

**Grange Academy
Kilmarnock
East Ayrshire**



Quality Indicators Demonstrated

- 3.1** Learning and Teaching
 - Teachers' planning
 - Pupils' Learning Experiences
- 3.3**
- 4.2** Support for Pupils
 - Personal and Social Development
 - Links with local authority or other managing body, other schools, agencies and employers
- 4.8**
- 5.1** Ethos
 - Climate and Relationships
 - Equality and Fairness
- 5.3**
- 7.4** Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance
 - Leadership

Grange Academy, Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire

Background

This example of good practice example is about the work of one teacher who is placing the issue of anti-sectarianism on the agenda of his pupils. David Gray's lesson plans can be viewed on this site in the Teachers section. Grange Academy is one of four secondary schools in Kilmarnock and one of nine within East Ayrshire Council. It is a six-year, co-educational, non-denominational, comprehensive secondary school serving the areas of Bellfield, Crosshouse, Shortlees and the Grange / Howard area in the town of Kilmarnock. There are approximately 1,180 pupils. The school is situated within a private housing estate approximately one mile outside the town centre. Approximately half of the pupils attending Grange Academy live on local authority council estates. Pupils attending the school are aware of the rivalries between supporters of different football teams and that sometimes these rivalries have sectarianism connotations.

3.1: Teachers' planning

Planning the learning outcomes is important. Within the anti-sectarian course devised, David has identified that it is important that pupils reflect critically on the consequences of their words and actions. As the anti-sectarian course is conducted within an RME class, the elements of Personal Search are important. Activities are devised to give pupils opportunities to discuss, debate and seek collaboratively solutions to everyday issues such as name-calling.

David also sees his work as fulfilling the requirements of other educational initiatives such as Education for Citizenship. In asking pupils to tackle sectarianism, they are also encouraged to consider ‘What makes a good citizen?’. It also links into Anti-bullying initiatives as pupils are asked to reflect upon what actions they can take to stop sectarian name-calling, chanting and bullying. Pupils are also helped to consider the roots of sectarianism through the history input within the lesson plans and to make connections with other forms of inequality such as racism.

3.3: Pupils’ learning experiences

A range of teaching methods and active learning methodologies were used to stimulate and challenge pupils (see 5.1). Though the lesson plans are designed to run over 10 weeks, David is clear that the pace of progression through the lesson plans needs to be gauged according to the differing experiences, abilities and aptitudes of the pupils in each class cohort.

Through the Curriculum Advisory Group, pupils learn to take responsibility for shaping and improving the course. At the end of the lessons, pupils are provided with opportunities to evaluate the course and make further suggestions for improvement.

4.2: Personal and social development

(See 5.3)

4.8: Links with local authority or other managing body, other schools, agencies and employers

David has collaborated with the organisation 'Nil by Mouth' who came in and kick-started the process with input about sectarianism. Using external speakers was a useful way to get young people engaged with the issues.

5.1: Climate and relationships

David believes strongly that a key ingredient for taking forward anti-sectarian or any anti-discriminatory issues has been the work that needs to be put into fostering democratic approaches within the classrooms.

Pupils have to feel valued and respected if they are to genuinely take on board issues of citizenship or equality and fairness. David attempts to foster a democratic classroom through a variety of ways:

- seeking pupil advice and opinion about his work via Pupil Curriculum Advisory groups. Pupils from the S1 classes comment on the programme they will be embarking on with David when they are in S2. The Curriculum Advisory Group membership rotates each term and all pupils who wish to take part have the opportunity to do so.
- engaging with active learning methodologies:
 - using lots of discussion rather than instruction
 - utilising groupwork methods which invite pupils to exchange views
 - providing a stimulating environment that challenges complacency and views but within a respectful and safe framework
 - using a range of teaching techniques to keep pupil interest high, e.g. small group work, debate, problem-solving, sharing of ideas

5.3: Equality and fairness

Assisting pupils to address issues of stereotypes and to feel comfortable with diversity is part of preparing pupils for living, socialising and working in an increasingly diverse world. Many of David's lesson plans provide opportunities for pupils to discuss why stereotypes occur, the hurtful aspects of unwelcome name-calling, barriers to participation and the injustices associated with discrimination. The lessons aim to help pupils become more comfortable with living with diversity and to accept difference as normal rather than a source of discomfort or something to be feared.

7.4: Leadership

The school management actively support David's work by enabling him to develop his work for wider sharing, such as inclusion in this website. The school is now looking at other ways in which it can embed anti-sectarian work in other departments.

GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS

- teacher provides opportunities for pupils to engage clearly with issues of sectarianism as well as multifaith and interfaith issues.
- a range of activities, methods and processes are used to provide pupils with opportunities to reflect critically on their own values and actions in perpetuating and responding to sectarianism, religious bigotry and discrimination
- the lessons are framed within an ethos that develops learning – mistakes can be made!
- lessons on sectarianism are contextualised – a brief historical analysis is given about the causes of sectarianism. Though football is featured, it does not take up the whole learning experience
- issues of bigotry, sectarianism, territorialism and discrimination are not avoided but discussed openly
- there is engagement with external agencies
- pupils are helped to develop self-confidence to challenge sectarianism and other forms of inequality

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