rec (2008)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education', available online at:
https://wcd.coe.int//ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2008)12&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864

OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). 2007. *Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools*, http://www.osce.org/odihr/29154

REDCo ('Religion in Education: a Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries?' http://www.redco.uni-hamburg.de/web/3480/3481/index.html)

UNAC (United Nations Alliance of Civilisations). Religions and beliefs website http://erb.unaoc.org/

The Children and Young People Bill http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/62233.aspx

GTCS Professional Standards www.gtcs.org.uk/home/home

Early Years Framework http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/publications/e/publication_tcm4618757.asp?strReferringChannel=earlyyears&strReferringPageID=tcm:4-608911-64&class=l1+d137154

Early Years Collaborative http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/Early-Years-and-Family/early-years-collaborative

SQA www.sqa.org.uk

Journey to Excellence http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/p/professionaldevelopmentpacks/genericresource_tcm4731527.asp?strReferringChannel=educationscotland&strReferringPageID=tcm:4-615801-64

Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/o/outdoorlearningpracticalguidanceideasandsupportforteachersandpractitionersinscotland.asp?strReferringChannel=educationscotland&strReferringPageID=tcm:4-615801-64

Getting it right for every child: Where are we now? A report on the readiness of the education system to fully implement Getting it right for every child, Education Scotland 2012 http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/newsandevents/educationnews/2012/pressreleases/october/reviewimplementgirfec.asp

Count Us In: A Sense of Belonging, HMIE 2009 http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/search/?strSearchText=Count+us+In+a+Sense+of+Belonging&strSubmit=true&form_submitted.x=9&form_submitted.y=15

Count Us In: Promoting Understanding and Combating Sectarianism, HMIE 2007
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/search/?strSearchText=Count+Us+In+Promoting+Understandign+and+Challenging+Sectarianism&strSubmit=true&form_submitted.x=16&form_submitted.y=14

Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy Scottish Government 2007
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/06091114/0

Teaching Scotland's Future: Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland – Scottish Government 2010
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/13092132/0

The report of the One Planet Schools Working Group - Learning for Sustainability
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/ACE/OnePlanetSchools/LearningforSustainabilitreport

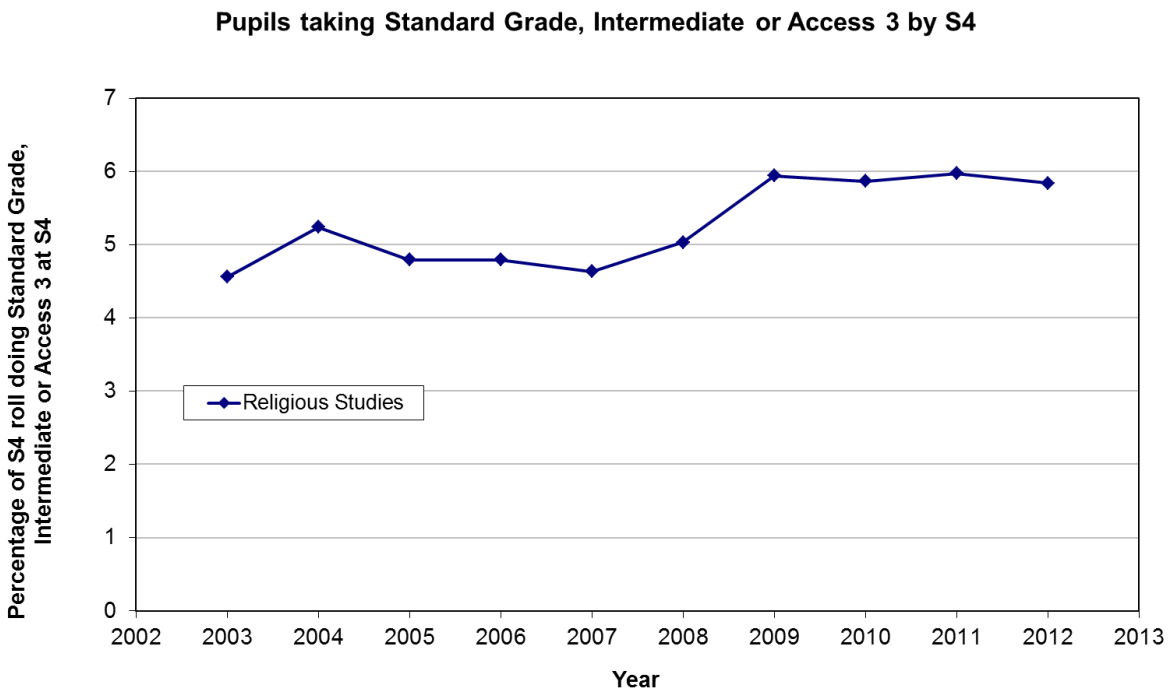
The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/175/contents/made

