
Dr David R. Smith - 6 October 2017

1. Introduction
2. A History: RE in Scotland
3. The ‘New’ Curriculum: RE in Scotland
5. Some Emergent Questions in the Scottish Context
1. Introduction
EU referendum: Aberdeen comfortably backs vote to Remain

A total of 63,985 votes were cast in favour of the Remain campaign with 40,729 backing Brexit.

Turnout was 67.9 per cent.

Jenny Laing, leader of Aberdeen City Council, said the result reflected the city’s “global outlook.”

She said: “People in Aberdeen do realise the importance of the EU, particularly for Aberdeen to move forward in terms of markets and movement of people to bring in the skills we need.

“We are not surprised that Remain would win here. We just hope the same result will be replicated nationally.”
Find local results

Nation results

England
- Leave: 53.4%
  - 15,188,406 VOTES
- Remain: 46.6%
  - 13,266,996 VOTES
- Counting complete
- Turnout: 73.0%

Northern Ireland
- Leave: 44.2%
  - 340,442 VOTES
- Remain: 55.8%
  - 440,707 VOTES
- Counting complete
- Turnout: 62.7%

Scotland
- Leave: 38.0%
  - 1,018,322 VOTES
- Remain: 62.0%
  - 1,661,101 VOTES
- Counting complete
- Turnout: 67.2%

Wales
- Leave: 52.5%
  - 654,572 VOTES
- Remain: 47.5%
  - 772,347 VOTES
- Counting complete
- Turnout: 71.7%

School of Education, Aberdeen, UK

- Around 800 UG students:
  - Programmes of Initial Teacher Education
- Around 900 PG Students:
  - From Leadership to Mindfulness; Enhanced Practice to Inclusive Practice

1. Introduction: RE in Scotland: A New Empirical Perspective
School of Education: Dr David Smith

- Acting Head of School:
- RE Tutor:
  - Work with UG students around Religion and Education
  - PGDE (Secondary) RMPS Students
- Studied:
  - Divinity (BD: Glasgow)
  - Biblical Studies (ThM: Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University)
  - Religion (PhD: Durham)
  - Education (PGDE: Edinburgh)

1. Introduction: RE in Scotland – A New Empirical Perspective
A History

1560 – John Knox’s Common Book of Discipline

1872 Education Act

1918 Education Act

1972 – Millar Report

A school in every Parish. Christian doctrine foundational

Creation of state schools. Continuation of Christian Religious Instruction

State supported RC Schools created

2. With permission: Dr Graeme Nixon – University of Aberdeen
A History

The Millar Report 1972

2. With permission: Dr Graeme Nixon – University of Aberdeen
A History

Subsequent developments:
➢ Specialist teachers (1974)
➢ Certification (1983)
➢ Government inspection (1984)
➢ National curricula (1992)
➢ Recognition of Philosophy (1999)
➢ Development of a child-centred approach (1972 onwards)

2. With permission: Dr Graeme Nixon – University of Aberdeen
The ‘New’ Curriculum: RE in Scotland

- Curriculum for Excellence:
  - 3-18
  - Broad Levels
  - Outcome-based curriculum
  - Separate Denominational (RC) Experiences and Outcomes
- Child-centred
- Experiences and Outcomes
Religious and moral education
Experiences and outcomes

Learning through religious and moral education enables me to:

- recognise religion as an important expression of human experience
- learn about and from the beliefs, values, practices and traditions of Christianity and the world religions selected for study, other traditions and viewpoints independent of religious belief
- explore and develop knowledge and understanding of religions, recognising the place of Christianity in the Scottish context
- investigate and understand the responses which religious and non-religious views can offer to questions about the nature and meaning of life
- recognise and understand religious diversity and the importance of religion in society
- develop respect for others and an understanding of beliefs and practices which are different from my own
- explore and establish values such as wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity and engage in the development of and reflection upon my own moral values
- develop my beliefs, attitudes, values and practices through reflection, discovery and critical evaluation
- develop the skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking and deciding how to act when making moral decisions
- make a positive difference to the world by putting my beliefs and values into action
- establish a firm foundation for lifelong learning, further learning and adult life.
The ‘New’ Curriculum: RE in Scotland

- Christianity
- World Religions
- Beliefs and Values:
  - Delivered through Christianity and World Religions

