

## First steps in RO.

### What are we going to do?

- 1. Do something – get talking, where are you? Where do you want to go? Formulate an action plan.**

Let the conversation begin and share the dreams. Catch the vision of the review group report and chat with others who might share the aspirations.

If in response to a HMle inspection and action plan is required then conversation is the first stage.

- 2. Develop and create teams: involve the key people – SMT, interested staff, chaplains, pupils**
  - RO team
  - Chaplaincy team

The chaplaincy team will be part of the RO team. The RO team are responsible for Religious observance. It will consist of a representative of the SMT or those delegated by the SMT; chaplaincy team members; pupil representatives and others representing the wider school community. The RO team will meet regularly to plan and review the overall development of RO within the school community.

The chaplaincy team may include non ordained people, or in fact anyone who is performing a recognised chaplaincy role within the school. (See examples of chaplaincy teams on LTScotland website)

- 3. Be creative**

RO as now described gives freedom to put on creative, fun and significant events which expand or deepen the spiritual awareness of the school community. RO does not have learning outcomes under a Curriculum for Excellence but has outcomes described as experiences. It is the responsibility of those presenting RO to be creative in the use of stimuli, space, lighting, music, cultural links, and forms of communication to make the most of the opportunity and deliver a worthwhile experience

Within the Review Group Report, spiritual development is described as a number of sensings (sensing mystery, values, meaningfulness, a changed quality of awareness, otherness and challenge. The challenge for those in the RO and Chaplaincy team is to be creative and provide opportunities for these sensings to happen.

The RO or Chaplaincy team will contain creative people. Release them to dream and think of what might be possible.

RO need not be limited to traditional assemblies and the LTScotland website contains examples of schools who have provided these opportunities through whole school

activities, outdoor connections or residential events. Many school activities if presented appropriately can be RO events.

#### **4. Be relevant to your school community.**

The key element is providing a minimum of six (plus other) occasions throughout the year which enable and support spiritual development of all members of the school community. This will mean that resources and stimuli will be drawn from a variety of sources and presented in ways which do not exclude but which is sensitive and relevant to all those in the school community.

Particular attention should be given to forms of language, cultural references media clips and concepts which are accessible for those present.

Circular 1/2005 advises that

[“The recommendations of the Religious Observance Review Group outline sensitive and tactful solutions which will allow schools to provide religious observance which is an inclusive, valuable and meaningful experience for all. Scottish Ministers see religious Observance as an important educational experience for children and young people at all stages of primary and secondary school. In accepting the Group’s recommendations, Ministers believe that future actions can build on Scotland’s strong Christian traditions without compromising them, and also promote the understanding and acceptance of other faiths and beliefs” \(Circular 1/2005 section 5\).](#)

#### **5. Do one event and do it well**

Don’t run before you walk.

Examine the RO template on the LTScotland website and follow the process of objectives and review which is there.

#### **6. Fit into established opportunities**

Begin where you are. There may be current opportunities in the timetable where school, year or class assemblies take place. Assemblies need not be long. Although the guidance expects a minimum of six plus, if the starting point is zero, then this required number should be increased incrementally.

#### **7. Understand the legislation**

RO is a statutory requirement. It is important that time is given to assimilate and understand the revised guidance of Circular 1/2005 supported by the Review group Report.

This also has implications for CPD time, as many colleagues will not be up to speed with the significant changes brought about by Circular 1/2005

#### **8. Know what it is and what it isn’t**

Learn to differentiate between RO and PSD, between assemblies promoting spiritual development and those celebrating success, and, between events which allow all to participate with integrity and those which are confessional (and appropriate in the informal curriculum)

**9. Make it relevant, enjoyable, challenging, inclusive**

These three elements of good RO remain, enjoyment, challenge and inclusion, and the greatest of them is .....?

**10. Speak to other schools who are further on in the process**

Find out what others are doing, be inspired and adapt for your own setting.

**11. Reflect and review.**

Continually.

KTC/ JR October 2007.