Appendix 5: Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Analysis.

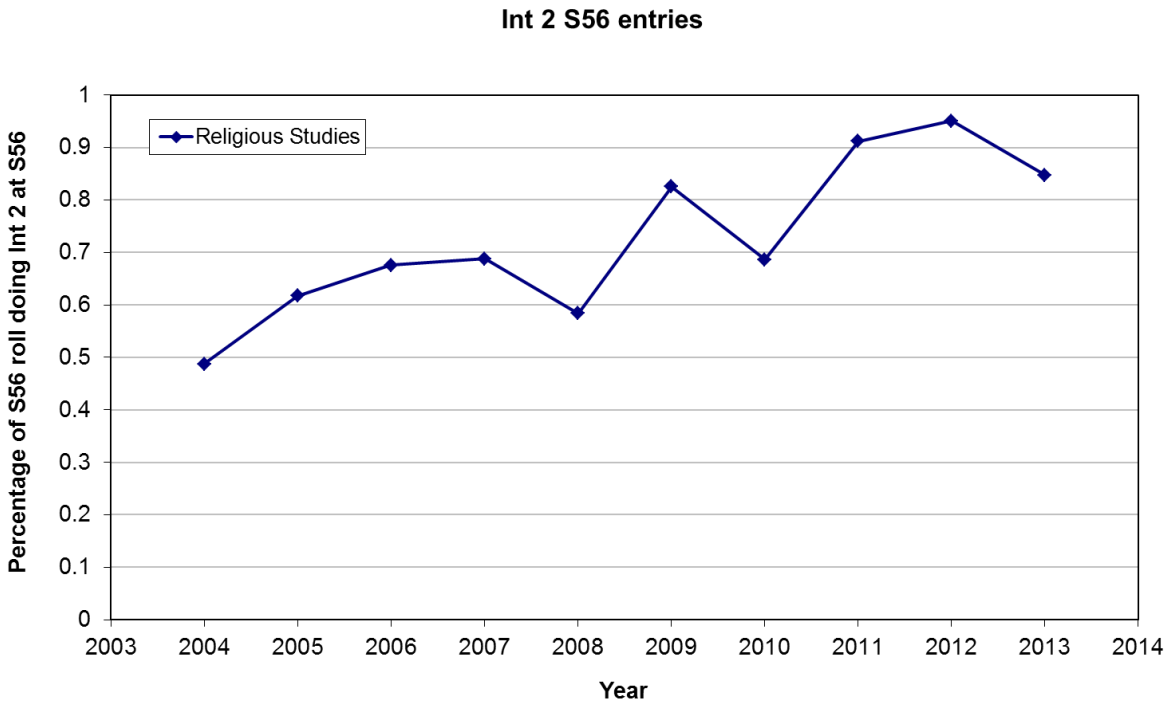
Note that in the following graphs Religious Studies is used as a term to indicate Religious Studies and/or Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies.