- Curriculum Categories:
  - Beliefs
  - Values and Traditions
  - Practices and Traditions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As I explore Christian stories, images, music and poems, I am becoming familiar with some beliefs Christian people have about God and Jesus. RME 0-01a</td>
<td>Through exploring Bible stories, I can describe some beliefs Christians have about God and Jesus. RME 0-01a</td>
<td>Through investigating and reflecting upon biblical and other Christian stories, I can show my understanding of these stories. RME 2-01a</td>
<td>Having reflected upon Christian sources, I can explain some key Christian beliefs about God, Jesus, the human condition and the natural world, and how these beliefs lead to actions for Christians. RME 3-01a</td>
<td>Having considered key Christian beliefs, I can express reasoned views on these and discuss how putting them into practice might affect individuals and society. I can confidently support my own responses to these issues of belief. RME 4-01a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By exploring some places and investigating artefacts, I am developing my knowledge of Christian beliefs and my awareness of the role of Christianity in Scottish society and the world. RME 1-01b</td>
<td>I can show understanding of Christian beliefs and explore the similarities and differences between these and my developing beliefs. RME 2-01c</td>
<td>Through exploring the lives and teachings of Jesus and other figures in Christianity, I am increasing my knowledge and understanding of key Christian beliefs. RME 2-01b</td>
<td>Through investigating and reflecting upon how Christians put their beliefs into action, I can reflect upon the consequences of putting my own beliefs into action. RME 3-01b</td>
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<td>I can talk about my own beliefs, or express them in other ways. RME 1-01c</td>
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Religious and moral education: experiences and outcomes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values and issues</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
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<tr>
<td>As I play and learn, I am developing my understanding of what is fair and unfair and the importance of caring for, sharing and cooperating with others.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Having explored biblical and other Christian stories, I can show my developing understanding of key values of Christianity and how they might be put into action in people’s lives and communities.</td>
<td>Through investigating and reflecting upon the lives and teachings of Jesus and key Christian figures, and drawing upon moral values as expressed in Christianity, I am beginning to understand how these have influenced Christian morality.</td>
<td>Having reflected upon Christian responses to issues of morality, I can discuss ways in which to create a more just, equal, compassionate and tolerant society.</td>
<td>Through exploring a range of issues of morality, I can consider Christian responses to these issues and relate these to my own developing values.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I can describe the key features of the values of Christianity which are expressed in stories.</td>
<td>I can share my developing views about values such as fairness and equality and caring, sharing and human rights.</td>
<td>I can demonstrate my developing understanding of moral values through participating in events and projects which make a positive difference to others.</td>
<td>I can apply my developing understanding of morality to consider a range of moral dilemmas in order to find ways which could promote a more just and compassionate society.</td>
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<td>RME 0-02a</td>
<td>RME 1-02a</td>
<td>RME 2-02a</td>
<td>RME 3-02a</td>
<td>RME 4-02a</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RME 1-02b</td>
<td>RME 2-02b</td>
<td>RME 3-02b</td>
<td>RME 4-02b</td>
<td>RME 4-02c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices and traditions</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>First</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am becoming aware of the importance of celebrations, festivals and customs in Christian people's lives.</td>
<td>Through investigating the Christian communities in my local area, I am discovering how Christian communities demonstrate their beliefs through prayer, worship and special ceremonies. I am developing respect for the practices and traditions of others.</td>
<td>I am increasing my knowledge and understanding of different forms of Christian worship and artefacts and can explain their importance for Christians.</td>
<td>Through investigation of and reflection on Christian traditions, practices and customs, I can explain the significance of these for Christians across a range of Scottish Christian Traditions.</td>
<td>Through researching a range of Christian traditions, practices and customs, I can explain their significance across a range of Christian Traditions. I can consider the place of these in the contemporary religious life of Scotland.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RME 0-03a</td>
<td>RME 1-03a</td>
<td>RME 2-03a</td>
<td>RME 3-03a</td>
<td>RME 4-03a</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am developing an awareness of the ways in which Christians celebrate different times of year and can relate these to my own life and community.</td>
<td>Through investigating the ways in which Christians mark major life events and times of year, I can explain key features of such festivals and celebrations.</td>
<td>I can describe the practices and traditions of Christianity and have considered the way these have influenced Scottish society.</td>
<td>I am developing my understanding of Scotland's religious diversity within Christianity and of the place of religion in society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RME 1-03b</td>
<td>RME 2-03b</td>
<td>RME 2-03c</td>
<td>RME 3-03b</td>
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</table>
### Development of beliefs and values

