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Module: The Reflective Practitioner (ECAD6003-C)

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**An exploration into how religious education could potentially influence Key
Stage Two children's moral and spiritual development.**

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Frontispice

This frontispiece is to clarify that except where reference is made, the work described throughout this research project is the result of the research carried out by the student. Also, this research project nor any part of it has been presented, or is currently being submitted in candidature of any award other than for the degree of BA (Hons) Primary Education with Qualified Teacher Status at University of Wales Trinity Saint David in Carmarthen. I fully understand that any work I use without reference constitutes as plagiarism, which would lead to the failure of this module.

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The author wishes to make reference to all the participants at their elective school, and offer appreciation to them. Without their valuable input, it is the author's belief that the results and findings chapter within this research project would not have been as articulate. The author would like to make special mention to the school's religious education co-ordinator for their time and valuable contributions. Also, the author wishes to pay a special thank you to the pupils who all engaged admirably and maturely to all questions posed by the author during interviews.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1- Aim

Estyn (2018) suggest that children should be invited to explore moral and spiritual concepts and dimensions in order to aid their personal search for meaning. The primary aim of this research project is to explore how religious education (RE) could potentially influence and impact upon key stage two children's moral and spiritual development. It is the author's belief that RE could help develop 'healthy and confident individuals' and 'ethical and informed citizens' in line with the new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015, page two).

Another focus area of the research project shall be to explore how questioning strategies could help children's understanding of RE by probing deeper thinking skills. Schön (1987) coined the phrase 'reflective practitioner'. Throughout this research project, the author aims to become a reflective practitioner by gathering primary research in a given elective school and then enhancing these findings with personal experiences and evidence of secondary research. Then, the author shall correlate the research and draw conclusions in order to improve their professional practice.

1.2- Rationale

The author possesses a background of being both personally educated and having worked in Catholic education. Further, the author has profound interest and enjoyment in delivering RE during professional teaching experiences. Personally, the author has studied Philosophy and Biblical Studies at Advanced Level. It is the author's personal belief that the knowledge gained from the research project combined with personal knowledge could potentially inform and hereby improve future teaching and learning experiences. The author is intrigued by spiritual and moral development theories and shall endeavour to make close reference to these throughout the research project in order to satisfy the overarching question of the research project.

1.3- Hypothesis

DCELLS (2008b) suggest that spiritual and moral development are essential aspects of RE, therefore should be identifiable within lessons. It is the author's belief that effectively planned and delivered RE lessons could impact upon a child's spiritual and moral development. However, from experience in professional settings, the author believes that some teachers are nervous about delivering RE and some children do not have a profound interest in learning about RE. Also, the author believes that children sometimes have a limited awareness of how they are developing their moral and spiritual understanding during RE lessons. The author believes that RE can be an

invaluable subject within the primary school sector. However, the author is aware there are some legal issues surrounding the deliverance of RE and this topic shall be explored throughout the research project. To be most effective, teachers need to engage with research and enquiry (BERA, 2014). The author hopes to either contradict or affirm these hypotheses during the research element of this project.

1.4-Overview

This research project shall take a deductive approach whereby hypotheses shall be deduced based upon existing theory. Then the author shall design a research strategy which should help conclude the hypotheses. Firstly, this research project shall be accomplished by writing an introduction highlighting the aims and rationale. Secondly, the literature review chapter shall define what RE is and how it has been valued within the curriculum. The chapter shall also illustrate the various views on RE that have been established by academics and theorists throughout the years. When investigating the literature, there shall be key areas explored in order to achieve the research project aims which include researching spiritual and moral development theories. Thirdly, the methodology chapter shall highlight the approaches and methods utilised to complete the primary research. The primary research shall follow a qualitative approach, which shall consist of semi-structured interviews and observations. The semi-structured interviews could help to gather in-depth views from participants. Penultimately, the results obtained from the primary research shall be presented in the results and findings chapter. Also in this chapter, there shall be a comparison of the secondary research that was completed within the literature review chapter to the findings of the primary research. Finally, the conclusion chapter shall attempt to summarise all the findings of the research project. The completion of these chapters shall consequence in receiving an overall understanding as to whether RE can impact and influence children in key stage two's moral and spiritual development.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1-Overview

Brookfield (1995) suggests that teachers can improve their reflective skills through four critical and interconnected lenses, one of which includes what can be discovered from researching wider educational literature. Furthermore, to create a purposeful and well researched context, all research projects depend upon secondary sources (Welsh Government, 2015a). Throughout this chapter, there shall be an overview of the development of RE within the primary school curriculum. Also within this chapter, there shall be an exploration of theories on children's moral and spiritual development.

2.2-Historical review

Prior to the Education Reform Act (Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1988) there existed defined study areas for each examination subject, but no compulsory curriculum (ACCAC, 2003). One of the two only compulsory subjects was Religious Instruction and Collective Worship which differs slightly from RE. Bastide (1992) suggested that the Education Reform Act (Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1988) gave fresh energy into RE.