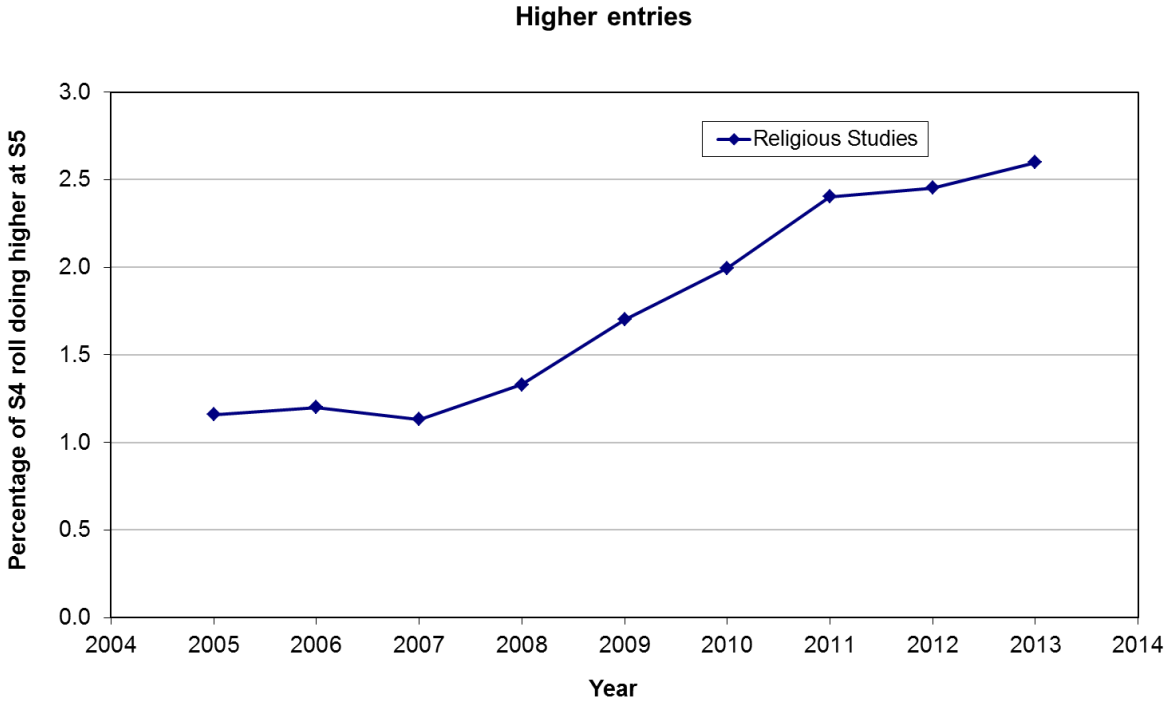
1. Entries for qualifications in the RME Curriculum Area

(a) S4: RS/RMPS entries by S4 have increased since 2007. This overall increase has been enhanced by the growth of entries at Access 3 level. The subject remains a popular choice in many schools. Young people say they find the courses interesting and relevant. As schools begin to replace these qualifications with the new national qualifications in RMPS we will continue to monitor patterns of entries and attainment.

