

MEDEN SCHOOL AND TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE

**RELIGIOUS
STUDIES
DEPARTMENT**

DEPARTMENTAL HANDBOOK

2007/8 EDITION

CONTENTS

Staffing
General statement
Aims and objectives
Teaching and learning
Key stage 3 schemes
Key stage 4 lessons
Assessment, recording and reporting
Behavioural management
Equal opportunities
Differentiated learning
Special educational needs
Pilot schemes
ICT policy
Staff development
Performance management
Departmental self-review Policy
Recent Self Review with analysis
Departmental Plans
Examination Results/Predicted grades analysis

GENERAL STATEMENT

The Religious education department is a developing department that aims to use the most modern teaching styles and strategies to enhance pupil learning and development.

The Religious education department sees itself as being a team member of the schools curriculum, having its own agenda and supporting cross-curricular themes.

The department recognises the value of shared input with respect to different learning situations and styles. This is specifically noticeable in the creation and development of Schemes of work across KS3 and KS4.

The use of this document

- (i) Staff should refer to this document were queries arise over issues related to the R.S. department.
- (ii) Staff should feel free to offer contributions and constructive criticism about the contents of this document.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Objective – “What is trying to be achieved through a course of action”

The aims and objectives of the Religious Studies department are as follows:

- To promote pupil interest and enjoyment in RS
- To extend pupils academically as far as possible
- To encourage open mindedness and respect of other people, opinions, beliefs and traditions
- To encourage the development of informed opinions supported by reasoned arguments

Religious Studies has specific aims and objectives related to national guidance in KS3.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING POLICY

Formal assessment

Assessment across KS3 will involve 1 assessment task per unit. The outcome of these will be National Curriculum levels which are recorded i) in the back of the pupil's books; ii) the teacher's record book; iii) on the class assessment data file found on the S: drive. These levels are taken from the national guidance on RS from the Dfee. All RE staff will have a common marking scheme related to each assessment.

The formal assessments for KS3 are currently being monitored for suitability and differentiation.

Informal assessment

Class work and homework are marked using the humanities marking framework and comments are made as is appropriate. Grades are given to indicate pupil work standards. These can be seen below in a table.

E= Excellent G=Good S=Satisfactory P=Poor U=Unsatisfactory

A tick would indicate that pupil work has been read and comments from the teacher will highlight positive aspects and may include comments on why it is positive; also areas or targets for improvement and how to improve. The department wishes to provide the pupil with information to help them improve and progress.

POLICY ON DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiation-“To recognise or show a difference and cater for that difference”

The Religious Studies department sees the need for differentiated learning as essential for the development of the subject and the school. Every pupil is an individual who requires a certain amount of individual attention to increase their learning potential.

The RS department also wishes to acknowledge the difficulty in applying detailed levels of differentiation to each individual or group. To help teachers apply differentiated teaching and learning styles/activities to pupils, data is available through the CAT's information held and shared by the Head of Department and available for all to read on the S: drive . This information will help to inform the teacher planning the lesson of what types of learning styles pupils have. Using this information correctly will allow teachers to plan activities with preferred learning styles in mind thus increasing the pupils learning potential.

The Religious Studies department's aims on differentiation are as follows:

1. Wherever and whenever possible, to treat each pupil's learning needs individually
 2. All RE staff should have access to the CAT's information and wherever and whenever possible use the information as guidance on planning for differentiated learning.
- NB Pupils are not now put in sets for Humanities – all schemes of work in R.S. will be undergoing a review and differentiated for all levels

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Equal Opportunities- "The same status, rights and responsibilities for all members of a group"

The Religious Studies department approaches equal opportunities with the following principles:

1. Each year group should have the opportunity to experience at least one off site religious trip.
2. All pupils have access to study R.S. through the use of I.T
3. All pupils have access to a varied range of teaching and learning styles
4. Differentiation allows pupils to access a body of knowledge, skills and concepts written into the schemes of work.
5. Religious education is accessible to any pupil regardless of the level of academic achievement, learning difficulties, gender or religion.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Special needs in Religious Studies covers two main groupings

- (i) The academically less able
- (ii) The academically exceptionally able pupils (gifted and talented)

It is the aim of the school as a whole to further the academic levels of exceptionally able pupils as well as less able pupils.

