



## Religious Education Validation Instrument

### Some explanatory notes on the instrument and its purpose

- The purpose of this instrument is to provide an external validation component to the school's own ethos evaluation process as laid out in *Signs of God's Presence*.
- Its focus is on the school's Religious Education Programme, particularly with regard to timetabled RE. Descriptors for these essential elements of an adequate Religious Education Programme show a rough progression from basic requirements to those needing more resources, structure, and reflection.
- The descriptors are divided into two sections. Phase 1, the basic requirements, includes items that can reasonably be expected of all schools. Phase 2 provides additional items that all schools, as far as possible, are encouraged to incrementally work towards.
- These descriptors are not exhaustive – a good, balanced RE Programme across the whole school may exceed the minimal parameters included here.
- Most descriptors are linked by number to one or more indicators in *Signs of God's Presence* – but the descriptors usually only partially cover what the indicators ask of schools. The two descriptors (7 and 13) not linked to indicators nevertheless reflect two important components of good RE Department practice.
- Space is provided next to each descriptor for noting evidence or offering comment. Suggestions as to the evidence that will enable validation of that descriptor are given alongside the descriptor.
- The evidence must be seen and agreed on by the principal and the validator<sup>1</sup> who will fill in the form. (If a strong disagreement arises this can be noted in the OTHER COMMENTS section of the form.)
- The principal and the validator will append their signatures to the Phase 1, Phase 2, and OTHER COMMENTS sections of the form, where applicable.

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<sup>1</sup> In most cases the validation process will be facilitated by the office director or a field worker delegated the task. Where possible, the owner or owner's representative could be invited to participate in the validation.

## Validation Process

- Schools' RE will be validated during regional office visits in a 5-year cycle. It is suggested that regional offices divide their schools into three categories with an equal number of schools per category where possible. Validation would take place in the green schools in the first year of the cycle, in the orange schools in the second and third years, and in the red schools in the fourth and fifth. (This expansion from the original 3-year to a 5-year cycle gives struggling schools and their local offices more time to put in place what may be lacking.)
  - **GREEN**        *Schools with a sound practice of Religious Education*
  - **ORANGE**      *Schools that are struggling but have a will to develop Religious Education*
  - **RED**            *Schools that tend to ignore Religious Education or let it drift*
- This instrument, based on *Signs of God's Presence*, is designed to assist the process. The instrument acts on two levels, indicating minimum requirements (those possible in all contexts), and further requirements that schools should strive to attain.
- It would also be helpful as a strategy to align the schools with their internal appraisal using *Signs of God's Presence* so that in the year of their validation they would be focusing on Statement 2.
- The process needs to be explained to the schools selected. Validation implies offering formal evidence corresponding to the various descriptors. Schools should be reminded of their responsibility in terms of the Deeds of Agreement (where applicable) and of their accountability to their owners.
- Signed copies of individual validations will be lodged with the owner, the regional office and the school. (Copies may also be sent to the National RE Office so that they remain informed of the realities of present practice.)
- A general report from each region on the validation process and the state of RE will be given to the annual National RE Meeting.

## How schools can facilitate the validation process

Schools can facilitate this validation process by:

- agreeing to a date with the validator;
- ensuring that a copy of the school's RE Policy is on hand, and, where available, a copy of the section in the school's development plan that addresses RE;
- having a small selection of learners' RE workbooks from various grades for the CaSPA representative to look at;
- making available a copy of the school's RE Programme plan for all grades;
- making RE Department Meeting minutes available, where applicable.

## Religious Education Validation Instrument

<b>Name of School &amp; EMIS Number</b>	
<b>Name of Principal</b>	
<b>Name of RE Coordinator</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

### PHASE 1

<b>Religious Education Programme Descriptors</b>	<b>Evidence and explanatory note or comment</b>
<p>1. The school has an RE policy based on <i>Fostering Hope</i> (1.3; 2.1)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>A copy of the policy can be attached; key requirements of Fostering Hope can be pointed out (and circled) in the policy</i></p>
<p>2. RE appears on the school timetable (2.5)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Number of periods per grade; duration of each period</i></p>
<p>3. Adequate time is given to both RE and Life Skills / Life Orientation (2.5)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Total time allocation per week to RE and Life Skills / LO for each grade</i></p>
<p>4. Staff are allocated to teach RE (2.6)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>List who teaches each grade</i></p>
<p>5. Staff teach RE on a regular basis (2.6)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>With reference to the teacher's work programme/s or RE file (Note what was available to be looked at.); some sampling of learner work for particular grades (Note what was available to be looked at.)</i></p>

<p>6. Staff have access to RE materials for teaching (2.6; 2.7)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Title of RE materials in common use in the school</i></p>
<p>7. The learners' work in RE is assessed, and reported on – and this is done on the school's report form</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>A report card; Samples of learners' report cards</i></p>
<p>8. The school has appointed an RE Co-ordinator who submits a regular report to the SGB/BOG or Ethos Committee (2.6)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Their name; copy of a report</i></p>
<p>9. The Catholic identity of the school can be seen through the presence of various signs, symbols, relationships between members of the school community, and activities of a service nature. (1.1; 1.2; 3.2; 3.3; 3.6)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Examples can include reference to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the school's mission / vision statement, signs &amp; symbols present in the school ( objects &amp; spaces)</i></li> <li>• <i>faith-based youth work, service activities, social outreach</i></li> </ul>
<p>10. The school calendar includes RE events – e.g. mass, paraliturgy, retreats, an assembly programme (2.12; 3.4; 3.9)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Provide some examples of these activities</i></p>

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School Principal

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Validator

## PHASE 2

<b>Religious Education Programme Descriptors</b>	<b>Comment based on evidence on hand</b>
<p>11. RE teachers meet as department, plan a coordinated delivery of the school's RE curriculum, and report-back and reflect on the progress of lessons (2.4; 2,6)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Meeting minutes ; an agreed plan</i></p>
<p>12. A monitoring process, similar to that used in other departments in the school, is followed by the RE Department (2.4)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>For example, a HOD checks the learners' books on a regular basis</i></p>
<p>13. Parents and governors are informed about relevant aspects of the school's RE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>By whom? On which occasions? What is said to them? Is this done across all grades?</i></p>
<p>14. RE activities and curriculum are included in the school development plan (2.6; 2.7)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>What? Why? Is there a budget allocation for RE? What is this expected to provide (materials, retreats, professional development activities, etc.)? Evidence from the current development plan – the RE excerpt could be attached and a comment on it provided here.</i></p>
<p>15. RE Teachers are encouraged – and, where possible, offered assistance – by the school to participate in ongoing professional development (2.6)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>Networking with RE teachers from other Catholic schools; Participation in CIE workshops; Enrolment in (academic) courses that promote quality professional teaching of RE; Membership of the Professional Society of Religious Educators</i></p>
<p>16. The school undertakes a review of its RE policy with regard to due process and own context (2.4)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><i>When? What was agreed on?</i></p>

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School Principal

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Validator

## Other comments

*If the principal or validator would like to note anything in addition to the Phase 1 and Phase 2 descriptors this can be noted here.*

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School Principal

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Validator