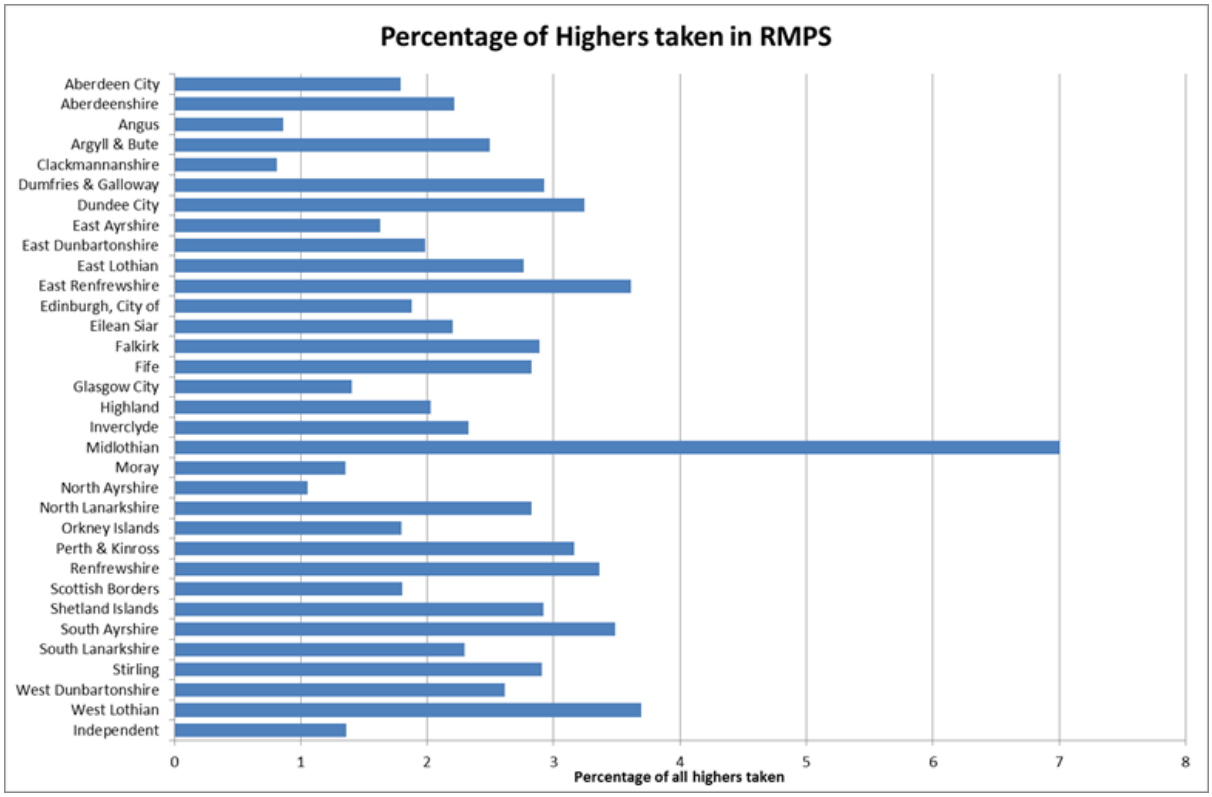


(b) S5/6: Entries at Intermediate 2 and Higher level have also increased. More young take Higher RMPS in S6 than in S5. This is often because they have not taken the subject previously and the preference in S5 is to progress to the next level of courses studied in S4. Young people in S6 often say it is better to do RMPS once you have completed Higher English in S5. The new national qualifications in RMPS provide progression in the subject for all young people from S4 to S6 so they can steadily build on their knowledge and skills developed through the broad general education. However, young people who access the subject at any point during the senior phase should be able to do so at the level most appropriate for them.