In order for the curriculum to become harmonious, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales became established in 1973 (Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2019). Their common priority was to discover ways for representatives of varying faiths to work together to promote their common interest of a richer provision for RE (Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2019).

The Education Reform Act (Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1988) required local education authority to establish a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education whose aim would be to offer advice on the teaching of RE, in agreement with their locally agreed syllabus (Grigg and Hughes, 2012). Each Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education comprises four representative groups: Christian and other religious denominations, the Church of England, teachers' associations and the local authority (Ofsted, 2010).

Orchard (1994) observed that RE often delved to far into the moral area at the expense of the specifically religious. To remedy this and demonstrate continuity it was deemed necessary to introduce cohesive schemes of work. Which was consequently how the locally agreed syllabus

became established. Non-faith schools deliver RE in line with their locally agreed syllabus. In contrast, many faith schools do not need to follow the locally agreed syllabus, and can alternatively deliver their own syllabus. The requirements for the RE curriculum arrangements in local authority schools are decided upon at regional levels (Teece, 2001). At a national level, the RE Council shares best practice. The Religious Education Council for England and Wales introduced a strategic plan to promote effective RE and secure suitable resources for RE (Ofsted, 2013).

2.3- RE in the present curriculum

Currently, RE contributes to the Basic Curriculum that children are entitled to explore, and must be delivered alongside the National Curriculum (Vale of Glamorgan Council, 2008; Bastide, 1992). RE currently focuses on understanding humanity's quest for meaning, exploring aspects of multicultural awareness, and developing pupils' own interpretations towards life and religion (DCELLS, 2008b). Thus, it could be suggested that RE allows pupils to explore spiritual and moral dimensions in which to help inform their own search for meaning and purpose (Estyn, 2018). Currently, RE should be delivered through the interrelationship of three core skills (DCELLS, 2008b). The three skills are engaging with fundamental questions, exploring religious beliefs and teachings, and expressing personal responses (DCELLS, 2008b).

It could be suggested many teachers are conflicted about how to assess a subject that involves spiritual development combined with varying beliefs and opinions (Ofsted, 2013). During the Education Reform Act (Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1988) there became considerable debate regarding assessment of RE. It could be suggested that due to the somewhat private nature of religion, there is difficulty in assessing children's spiritual development. According to National Curriculum Council (1993) schools are advised not to assess pupils' spiritual and moral development as this could be regarded as disrespectful or intrusive. However, schools should ensure the curriculum and aspects of school life are allowing opportunities for spiritual and moral development (National Curriculum Council, 1993).

During RE, every child is entitled to an experience which is both academically challenging and personally inspiring (Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2013). Independent (2015) suggested that the Welsh Minister Huw Lewis proposed to transform RE into Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. Lewis (2015, cited in Independent, 2015) suggested that there would be a commitment to allowing children to explore ideas surrounding ethics and citizenship. However,

some could contradict this suggestion and recommend that such concepts are explored throughout subjects such as Personal and Social Education (DCELLS, 2008c) or in a cross-curricular manner through Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

Without the inclination to question, and without the excessive use of imagination, children may lack motivation to learn, therefore hindering their intellectual development (National Curriculum Council, 1993). RE should encourage children to explore philosophical, ethical, and spiritual questions in a reflective and analytical manner that stimulates further questioning and debate (DCELLS, 2008b). Wright (2015) suggests that every topic in RE should start with an enquiry question that is open ended but has a concept at the centre.

2.4- New curriculum changes

Moving forward, RE now exists within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (Donaldson, 2015). Donaldson (2015) proposes that in the new curriculum the national expectations for RE should remain a statutory requirement. Grigg (2015) suggests that there is a need to model the kind of enquiry and reflective thinking that lies at the heart of RE while demonstrating respect and sensitivity. In terms of provision and progression, Estyn (2018) suggest that RE lessons help pupils to become ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world (Donaldson, 2015).

RE should provide children with valuable experiences that contribute to each of the four core purposes (Donaldson, 2015). Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (WASACRE) and National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE) Working Group (2017) suggest that RE in the new curriculum should be divided into three interrelated key skills which are; awareness of life experience and questions raised, beliefs, teachings and practices, and exploration and personal response.

Throughout education, there should be a celebration of the different and diverse cultures within Wales (Welsh Government, 2011). According to Estyn (2018) most pupils in Wales have a secure understanding of the practices and varying beliefs of different religions. However, a study by McCreery (2005) suggested that RE did not effectively teach people about the diversity of people's backgrounds. There is some suggestion that RE could be misinterpreted as being based upon promotion of a particular faith, rather than developing pupils' respect and understanding of different

religions (Donaldson, 2015; National Curriculum Council, 1993). RE is not about imparting beliefs but helping children make sense of the World (Copley, 1994). RE could help children develop a range of concepts, skills and attitudes required to prepare for adult life and promote their spiritual, moral, and cultural development (Davies, 2004).