The Religious Studies department's aims are as follows:

- (a) To implement the Schools policy on special needs
- (b) To acknowledge the entitlement to the curriculum of such pupils
- (c) To provide a selection of resources appropriate to encouraging the development of all pupils
- (d) To monitor special needs progress
- (e) All R.S. staff are expected to liaise with the special needs co-ordinator and team over the suitability of resources and learning activities/teaching styles

BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. The department follows the school policy on behavioural management (please view the school handbook).
2. Staff should encourage positive behaviour and encourage pupils whenever possible to fulfil their potential
3. The department acknowledges that behaviour may be linked to the wider circumstances related to background. Pupils who have constant behavioural difficulties should be discussed with form tutors, co-tutors and Progress Leader to gain a fuller picture. A more appropriate course of corrective action may be made following discussions.
4. Staff should be fair and consistent in imposing sanctions
5. Staff should avoid deepening confrontational situations
6. Staff should avoid making remarks of a personal nature
7. Wherever possible, staff should treat each incident in isolation
8. Only following parents being informed and responding should detentions after school go ahead
9. No child should be detained outside of school time at all unless point 8 is met
10. In the event of a RS trip, a pupil with constant poor behaviour may be disqualified from going.
11. If a member of staff feels it necessary to send a pupil out of the room, if they are to stay outside for longer than five minutes work should be set

12. All pupils sent out of the room should be observable by the teacher who took the course of action.

13. No member of staff should ever manhandle a pupil.
Contact may only be made if the pupil is causing
Clear and immediate danger to themselves or others

On occasions it is preferable to place pupils with another teacher for the course of the lesson. This can be arranged among the department or teachers in 'neighbouring' rooms. Enough work must be sent along with the pupil to last the course of the lesson. The pupil should always report back to their teacher at the end of the lesson.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Religious Studies department recognises that staff development is an important aspect of education for the following reasons:

1. It promotes and contributes to the development of the department
2. It contributes to the wider professional development of Meden school
3. Pupils gain from the improving knowledge, experience and expertise of staff development
4. If a member of staff is on a course, full lesson details and resources should be left for use by a cover or supply teacher

In the light of these observations it is the policy of the department;

- (a) To encourage the taking up of courses- both internal and external to the school
- (b) To encourage the staff to take on manageable wider responsibilities and promotions
- (c) To promote the exchanging of ideas concerning the teaching of Religious Studies
- (d) To encourage staff to be members of school based groups
E.g. Curriculum group, marketing

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

This policy came into force in September 2000.

Performance management is a system created to maintain high standards of teaching throughout the school. Each teacher works with a colleague who is involved in meeting, target setting and observing the teacher. Attention is placed on effective teaching and monitoring to raise the quality of teaching. The Religious education department is involved in this process and the aims of the department on performance management are:

- To ensure each member of the R.S. staff have a colleague to facilitate the performance management process
- To ensure that if a member of the R.S. staff is not involved in performance management (NQT for example) then some form of professional review should take place.
- To check and ensure that for R.S. staff the following occurs:
 - (a) Objectives are discussed and agreed
 - (b) Regular and objective feedback is given
 - (c) Adequate training and feedback is given
 - (d) The performance review takes place

STAFFING

From September 2007, the Religious Studies Department consists of:

Liz Heald (Head of Department)

Janet Brashaw

Dorinda Weston-Davies

Helen Heath

Jo Matthews

John Gibson

ROOMING

Religious Studies rooms are B16 and B1 although other rooms are used depending on the teacher, and room availability.

ICT POLICY

As Religious Studies teachers we need to encourage the use of ICT by pupils both within school and at home, where facilities are available.

We should encourage the use of ICT for a variety of reasons:

- o *To enhance the presentation of coursework and homework (at any key stage)*
- o *To draft and re-draft work, reducing a laborious writing process*
- o *To produce attractive work both for folders and display*
- o *To build pupil pride and self esteem*
- o *To develop individual word processing skills*
- o *To increase pupils knowledge and understanding of a topic*

Where possible, each class should be taken to use ICT facilities in Religious Education at least once a year, perhaps for example, as part of a writing exercise to support literacy. **However**, because access to ICT suites tends to be limited for much of the year to non-ICT classes, this has to remain an ideal until further planned alterations are made to the school.

Pupil's are encouraged to use the ICT facilities at lunch times when a club is available and many pieces of ICT related work have been completed using these facilities at lunchtime.

At many times, pupils will be encouraged to utilise their personal ICT facilities.

The Religious Education department is hoping to develop facilities of its own and currently has a lap-top which pupils will be allowed to use for research and for presenting work using the faculty's power-point projector. In the long term the ICT situation should improve to having PC's in the classroom.