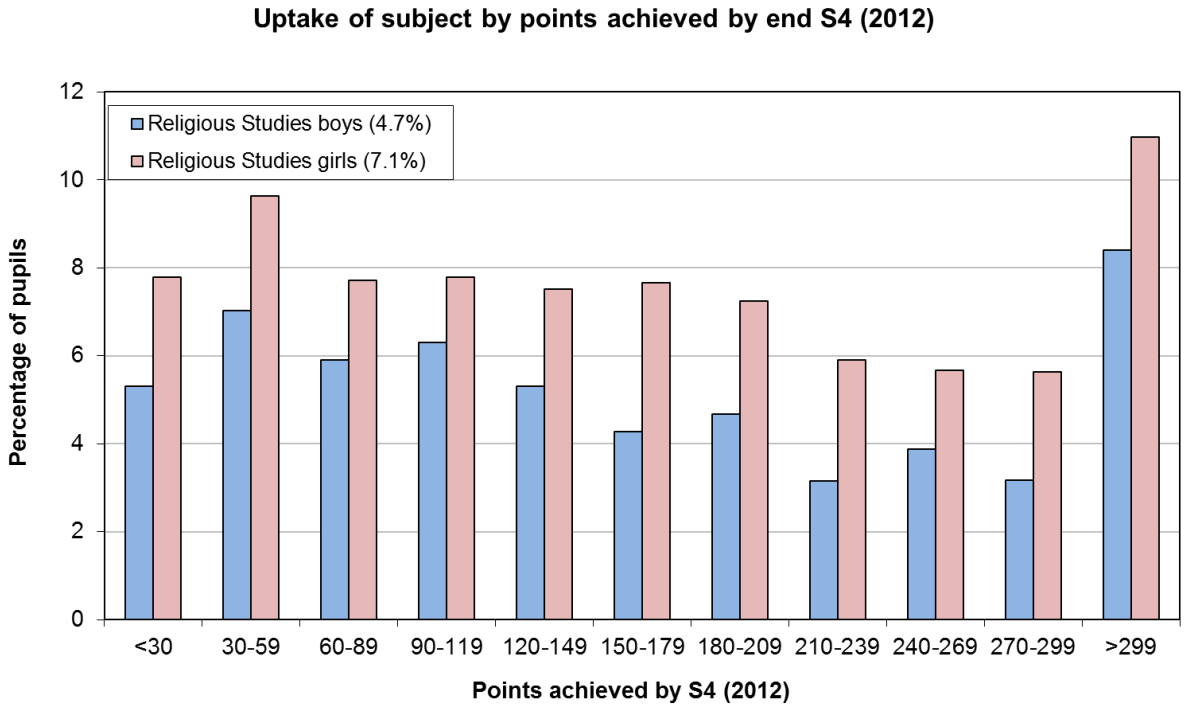

Int 2 S56 entries
Religious Studies
Percentage of S56 roll doing Int 2 at S56
1
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
Year


Higher entries
Religious Studies
Percentage of S4 roll doing higher at S5
3.0
2.5
2.0
1.5
1.0
0.5
0.0
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
Year

(c) Across Local Authorities: Higher RMPS entries vary widely by EA. There are a number of reasons which might explain this. For example it may be simply due to the number of students in different local authorities or it may be related to staffing issues or curriculum structures. As we continue to support schools and local authorities to implement the new national qualifications in RMPS we will monitor levels of uptake across Scotland and seek to identify and address any underlying issues relating to this variation.

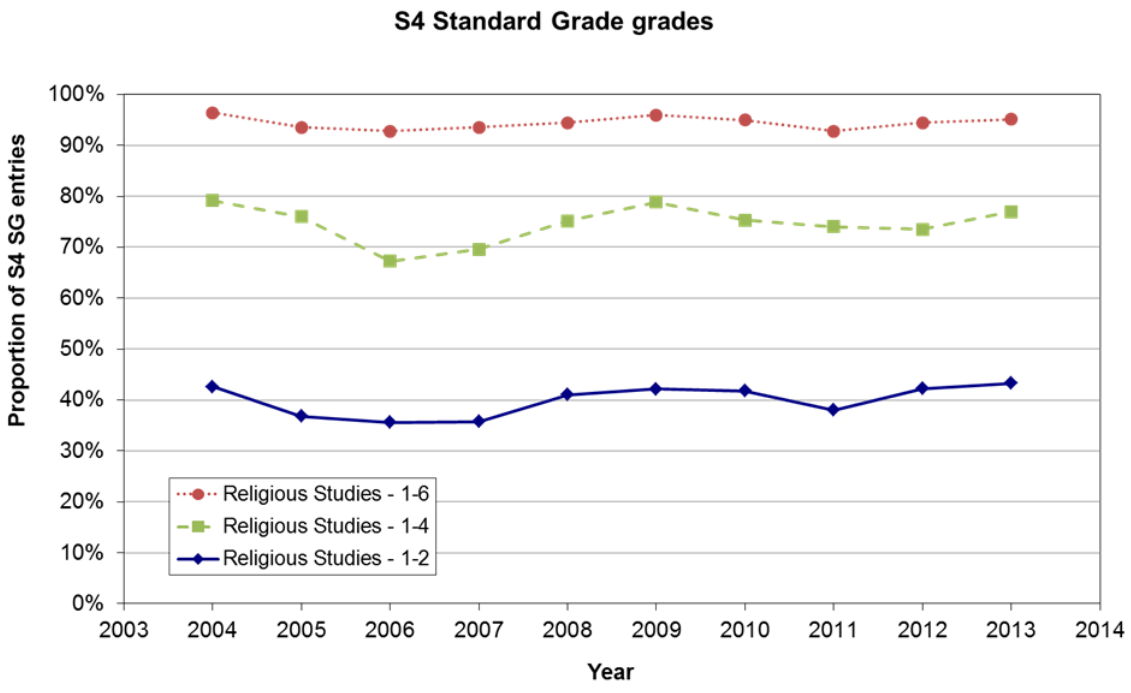


(d) S4 uptake by gender and ability: RS/RMPS attracts more girls than boys. The graph below also indicates that it seems to be attracting two discrete groups of pupil: low attainers and very high attainers. 9.6 % of girls achieving 30–59 points take RS/RMPS but just 5.6% of those achieving 270–299 points. However those most likely to take it are those achieving 300 points or more: 11% of girls and 8.4% of boys. National qualifications in RMPS are suitable for all young people. Schools should continue to monitor how they promote RMPS at times of subject choice to ensure all young people are fully aware of the benefits in relation to the subject specific knowledge and skills.