2.5- Theories on moral and spiritual development

The school curriculum should promote the spirit and moral development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (Bigger and Brown, 1999). When developing the whole child, personal development can be just as important as academic attainment (Eaude, 2008). Personal development could arguably be shaped by factors such as moral and spiritual development. Spiritual development is accompanied by moral development as a result of a growth of awareness of self, in relation to others (WASACRE and NAPfRE Working Group, 2017). Ofsted (2010) suggested that RE sometimes makes a positive contribution to aspects of pupils' moral development, in relation to the appreciation of the diverse nature of society. However, RE's contribution to aiding pupils' spiritual development is sometimes limited (Ofsted, 2010).

Many view RE as an opportunity for personal, spiritual and moral reflection (Dinham and Shaw, 2015). Most schools recognise the importance of the spiritual and moral dimensions of the curriculum (National Curriculum Council, 1993). Spiritual and moral issues are intensely personal (Roberts, cited in Best, 2000). The English curriculum possesses Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development, which is an over-arching curriculum responsibility that encompasses personal development across the whole curriculum (SMSC The National Quality Mark, unknown date; Seymour, unknown date).

2.5.1- Spiritual Development

Sutherland (1994, cited in Best, 2000) suggested that it is correct to expect RE to have a major role in promoting pupils' spiritual development. Fowler (1981) sought to discover the developmental process in human faith and thus developed the Stages of Faith (Appendix One). At key stage two age, children could be in the 'Mythical Literal' stage (Fowler, 1981). During this stage children would accept existence of a deity, appreciate other's viewpoints, and regard beliefs and moral rules literally (Fowler, 1981). Further, during this stage children would begin to separate out the real from the make believe (Fowler, 1981).

Gay (2000) suggests that schools have been uncertain about spiritual development because of conceptual difficulties with the term. Many suggest that there are varying aspects of spiritual development. These could include relationships with others, search for personal identity, response to complex experiences, and encounters with moral choices (National Curriculum Council, 1993). Deprivation of spiritual development, may cause children to have difficulty co-existing with others (National Curriculum Council, 1993). Ofsted (2010) suggested that practitioners should ensure that RE promotes pupils' spiritual development by permitting for reflection on the implications of religion and belief upon their personal lives.

The word 'spiritual' can evoke religious feelings of prayer and relationship with a divine being (Bigger, unknown date cited in Bigger and Bowen, 1999). Duff (2003) concluded that spiritual development is defined under three broad concepts; awareness, self-knowing and transcendence, which are religiously neutral. Further, spiritual development relates to how children acquire insight into personal existence, development of beliefs and focuses upon self-reflection (Roberts, cited in Best, 2000).

2.5.2- Moral Development

Ofsted (2013) perceived RE as having a significant role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of empathy and respect. Kohlberg (1971) proposed Stages of Moral Development (Appendix Two). Possibly, children of lower key stage two age could be in the 'Pre-conventional Morality' Stage whereby they do not have a personal code of morality but one that is based upon standards of adults and the consequences of adhering to or breaking rules (Kohlberg, 1971). According to Kohlberg, during the pre-conventional morality stage children would believe in the rules of the authority figures such as teachers and would regard the rules as absolute (Kohlberg, 1971). Moreover, Piaget (1932) suggested two main types of moral thinking, one of which is 'Heteronomous Morality' where people regard morality as obeying other people's rules, and view them as fixed. Possibly, children of upper key stage two could be in the 'Conventional' stage of morality, whereby they continue to accept the rules of authority figures, as they feel that this is necessary to maintain positive relationships and order (Kohlberg, 1971).

Moral development, like spiritual development, involves several elements (National Curriculum Council, 1993). Personal morality can combine the beliefs of individuals, values of the religious groups to which they belong, and the laws of society (National Curriculum Council, 1993). Similar

to Kohlberg, Piaget (1932) deduced that children's ideas regarding rules, moral judgements and punishment tended to vary as they grew older. Everyone has the right to choose their beliefs and moral position (Talbot cited in Best, 2000; UNICEF, unknown date).

2.8- Conclusion

To summarise this chapter, RE could be viewed as valuable to helping children to become imaginative and reflective individuals, and responsible citizens who could potentially make a positive contribution to society (Webster, 2010; Donaldson, 2015). Further, it could be argued that from the various suggestions throughout this chapter it could be argued that RE has been shaped throughout the years to become more multicultural, in reflection of a diverse society (Davies, 2004). It could be argued that despite the numerous curriculum changes, many aspects of RE have supplemented children's spiritual and moral development. Moreover, it could be suggested that RE could have a lot of flexibility with regards of what to teach (Elton-Chalcraft, 2015).

It could be argued that despite the varied amount of primary research available to the author there seems to exist a piece of work that poses a question similar to the author's research project title. This chapter's secondary research shall be compared and contrasted to the primary research in chapter four in an attempt to remedy the gap that exists in research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1-Overview

It was of fundamental importance that the appropriate methodology was utilised when obtaining primary research. The author examined benefits and limitations of many methods before selecting which would be the most beneficial. Also, when selecting methodology it is integral to ensure selected methodology will permit the author to obtain data in an ethical manner. Arguably, it could be difficult to comprehend if children's moral and spiritual development is being impacted upon by RE in such a limited time period. However, by using observations and interviews, the author can base some judgements and conclusions.

