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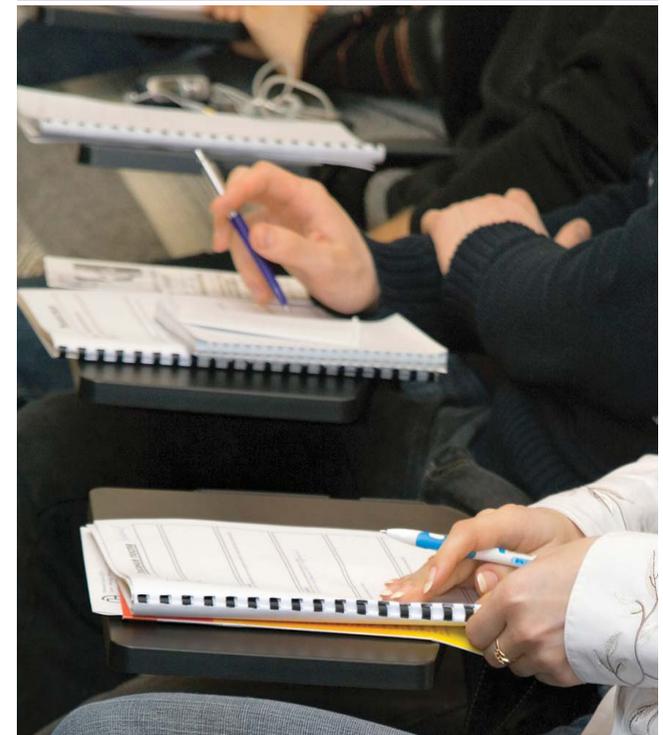
Scottish Charity Number SC011353

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The Church of Scotland
Church and Society Council

Standing Committee on Education





They found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Luke 2:46

Standing Committee on Education



Now under the umbrella of the Church and Society Council, this committee is the oldest Church of Scotland committee still in existence. Its first meeting was in 1825. Its roots lie in the reformers passion for education and their vision that an education gives people the tools by which they can be more faithful.

Today the Church, through its Education Committee still holds strong to that commitment for education, believing that it continues to change lives for the better. The Curriculum for Excellence, to which the Committee contributed significantly, is an exciting development which the Church believes holds true to those early reformation traditions of education being about the whole person. This leaflet outlines how the Education Committee attempts to hold true to that reforming tradition in 21st Century Scottish Education.

▶ Committee membership

The committee is made up of some members of the Church and Society council along with a variety of chaplains, teachers and others involved in education policymaking.

▶ Religious Representatives on Local Authority Education Committees

Every local authority committee concerned with education matters has to have, by law, 3 religious representatives who have full voting rights. This comes from the time when the church gave its schools to the state under the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act and when the state denomination school sector was created in 1918. The Committee appoints its representative - after recommendations from the local presbytery(s) and often assists in the appointment of the so called "third Rep". The Roman Catholic Church also appoints one of these three reps. The Education Committee provides training and support for all of the religious representatives in partnership with the Scottish Catholic Education Service.

▶ School Chaplaincy

We offer training and support for chaplains in the form of resources, conferences, information and a newly formed digital forum. We encourage and support ecumenical (and in a few cases interfaith) chaplaincy teams. We can also at times offer support chaplains on specific local issues

▶ Further Education (FE) Colleges Chaplaincy

FE college chaplaincy is predominately part time and ecumenical with issues that are very specific to the sector. To keep that ecumenical focus we work in this area through the Action of Churches Together Scottish Education Committee. The priority at present is the creation of a new support network for FE chaplains

▶ Political engagement

We contribute regularly to government consultations on education matters, most recently on class sizes, RME guidelines, faith schools, school closures and others. In addition we meet regularly with the education spokespeople of all the political parties to raise issues of concern.

▶ General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS)

We appoint the Church of Scotland's representative on the GTCS who reports back regularly. The Church was a founder member of the GCTS and sees its continued support for the GTCS as a way of contributing to the maintaining of standards in Scottish education

▶ Religious and Moral Education

We have a particular interest in the quality and accessibility of RME in all schools. We meet regularly with Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority as well as having the senior HM inspector of RME amongst our membership. We are at present exploring ways of providing online resources for the teaching of Christianity in RME in partnership with the Religious Education Movement Scotland. We also engage in interfaith issues around RME through participation in the Scottish Joint Committee on RME, (SJCROME), which has representatives from a wide variety of faith communities

▶ Religious Observance

RO goes back to the very roots of the reformation view of education; that it is not simply an academic experience but something that enables a discovery about what it is to be alive. We were involved in the drafting of the 2005 guidelines on RO. We have also created and continue to heavily support a Masters module in RO for school staff and chaplains in partnership with Glasgow University and Scripture Union Scotland. You can get more information about that by emailing aitken@cofscotland.org.uk or Denise.Porada@glasgow.ac.uk. RO is also an issue we work on in the SJCROME.