DEPARTMENTAL SELF-REVIEW POLICY

The aims of self-review within the Religious Studies department are:

- ❖ To recognise and celebrate strengths in planning, teaching and assessment
- ❖ To enable and encourage the sharing of good practice and effective strategies both within and between departments at every key stage
- ❖ To highlight important developmental areas for both departments and whole-school
- ❖ To cement the place of self-review within the school improvement process

The areas covered in the self-review should include:

- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Teaching
- ❖ Assessment
- ❖ Achievement

A structured sheet is available with specific questions to ask during the self-review period. The department aims to review itself at least once a year in detail. The head of department will gain evidence for the areas mentioned throughout the year and use these to review the overall performance of the department.

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

The quality of teaching and learning is central to both the school's and the R.S. department's work. The department acknowledges the total importance of improving teaching and learning. In relation to teaching and learning the department has a number of aims:

- As schemes of work are completed, analysed and improved, a major focus of improvement is on the development of more successful teaching and learning strategies.
- To seek and develop ways to increase the number of pupils that are consistently engaged in learning processes.
- To share good practice in terms of planning and the use of teaching and learning strategies. This should be included in the department's self-review process.
- To increase the opportunities for pupils to think more independently in R.S.

KEY STAGE 4 LESSONS

The following lesson titles may not be taught in the order displayed. All non-examination groups receive one lesson per fortnight of 'moral issues'. Due to the constraints on the school timetable the school was unable to meet the required one lesson per week guidance. The scheme of work is prescribed in the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for R.E. 2003 guidelines. We follow the OCR Short Course Religious Studies (Ethics) modules to meet these guidelines as follow:

Year 10	Year 11
Religion and Human Relationships	Religion and Medical Ethics
Understanding the roles of men and women in the family	Abortion
Marriage	Fertility Treatment
Divorce	Euthanasia
Sexual relationships	Suicide
Contraception	The use of animals in medical research
Religion and Equality	Religion, Peace and Justice
Religious teachings on Equality	Attitudes towards war
The Role of Women	Attitudes towards violence and pacifism
Prejudice and Discrimination	Beliefs about the treatment of criminals
Racism	Responses to Social injustice
Attitudes towards other religions	
Forgiveness and reconciliation	

KEY STAGE 3 SCHEMES

The following schemes may not always be taught in order and the content and duration are flexible. The current list of schemes is largely based on QCA guidelines for R.S. in secondary school.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES - DEPARTMENTAL SELF-REVIEW

The following Self-review aims to reflect on the effectiveness of planning, teaching and assessment in R.S.

Reviewing the department is a continual project.

SLT have recently completed a review on the Humanities Department.

ANALYSIS OF SELF-REVIEW

Targets for improvement

Key Stage 3 Planning

- ✦ Implement the new differentiated schemes of work over the coming year (2007/8)
- ✦ Over the next 3 years (2007/10) working towards Power Points for all lessons to support Teaching and Learning

Key Stage 3 Teaching

- ⊖ Observation of RS staff before Summer Holiday each year and give feedback
- ✦ Compare all who take an assessment to their previous N.C based level to see the progress they have made. (Using new 'Traffic Light System' currently being implemented)
- ✦ Ensure that all grades are entered on Assessment Record Sheets in back of books and that all pupils are aware of levels.
- ⊖ Review the consistency of marking and assessment with the departmental staff at a meeting - are we being consistent?

Key Stage 3 Assessment

- ⊖ Insure that KS 3 assessment pieces are completed, marked and analysed
- ✦ Continue to develop assessment pieces with a focus on differentiation
- ✦ Use files on S: drive containing CAT and SAT scores /results for comparison with RS levels/grades

Key stage 3 Achievement

- ✦ Track as many pupils progress as possible using RS assessment data
- ⊖ Find local and National levels/grades for comparison

Key stage 4 Planning

- ✦ Implementation of new OCR GCSE course
- ✦ Attempt to link KS4 GCSE Planning with pupil capabilities from tests in year 9

Key stage 4 Teaching

- ⊖ Assess the attendance of pupils (as individuals)
- ⊖ Continue with staff observations and share observations out between staff enabling all staff to be observed
- ⊖ Increase the variety of teaching resources within the schemes and update or increase the current resources.

Key stage 4 Pupil Achievement

- ⊖ Make comparisons of achievements between GCSE groups and Local and National achievements in the same subject.
- ⊖ Track the pupil's achievements from end of KS3 predictions to GCSE to view if pupils are meeting their potential.
- ⊖ Do not ignore the value of book assessment and use this data to track the consistency of a pupils achievements and effort