3.2- Ethical implications

Researchers should act with both honesty and integrity (Grigg, 2015). When obtaining primary research throughout the research project, the author endeavoured to adhere to BERA Guidelines (BERA, 2018). Also, when obtaining data the author complied with the Data Protection Act 1998 (legislation.gov.uk, 1998) where all contributors became informed that they should remain anonymous within the results and findings chapter of the research project.

Ethics can support important social and moral values (Resnik, 2015). One of the core aspects of research integrity includes honesty, open communication, and demonstrating respect for all participants (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2017). At all times, respect was shown to all participants. In order to demonstrate how the author shall endeavour to adhere to ethics, an ethics form was completed prior to undertaking the primary research at elective school (Appendix Three).

3.3- Interviews

Researchers should endeavour to ensure that potential participants understand what is involved in the study, what they shall be expected to do, and what shall happen to the information they provide (BERA, 2018). BERA endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, unknown date) and ensures the best interests of the child are the primary consideration. Children who are potentially capable of forming their own views should be allowed to express those views, commensurate with their age and maturity (BERA, 2018). In order to select children who would be willing participate in the interviews, the author asked the class teachers to kindly elect children who were asked politely if they wished to contribute to the research project. Then, the selected children had the process of the interview explained to them while adhering to the aforementioned guidelines.

Hughes and McCrum (2003) suggest that it is beneficial to ensure there is a gender balance with the interviewees. The author interviewed one male and one female pupil from each key stage two class. The author utilised a standardised interview schedule (Appendix Four), in order to obtain sufficient data. However, the author would often deviate from the schedule creating the interviews to become unstructured. The author sometimes encouraged children to answer the questions and interpret them how they wish. McLeod (2014) suggests that unstructured interviews are flexible, and questions can be altered depending on the respondents' answers. Also, unstructured interviews generate qualitative data through the usage of open-ended questions (McLeod, 2014). Also, there could be an increase of validity as the interviewer has the opportunity to search for a deeper understanding and search for clarification (McLeod, 2014). It was this free flowing and somewhat relaxed style of interview that the author wished to achieve. Also, the author interviewed the school's RE co-ordinator and various members of staff in a similar semi-structured manner following a varied interview schedule (Appendix Five).

3.4- Observing children

Whilst observing children, practitioners could reflect upon questions that could lead to an evaluation of the provision and the different pedagogical approaches used (DCELLS, 2008b). During the observations, the author witnessed aspects of good practice that could arguably help inform future practice. Morrison (1993 cited in Cohen et al., 2007) suggests that observations can help researcher to gather data on the interactional setting and pedagogic styles. The author noted the research using a case study style and observational notes.

However, there are some cautions about the methods of observations, such as bias. Researchers may only choose to observe secular parts that would aid their research. To prevent this the author endeavoured to observe all aspects. Lowland (1971, cited in Cohen et al., 2007) highlights the importance of recording observation notes as soon as possible after observation.

For the majority of the observations, the author took the role of a non-participant observer. The observations took place within classrooms in what is known as a 'natural' setting (Cohen et al., 2007). During one lesson, the author became invited to participate in some of the activities, transferring the author to the role of participant observer. The author willingly obliged and engaged

with the activities. This situation provided opportunities for the author to question children as they were undertaking the activities.

3.5- Conclusion

While researching children's development, Piaget (1932) utilised qualitative research, through methods of interviews and observations. As one of the pioneers of exploring children's development, the author believed it could be advisable to use similar methodology. Obtaining primary research was integral to informing and potentially supporting or contradicting the author's secondary research discussed in chapter two. Conducting the research in an ethical manner was a high priority for the author and this priority was adhered to throughout the research project. The author sometimes utilised observations and interviews simultaneously, as then the author could utilise first-hand experiences and support them with interviewees' suggestions (Cohen et al., 2007).

Chapter Four: Results and Findings

4.1-Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the primary research obtained during the author's elective experience in a large primary school in the South Wales area. For purpose of context, the author wishes to note that the school was a non-faith school. The author prioritised obtaining a range of responses from both practitioners and children to inform the aims and overall outcome of the research project. One of the main focuses of being a reflective practitioner includes having an active focus on using evidence to reach informed judgements (Pollard and Tann, 1987; Pollard, 2014). The author presented their results and findings in a report, which became presented to the school's senior leadership team (Appendix Six).

4.2- How RE could impact upon children's moral development

During interviews, children were invited to respond to what 'moral development' meant to them, before being provided with clarification of the definition. The children interviewed were key stage two age, and all arguably demonstrated tendencies in accordance to Kohlberg's Moral Development Stages (1971). The children believed that RE could help them gain a better understanding of 'making good or bad choices', and this was a recurring phrase mentioned by five out of the eight children interviewed. At Stage Four, children understand the importance of Maintaining the Social Order and have become aware of the rules of society (Kohlberg, 1971). One child discussed how stories from religious books read to them during RE taught them about moral decisions and 'how to make good decisions and be an all-round good person'.