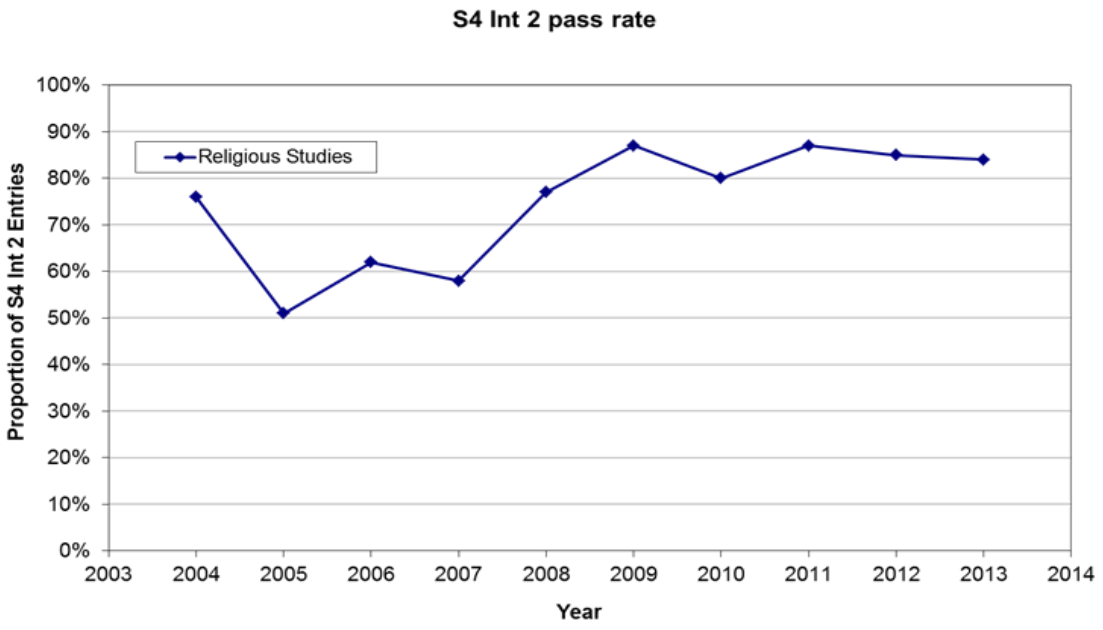


2. Attainment for qualifications in the RME Curriculum Area

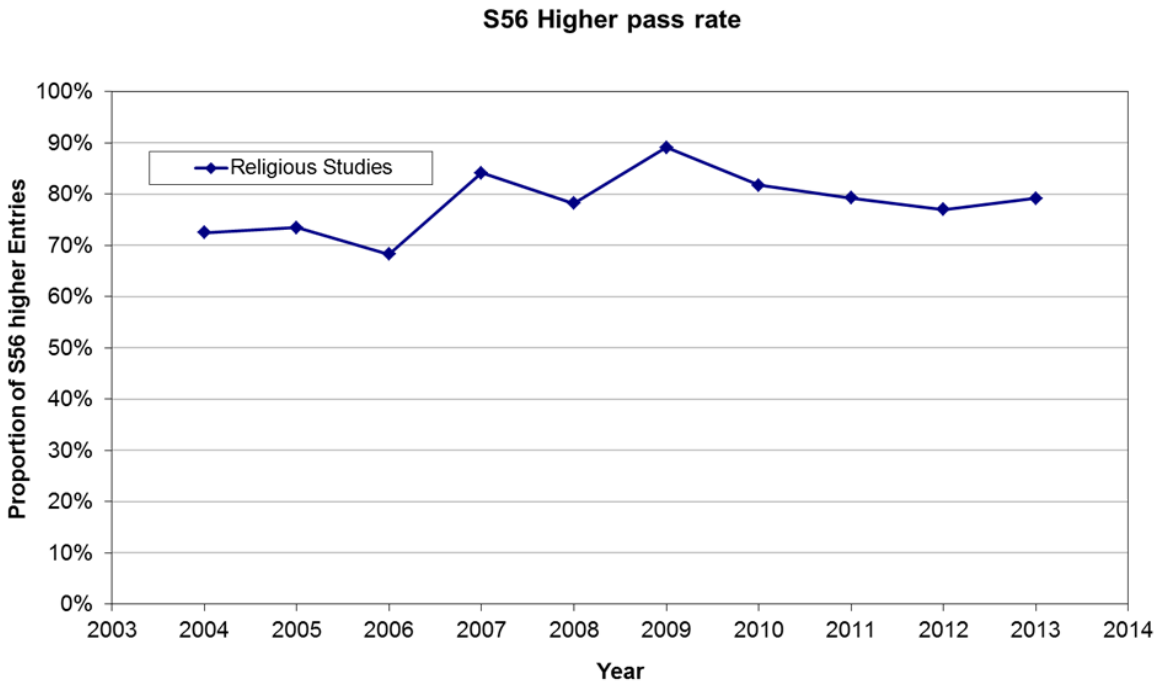
(a) S4: The graph below shows that almost all young people presented for Standard Grade in S4 achieve an award at grades 1-6. Attainment at all standard grade levels declined between 2004 – 2006 and attainment has continued to fluctuate over the past decade. Overall attainment is now similar to that of ten years ago.