These experiences and outcomes should be addressed through the context of the experiences and outcomes for Christianity and world religions selected for study. They should not be seen as a separate area to plan for but should be intertwined with the experiences and outcomes for Christianity and the world religions selected for study. They should also enable consideration of a range of spiritual traditions and viewpoints which are independent of religious belief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early</th>
<th>First</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am developing respect for others and my understanding of their beliefs and values.</td>
<td>I am developing an increasing awareness and understanding of my own beliefs and I put them into action in positive ways.</td>
<td>Through reflection and discussion, I can explain a range of beliefs which people hold and can participate in debates about 'ultimate questions'.</td>
<td>Having reflected upon and considered a range of beliefs, belief systems and moral viewpoints, I can express reasoned views on how putting these beliefs and values into action might lead to changes in society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>As I play and learn, I am developing my understanding of what is fair and unfair and why caring and sharing are important.</td>
<td>I am developing an awareness that some people have beliefs and values which are independent of religion.</td>
<td>I am increasing my understanding of how people come to have their beliefs, and further developing my awareness that there is a diversity of belief in modern Scotland.</td>
<td>I am able to apply my understanding of a range of moral viewpoints, including those which are independent of religion, to specific moral issues and am aware of the diversity of moral viewpoints held in modern Scotland and the wider world.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RME 0-09a</td>
<td>RME 1-09a</td>
<td>RME 2-09a</td>
<td>RME 4-09a</td>
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Religious and moral education: experiences and outcomes
### World religions selected for study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As I explore stories, images, music and poems, I am becoming familiar with the beliefs of the world religions I am learning about. RME 6-04a</td>
<td>Through exploring stories from world religions, I can describe some of their key beliefs. RME 1-04a</td>
<td>Through investigating and reflecting upon stories of world religions, I can show my understanding of these stories. RME 2-04a</td>
<td>Having reflected upon sources from world religions, I can explain some key beliefs about deity, the human condition and the natural world, and how these beliefs lead to actions for followers of those religions. RME 3-04a</td>
<td>Having considered the key beliefs of world religions, I can express reasoned views on these and discuss how putting them into practice might affect individuals and society. I can confidently support my own responses to these issues of belief. RME 4-04a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By exploring some places and investigating artefacts, I am developing my knowledge of the beliefs of world religions and my awareness of their role in Scottish society and the world. RME 1-04b</td>
<td>I can talk about my own beliefs, or express them in other ways. RME 1-04c</td>
<td>Through exploring the lives and teachings of significant figures from world religions, I am increasing my knowledge and understanding of their key beliefs. RME 2-04d</td>
<td>Through investigating and reflecting upon how followers of world religions put their beliefs into action, I can reflect upon the consequences of putting my own beliefs into action. RME 3-04b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religious and moral education: experiences and outcomes
3. Example – Teaching about Creation and Evolution

• RME 3-01a
• Links to Personal Search and Ultimate Questions:
  • Learning about / learning from
  • Why am I here? Questions of purpose:
    • Religious responses to questions of ‘being’ and meaning
3. Example – Teaching about Creation and Evolution

• Classical philosophical arguments: Cosmological argument
• Explore issues of text and genre
  • Myth:
    • Creation myths
    • Demeter and Persephone
    • Babylonain
3. Example – Teaching about Creation and Evolution

- Some light Biblical Criticism, but not necessarily
- Texts used as a springboard for enquiry and questioning
- Introduce a range of interpretative possibilities:
  - Opens up a wider understanding of religion later:
    - Range of expressions of religion, as opposed to one
4. RE in Scotland: A New Empirical Perspective: UK

• **Research topic:** Currently employed Religious Education teachers’ beliefs about religion and Religious Education

• **Research Design:**
  
  • Online questionnaire provided:
    
    • **UK geographical coverage**
    
    • **Confidentiality** (Not merely an ethical consideration, but an important aspect for data integrity when dealing with a sensitive subject area)
    
    • Use of **quantitative** data for example captured using 5-point Likert Scales
    
    • **Qualitative** open-text comment boxes provide the ability to provide further nuance
    
    • Semi-structured interviews to be conducted in focus groups, in order to explore the themes which have emerged from an analysis of the questionnaire
4. RE in Scotland: A New Empirical Perspective: UK

- **N=465** (After exclusions)
- Representation from across the UK weighted towards England and Scotland.
  - Scotland **N=119** (26.15% of respondents)
- Majority of respondents have been teaching for 6-10 years (**N=124 or 26.96% of respondents**); however, a spread of respondents by age
- Sectoral coverage captures the multifarious nature of education in the UK; however, **State Secondary** is the majority of representation (**N=235 or 50.98%**)
- Responses are weighted to those in **Urban** (**N=178 or 38.70%** and **Suburban areas** (**N=191 or 41.52%**)
- Respondents had a variety of degree backgrounds; however, **Religious Studies** was the majority response (**N=188 or 41.50%**)
4. RE in Scotland: A New Empirical Perspective: UK

- Respondents were concentrated between ages **25 and 54** (*25-34*: N=144 or 31.79%; 35-44: N=142 or 31.35%; 45-54: N=100 or 22.08%)
- **Females** respondents **outweighed males** by 388 (or 74.45%) to 115 (or 25.33%)
- **England** was the largest geographical area represented (N=323 or 70.99%)
- A spectrum of parties were voted for by respondents in the General Election (2015) Of those who chose to vote, **Labour** received the greatest number of responses (N=190 or 42.89%)
- Respondents overwhelmingly identify as **White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British** (N=389 or 85.87%)
- **Heterosexual/Straight** comprises 91.05% (N=407) of respondents.
- The majority of respondents’ schools did not have a religious character: **None** (N=278 or 61.92%)
Welcome to Scotland
Fàilte gu Alba
4. RE in Scotland: A New Empirical Perspective: Scotland