One child produced an excellent response and deduced RE could 'help them understand their friends' varied cultures and beliefs and why they choose to do things like celebrations and festivals'. RE could help children develop values that promote the understanding of respect and empathy, which are vital for our diverse society (Ofsted, 2013; Davies, 2004). Another child discussed that they enjoy RE because it helps them 'feel closer' to their friends as they can 'understand their religions better'. Most of the children concluded how it was 'normal' to have different beliefs to their friends. During Stage Two called Individualism and Exchange, children recognise that there is not just one correct view and different individuals have unique viewpoints (Kohlberg, 1971). Estyn (2018) highlighted that children are aware that RE helps nurture respect for the similarities and differences between individuals. Further, children who are developing morally are becoming

responsible citizens who demonstrate respect towards others and understand people's traditions (Erricker, unknown date a).

Schools could encourage children's moral development through their carefully planned ethos (National Curriculum Council, 1993). The elective school documented their ethos in their school policy and their ethos included dimensions and aspects of moral development. Practitioners may recognise that all religions have a moral dimension, however, only learning about that aspect is not sufficient (Teece, 2001). All teachers interviewed concluded that RE could definitely aid children's moral development. One practitioner suggested that RE was 'potentially one of the best subjects to develop children's moral understanding'. Erricker (unknown date a) suggested that children who are developing morally could be confident individuals who possess secure values, and distinguish right from wrong.

Children should be encouraged to justify their opinion about a particular dimension of a belief system in comparison to another belief system, and support using evidence (Elton-Chalcraft, 2015). One teacher utilised questions to probe children's deeper thinking about the topic of the after life. Children were provided with a corresponding task in which they compared various religions' beliefs and drew comparisons. Arguably, this activity evoked children's moral and spiritual development as it embedded their understanding of other people's religions and opinions. Children were observed discussing in a 'think, pair, share' assessment for learning manner, various opinions on religions. All children seemed engaged and when approached by the author were able to discuss how the activity was helping them to further enhance their moral development and empathy towards other religions.

4.3- How RE could impact upon children's spiritual development

The children interviewed all arguably demonstrated signs in accordance to Fowler's Stages of Spiritual Development (1981) as all children interviewed discussed how RE could help teach them about a divine being. At key stage two age, Fowler (1981) concluded children all usually acknowledge the existence of a God. During the interviews there became a reoccurrence from the interviewees using the word 'God' in their responses whereby it could be concluded that children all perceived spiritual development as becoming more understanding of religious deities. Moreover, during interviews, children were invited to respond to what 'spiritual development' meant to them, before being provided with clarification of the definition. Four out of eight children concluded that RE would 'help them with their understanding of God'. One child articulated that RE is 'clearly

linked' into spiritual development because it is 'mostly all about religions and praying'. The majority of teachers suggested that RE could influence children's spiritual development. Whereas, one teacher concluded that RE would be the 'most paramount subject' for aiding children's spirituality.

During one lesson observed, children were witnessed attempting to achieve the lesson objective of separating the real from the make believe in pairs. Fowler (1981) suggested that during the 'Mythical Literal' stage, children should begin to identify and understand the difference between real and make believe. Hence, this lesson was aiding children to become more spiritually aware by solidifying understanding of what was real or make believe. Hereby, also arguably developing their critical thinking skills. Estyn (2018) suggest that pupils consolidate their thinking and reasoning skills in RE lessons. Erricker (unknown date b) suggested that children who are developing spiritually are successful learners who possess enquiring minds.

Furthermore, in another lesson observed, children were exploring and consolidating understanding of a religious festival through creative activities. The author was able to take the role of participating observer and question children as to whether they found the activities enjoyable and academically stimulating. The emphasis upon providing pupils with first-hand experiences of religion combined with the exploration of other faiths, has increased interest levels amongst pupils (Davies, 2004). Hereby, this enquiry-based learning and constructivist approach the author witnessed arguably provided children the opportunity to structure understanding of their moral and spiritual development. One child suggested that they would 'much prefer to be learning RE in a fun way like this'. When the question of 'what is the purpose of this activity?' was posed, one child replied 'to help teach us about other religions or help us make decisions of what religion we would like to be a part of'. Ofsted (2013) suggest that when children demonstrate imagination and creativity in their learning their spirituality is being developed.

4.4-How RE is represented within educational settings and delivered

Some schools make explicit reference to moral and spiritual development within their RE policies (Appendix Seven). Practitioners in the elective school suggested that they enjoyed delivering RE, however, sometimes it was a difficult subject to plan for due to its sensitivity. RE currently consists of an open and exploratory approach but parents possess the legal right to withdraw their children (DCELLS, 2008a). One teacher suggested that this withdrawal could potentially hinder a child's

moral and spiritual development, however, ‘respectfully it is the parents choice’. About a half of primary teachers lack confidence in teaching RE (Religious Education Council of England and Wales, unknown date). Three out of five teachers interviewed suggested that they were not confident when delivering RE. One teacher articulated they feared planning RE incorrectly and then having to address misconceptions. Also, another teacher suggested that if RE is planned incorrectly, it could have a ‘detrimental impact’ upon children’s moral and spiritual development. It could be argued that it is undesirable for pupils to be withdrawn from any lesson, but some parents are concerned about poor practice or biased teaching in RE (Lichten, 2018).