(b) S4: This graph shows that Int 2 attainment has improved in recent years and has significantly improved since a dip in 2005.



(b) S5/6: The graph below shows that Higher attainment has improved slightly over the past decade although there has been a slight dip since 2009. Schools should continue to strengthen their approaches to tracking and monitoring young people's progress to ensure each young person achieves success at the most appropriate level. We will continue to monitor this trend as the new Higher qualification comes on stream and to support schools in improving approaches to assessing, tracking and monitoring young people's progress.



Appendix 6: Use of the principles of curriculum design to plan learning.

The following reflection tool has been designed from the range of best practice identified. It is intended to support staff in reviewing the curriculum for religious and moral education to ensure the principles of curriculum design are embedded. In using this tool, staff should consider how well each of the design principles is embedded within the courses and programmes within their local context. This reflection is an important aspect of self-evaluation to continually review and refresh the curriculum for religious and moral education.

Children and young people experience **challenge and enjoyment in** RME/RERC when

- staff understand the rich opportunities for learning within the framework of experiences and outcomes.
- learning is planned with a focus on the skills for learning, life and work which are embedded within the experiences and outcomes.
- learning engages them in high order thinking skills.
- expectations of children and young people's contributions to learning are consistently high.
- tasks and activities take account of prior success and their individual needs.
- they are able to demonstrate creativity in planning and leading their own learning.
- they are well supported and able to make progress.

Children and young people experience **breadth** in RME/RERC when

- there is an appropriate balance of learning within and across the various organisers of Curriculum for Excellence.
- they will learn and develop through a variety of contexts within both the classroom, other aspects of school life and in the wider community.
- they are able to learn with classroom teachers and with a range of appropriate partners who contribute to the curriculum.

Children and young people experience **progression** in RME/RERC when

- they build upon earlier knowledge and achievements.
- their learning is planned to ensure continuity across key transitions.
- arrangements for core provision take appropriate account of national expectations from P1 to S6.

Children and young people experience **depth** in RME/RERC when they

- have opportunities to think explore religious and moral issues from a range of perspectives.
- are expected to apply their learning from one issues to learning about another.
- can analyse sources and recognise different stances.
- engage in personal reflection which supports them in developing their own faith, beliefs and viewpoints.

Children and young people experience **personalisation and choice** in RME/RERC when they

- choose what and how they learn.
- make decisions about how to demonstrate their learning.
- draw on their particular talents, aptitudes and experiences.
- express their own opinions, beliefs and stances.
- share aspects of their family and community life with others.
- reflect and mature in their own personal beliefs and values.
- appreciate the consequences of their beliefs and actions.

Children and young people experience **coherence** in RME/RERC when

- the learning journey is planned in a holistic way.
- links across their learning are clear.
- assessment and reporting help them see where they are in their learning journey.

Children and young people experience **relevance** in RME/RERC when

- they understand purposes of their activities.
- learning is linked to their lives, present and future.
- they can apply their learning to their own lives and decision making.

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