

**St Augustine's  
RC High School**



**Quality Indicators Demonstrated**

**1.2**

**Curriculum**

- Courses and Programmes

**3.1**

**Learning and Teaching**

- Teachers' planning
- Pupils' Learning Experiences

**3.3**

**4.8**

**Support for Pupils**

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

**5.1**

**Ethos**

- Climate and Relationships

**5.3**

- Equality and Fairness

### St Augustine's RC High School, Edinburgh

#### Background

St. Augustine's RC High School is situated in the west side of Edinburgh. This case study focuses on the work of the Religious and Moral Education Department. The school does not face issues of sectarianism or religious intolerance on a daily basis but is aware that pupils wish to discuss these issues openly.

#### 1.2: Courses and programmes

The area of sectarianism and religious intolerance/diversity is covered in a range of courses and programmes. For example, in English, literature and plays have been selected to raise issues, e.g. *Across the Barricade* by Joan Lingard (S1/2), *Wolf* by Gillian Cross (S2), the play *Sailmaker* by Alan Spence (S5) and *Heritage* by Nicola McCartney (S5/6). These materials raise issues of difference and explore issues of segregation which allows space for discussion on prejudice and discrimination.

In RME, teachers have found young people keen to discuss issues of sectarianism, in the same way that they are keen to speak about other social issues like racism or poverty within a home and global context.

As a starter, the organisation 'Nil by Mouth' was invited in to stimulate discussions. The Nil by Mouth presentation drew from experiences in Glasgow and the West of Scotland but with assistance pupils were able to discuss issues within an Edinburgh context.

Another route the class teacher has used for raising the issue of sectarianism has been via the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Unit 'A World of Values'. This Unit (particularly LO4) provides opportunities at S3 and also at S4 level to choose a moral or social issue and sectarianism is a possible area here to cover.

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A video that was used to support discussion was the BBC production *Holy Cross* which explored why Catholic schoolchildren faced abuse and hostility as they made their way to their school in North Belfast. Read about how [Rosa Murray uses the video](#).

Within the school and visually in the classrooms and corridors, there are posters showing pupil work on other faiths and beliefs thus further engaging with faith and belief diversity.

**3.1: Teachers' planning**

The inclusion of the issue required planning (e.g. arranging external speakers, consideration of what learning outcomes were to be achieved) to maximise pupil and teacher time.

**3.3: Pupils' learning experiences**

Teachers take a lead from pupils and provide opportunities to develop issues and interests raised by pupils. Pupils are offered opportunities to develop the themes by writing them up through further reading and research.

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

The RME staff working in partnership with a voluntary sector agency in Glasgow, Nil by Mouth, helped set the context for making the issue of sectarianism 'real' for the pupils. Use of external agencies can be helpful to set the scene and although the agency is Glasgow based, there were common lessons for all areas on the issue of sectarianism.

**5.1: Climate and relationships**

Allowing the young people to discuss controversial and difficult issues, develops the emotional literacy of young people. Pupils are offered opportunities to think individually and collectively about how emotions (for example, as engendered through the video *Holy Cross*) shape actions and to reflect on the consequences of those actions.

**5.3: Equality and fairness**

Pupils, through discussion with Nil by Mouth and watching the video, consider issues of equality and fairness. Opportunities are created for pupils to appreciate interviews, feelings and values of one another with attention paid on the need for dialogue.

Equality and fairness issues are also supported through the inclusion of the same values in the school liturgical life. When the school has liturgical services, the ideas or challenges of equality, justice, peace etc, are integral to the content of the liturgy. This is important as this enables the pupils to experience spiritually what they have been communicating about in class.

### **GOOD PRACTICE INDICATORS**

- open acknowledgement of the existence of sectarianism and religious intolerance
- use by teachers of a range of opportunities to engage pupils in thinking critically about issues of prejudice and discrimination which includes sectarianism and religious intolerance (external speaker, video, group discussion, personal research)
- offering young people opportunities to find out about work being done
- to tackle sectarianism and encouraging them to recommend strategies and solutions for challenging this form of bigotry
- lessons on sectarianism are embedded within core materials which enables a thought-through and sustained approach

**NB:** Copies of the video *Holy Cross* and all the books / plays mentioned above can be borrowed from the Centre for Education for Racial Equality Resource Centre, Tel: 0131 651 6274 or e-mail [ceres@ac.uk](mailto:ceres@ac.uk).

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