Schools should provide a daily act of collective worship for all children, with the aim to help them develop morally and spiritually (Estyn, 2018). Children at the elective school were invited to pray at before departing school at the end of the day. In contrast, in faith schools, children are invited to pray several times a day. Therefore, it could be argued that despite the elective school being non-faith staff endeavoured to provide pupils with a daily experience that could help contribute to their moral and spiritual development.

Effective planning is essential if RE is to be delivered well (Davies, 2004). The author became presented with various lesson plans and mid-term plans at the elective school. The teachers kindly took time to explain how children would be developing their moral and spiritual during the lessons. One teacher mentioned how they often endeavoured to specify on ‘either the moral or spiritual element of RE’, whereas there is sometimes occurrence of the two dimensions being developed at once.

4.5- Questioning strategies

One feature of outstanding teaching of RE is questioning that challenges children to explore and engage with the deeper meaning and significance of religion (Grigg, 2015). According to WASACRE and NAPfRE (2017) throughout RE, children shall be helped to become enterprising, creative contributors when encouraged to think creatively in relation to difficult questions (Donaldson, 2015). The author witnessed how effective questioning skills and strategies enabled children to relate RE to personal experiences. McCreery et al. (2008) suggested that one of the key principles when teaching RE is to draw upon similarities between children’s experience and the specific religious experience. One teacher used open-ended questions to ask the children to share their personal experiences of different religious festivals from varying faiths. The author observed

an increased engagement and enthusiasm when children were sharing their experiences (Appendix Eight). The children all listened intently to each other's opinions hereby aiding their moral development and empathy towards other religions.

As mentioned in the author's elective report, the author witnessed first-hand how RE could impact upon children's analytical thinking skills. In an interview, one teacher suggested how Bloom's Higher Order Thinking questions could be utilised to probe deeper thinking on religion. Hereby, it could be suggested that if teachers select suitable questioning strategies to be deployed during RE lessons, children's cognitive capacity is being developed as well as their moral and spiritual development. One child articulated that they enjoy when the teacher gives them a 'big question' at the beginning of RE lessons as it 'really makes me (them) think'. The child was arguably making reference to when a teacher poses an overarching question to and then the lesson is devoted to explore deeper the significance of the question from a moral or spiritual stance.

4.6- Observations of guest speakers and educational visits

RE is not limited to the classroom. Guest speakers and educational visits provide positive first hand experiences for children. Faith leaders are often keen to share their practices with local schools (Bastide, 1999). One of the limitations however depends upon the faith leader's ability to communicate well with children (Bastide, 1999). Children in the elective school were visited by the local priest. The author observed the children listening intently with a sense of awe and wonder. The faith leader could be briefed beforehand with the aims of the visit, and pupils could be helped to prepare suitable questions for the speaker (Davies, 2004). Arguably if pupils are unprepared, the visitor's presentation may provoke awkwardness, failing to achieve respect and understanding for other cultures and religions (Davies, 2004). This could potentially have a detrimental impact upon a child's moral development as they would not be demonstrating empathy and understanding towards other religions. Grigg (2015) suggests that meeting and speaking to faith leaders could potentially help bridge the gap between cognitive and emotional learning.

Educational visits could arguably be perceived as enquiry based learning and a constructivist approach whereby pupils are developing their moral and spiritual understanding for themselves. It could be argued that effective teaching of RE could foster community cohesion by developing an appreciation for diverse faiths (Ofsted, 2010). Another way of boosting community cohesion and links to the wider community is organising educational visits to places of worship. Places of

worship can have the potential to evoke feelings (Davies, 2004). It was evident from observation that when the children undertook the educational visit to a local church, it had a powerful and emotive impact upon them. Bastide (1999) highlighted one of the aspects around the idea of spiritual development is a sense of awe, mystery and wonder. Children were observed gazing around the building with an eager sense of amazement and curiosity. One child eagerly suggested that 'this is the house that God made'. Thus, it could be argued the educational visit had an impact upon the child's spiritual development as they began to acknowledge the existence of a religious deity. Which as Fowler (1981) suggested, children in the mythical-literal stage would begin to acknowledge an existence of a divine being.

4.8-Conclusion

The research collected during electives helped contribute to the results and findings in this chapter and has been compared with the secondary research. It could be deduced that it is a general consensus that people believe that RE could have both an impact and influence on children's moral and spiritual development. Also, it could be argued that children have a good understanding of how their moral and spiritual understanding can be developed throughout RE lessons. It could be argued that RE has the powerful ability to enhance children's exploration of their own personal moral and spiritual development.