- **N=119** (After exclusions)
- Majority of respondents have been teaching for **6-10 years** (N=29 or 24.37% of respondents); however, a spread of respondents by age.
- Unlike the UK data, **State Secondary** is the majority of representation (N=106 or 89.08%):  
  - Majority of respondents are **Secondary RE Teachers**
- Unlike the UK data, responses are weighted to those in **Suburban** (N=47 or 39.50%) and **Urban areas** (N=44 or 36.97%)
- Like the rest of the UK, respondents had a variety of degree backgrounds; however, **Religious Studies** was the majority response (N=57 or 47.90%)
Q6 Please specify any degrees that you have? Select as many as apply.

- 2.52% N=3
- 11.76% N=14
- 47.90% N=57
- 24.37% N=29
- 60.50% N=72
- 4.20% N=5
- 19.33% N=23
- 19.33% N=23

NB. Multiple responses allowed. N=226
4. RE in Scotland: A New Empirical Perspective: UK

• Respondents were concentrated between ages 25 and 54 (25-34: N=41 or 34.45%; 35-44: N=39 or 32.77%; 45-54: N=21 or 17.65%)

• **Females** respondents outweighed **males** by 97 (or 81.51%) to 22 (or 18.49%)

• A spectrum of parties were voted for by respondents in the General Election (2015). Of those who chose to vote, **Scottish National Party** received the greatest number of responses (N=61 or 51.69%). **Labour** (N=23 or 19.49%)

• Respondents overwhelmingly identify as **White**: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British (N=111 or 93.28%)

• **Heterosexual/Straight** comprises 89.92% (N=107) of respondents

• The majority of respondents’ schools did not have a religious character: None (N=74 or 62.18%)
Q14 – ‘To What Extent Do you consider yourself to be “spiritual”? (N=114)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY SPIRITUAL (1)</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT SPIRITUAL (2)</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY SPIRITUAL (3)</th>
<th>NOT VERY SPIRITUAL (4)</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL SPIRITUAL (5)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>30.70%</td>
<td>22.81%</td>
<td>20.18%</td>
<td>9.65%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>114</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q15 - ‘Belief in God(s)? (N=116)

Q15 Concerning belief in God(s), are you?

- 15.52% N=18 (Atheist)
- 40.52% N=47 (Agnostic)
- 41.38% N=48 (Theist)
- 2.59% N=3 (Other (Please specify))
Q16. ‘What is your religion?’ (N=116)

- 55.17% N=64
- 38.79% N=45
- 1.72% N=2
- 1.72% N=2
- 2.59% N=3

Legend:
- No religion
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other (Please specify)
Q23. ‘Religion is dangerous’ (N=98)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolutely Agree (1)</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Agree (2)</td>
<td>4.08%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree (3)</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Agree (4)</td>
<td>19.39%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at All (5)</td>
<td>51.02%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>98</td>
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</table>
Q23. ‘Religion is dangerous’ – Comments (N=49)

- Thematic coding.
  - Top 5 codes:
    - Dangerous People – 48.98% (24)
    - Essentialism – 38.78% (19)
    - Instrumentalism – 32.65% (16)
    - Religion is not Dangerous – 32.65% (16)
    - Dangerous Interpretations – 20.41% (10)
‘Religion itself is not dangerous, it is how it is interpreted and practised [sic.]’

[DANGEROUS INTERPRETATIONS / DANGEROUS PEOPLE / ESSENTIALISM]

‘Religion is only dangerous if a 'follower' makes it so. Religions are peaceful, interpretation of followers are dangerous’

[DANGEROUS PEOPLE / ESSENTIALISM / RELIGION IS NOT DANGEROUS]
5. Some Emergent Questions in the Scottish Context

• Is ‘neutrality’ possible? Is it desirable? Why?
• What does it mean to be ‘confessional’? Is Humanism a faith-position and therefore ‘confessional’?
• Are ‘confessional’ and ’non-confessional’ RE two different subjects?
• What should the training route be to becoming a teacher of ‘religion’?
• Religious Education? Religious and Moral Education? Religious, Moral, and Philosophical Studies?
• Can ‘religion’ be separated from ‘philosophy’?
• Should apparently negative manifestations of religion be called ‘religion’? Essentialism and Religious Education.
• Which is more important: content or pedagogy? Is this a false binary?
Transforming the world with greater knowledge and learning