Also, all research collected following visits to and by the school, could be analysed with a view to improving future studies, and to develop the children's knowledge and enthusiasm.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1- Overview

The ultimate aim of this research project was for the author to gain a better understanding of whether RE impacted upon key stage two children's moral and spiritual development. Throughout this chapter, the author shall conclude the findings elaborated upon in the previous results and findings chapter. The author conducted this research project in a deductive manner and shall now conclude the hypotheses by discussing the research strategies and relevant findings.

5.2- Conclusions

RE makes an important, although not exclusive, contribution to moral and spiritual development (Welsh Office Education Department, 1994). In relation to the hypothesis discussed in chapter one, the author concluded that effectively planned and delivered RE lessons could definitely impact upon a child key stage two's spiritual and moral development. Moral and spiritual development opportunities are certainly not restrained to RE, however, the subject most definitely aids itself to their development (Bastide, 1999).

During the Cambridge Review, Alexander et al. (2009) concluded that primary education is a moral pursuit for children. The author was able to conclude in a deductive manner that RE if planned and delivered effectively can have an impact and influence upon children's moral and spiritual development. Thereby, it could be concluded that RE is of fundamental importance in terms of aiding children on their moral pursuit (Alexander et al., 2009). It could be argued children have an innate sense of awe and wonder which could be developed through the exploration of moral and spiritual dimensions of life during RE lessons.

The methodology selected suited this research project and undoubtedly attributed to the research project's overall outcome. However, the author would have wished to have had some more children and teachers to interview as this could allowed the findings to become more varied. Furthermore, overall the author was satisfied with the outcome of the primary research.

5.3-Informing future practice

Reflective practice is designed to help improve practice (Welsh Government, 2015b). With the author's personal background in Catholic education, it was extremely interesting to witness good practice of RE within a non-faith primary school. It is the belief of the author that this research project has been invaluable for professional development by informing and hereby potentially

improving professional practice in the future. The author gained understanding of how to potentially foster and encourage children's engagement through emotionally and intelligently stimulating activities and expressing interest in children's personal experiences.

This research project has been invaluable for the author's own understanding of how RE could be utilised to help children become 'healthy and confident individuals' and 'ethical and informed citizens' (Donaldson, 2015, page two). By furthering their multicultural understanding who are able to understand how to make good choices. Further, the research project has provided the author with experience of refining the invaluable skills of observing children and understanding how important it is to ensure that pupil voice is valued. The author has deduced how important it is to engage students through effective questioning strategies to probe deeper thinking. Further, the author has gained understanding of how important it is to allow children to use a constructivist approach and utilise enquiry based learning during RE lessons. Whereby, pupils can construct meaning for themselves through and build upon their moral and spiritual development.

6448 words

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Appendix

Appendix One- Fowler's Stages of Faith

TABLE 17-9
Fowler's Stages of Faith

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Pre-Stage: <i>Undifferentiated faith</i>	Infant	Trust, hope, and love compete with environmental inconsistencies or threats of abandonment
Stage 1: <i>Intuitive-projective faith</i>	Toddler-preschooler	Imitates parental behaviors and attitudes about religion and spirituality Has no real understanding of spiritual concepts
Stage 2: <i>Mythical-literal faith</i>	School-aged child	Accepts existence of a deity Religious and moral beliefs are symbolized by stories Appreciates others' viewpoints Accepts concept of reciprocal fairness
Stage 3: <i>Synthetic-conventional faith</i>	Adolescent	Questions values and religious beliefs in an attempt to form own identity
Stage 4: <i>Individuative-reflective faith</i>	Late adolescent and young adult	Assumes responsibility for own attitudes and beliefs
Stage 5: <i>Conjunctive faith</i>	Adult	Integrates other perspectives about faith into own definition of truth
Stage 6: <i>Universalizing faith</i>	Adult	Makes concepts of love and justice tangible

(Data from Fowler, J. W. [1981]. *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. New York: Harper & Row; Johnson, B. S. [1996]. *Psychiatric-mental health nursing: Adaptation and growth* [4th ed.]. Philadelphia: Lippincott.)

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Appendix Two- Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Kohlberg's Theory

Level/Stage	Age Range	Description
I: Obedience/Punishment	Infancy	No difference between doing the right thing and avoiding punishment
I: Self-Interest	Pre-school	Interest shifts to rewards rather than punishment – effort is made to secure greatest benefit for oneself
II: Conformity and Interpersonal Accord	School-age	The “good boy/girl” level. Effort is made to secure approval and maintain friendly relations with others
II: Authority and Social Order	School-age	Orientation toward fixed rules. The purpose of morality is maintaining the social order. Interpersonal accord is expanded to include the entire society
III: Social Contract	Teens	Mutual benefit, reciprocity. Morally right and legally right are not always the same. Utilitarian rules that make life better for everyone
III: Universal Principles	Adulthood	Morality is based on principles that transcend mutual benefit.

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Appendix Three- Ethics Form



PG2 / E1 FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

Full Name:	Bethan Petty		
Tick all boxes which apply:			
Member of staff:	☐	Student:	☒
Honorary research fellow:	☐		
Faculty/School/Centre:	South West Wales Centre of Teacher Education (SWWCTE) Yr Athrofa		
Campus:	Carmarthen		
E-mail address:	1601574@student.uwtsd.ac.uk		
Contact Telephone Number:	07792 450133		
For students:			
Student Number:	1601574	Undergraduate	☒
Programme of Study:	BA Primary Education with QTS	Taught Postgraduate	☐
Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Sioned V Hughes	Research	☐

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
				Date
If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known):	Research Degrees Committee		☐	

approval (and date where known):	Faculty Research Committee	☐	
	Other (write in) Module Co-ordinator (ECAD6003) – Dr Sioned V. Hughes, ITET	☒	30/01/19

Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval.

SECTION C: External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
<i>This research will adhere to BERA guidelines</i>	☒
<i>This research will adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998</i>	☒
<i>This research will adhere to the University research guidelines/ EWC guidelines</i>	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?	YES	☒	NO	☐
If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person:				
Institution	Pontarddulais Primary School			
Contact person name	TBC			
Contact person e-mail address	TBC			

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☒
If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

Indicative title:	An exploration into how religious education could potentially influence key stage two children's moral and spiritual development. Sub questions: -Could religious education help children become ethical and informed citizens? -Exploring how religious education could encourage moral and spiritual development? -Exploring attitudes to religious education. -Understanding how questioning strategies could help children's understanding of religious education.		
Proposed start date:	29.01.2019	Proposed end date:	29.04.2019

Purpose of research activity (including aims and objectives)

Outline the purpose, aims and objectives of the research activity, including key research questions. Show briefly how existing research has informed the proposed activity and explain what the research activity will add and how it addresses an area of importance. (Maximum 300 words)

Overall, the research project predominantly aims to explore how religious education could potentially influence key stage two children's moral and spiritual development. The research aims to gain better understanding of how religious education can impact upon key stage two children's understanding of moral values. Also, with the new curriculum reform impending I wish to research how religious education could inform children to become 'ethical and informed citizens' (Donaldson, 2015). Further, I wish to gain a better understanding of how religious education could impact upon children's spiritual and moral development. Also, I wish to explore children attitudes to religious education. Also, I would like to explore how questioning strategies could help broaden children's understanding of religious education.

Proposed methods

Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. (Maximum 600 words)

Interviews-

A group of children from key stage two class will be interviewed in a semi structured manner. Throughout the interview, they will be invited to respond to pre-planned questions. For example, what does religious education mean to you? What is the importance of religious education? Do you enjoy religious education and why? The children will be in an informal setting and I will make notes of their responses. I intend to type up the pre-planned questions and will attach these in the appendix of my research project. The children shall not be forced into participating and no direct individual questioning will take place if a child does not wish to respond. I also intend to interview different key stage two teachers and the religious education co-ordinator to gain understanding of how they teach religious education and how they believe it could impact upon a child's moral and spiritual development.

Observations/Field Notes-

I will observe and make notes of a variety of teaching and learning experiences that I encounter throughout my research. Throughout my observations, I will take note of how well pupils are engaging with religious education. At times, I may focus on certain individuals, but majority of the time I will focus on the class as a whole. Both the children and the class teacher will have access to my observation diary. As aforementioned, confidentiality will be upheld and no names shall be mentioned, a pseudonym could be used if necessary. To further enhance my research, I may discuss my notes with the teacher or children to gain a more detailed perspective or explanations. On occasions, I may observe participants without their knowledge and make notes on their learning experiences. I also intend to make notes on pedagogical approaches and how they can impact upon children's understanding of religious education.

Learning Walk-

To support my research I may conduct a learning walk through the school to observe displays and discuss aspects of provision with members of staff or children. These learning walks maybe self-directed or facilitated with a group of learners. I will obtain consent from a member of staff. Prior to evidencing (through means of written, photographic or audio methods) I will ask the participant who accompanied me on the walk for their permission to use the information they provided in my research.

Examples of pupils' work-

To support my research I may use examples of pupils' work. However, prior to gaining the samples of work, I will ensure I have gained the class teacher's consent and the consent of the pupil to which the work belongs. Upon gathering the examples I will take responsibility of the work and ensure confidentiality is upheld.

At no times will children's or adults' names be recorded.

Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
The proposed research will be conducted at Pontarddulais Primary School, my assigned elective school. Further research will also be carried out at a partnership primary school, however, school details are yet to be released by the faculty.
Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.
N/A

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
Use of interviews?	☒	☐
Use of diaries?	☒	☐
Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
Participant observation without their knowledge?	☒	☐
Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box	☐	☒

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
Children under 18?	☒	☐
Prisoners?	☐	☒
Young offenders?	☐	☒
Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Others (please identify):	☐	☒

Participant numbers and source

Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?

The estimate expected number of participants will be around 30 children aged between 7 and 11 years old, in key stage two classes. However, this number may be subject to change, due to the class I will be based in for the elective period.

I will gain consent from the class mentor and senior mentor prior to undertaking my research in my professional teaching experience class.

Members of staff will also be invited to participate in the research.

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐

Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
(this box should expand as you type)			

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
If YES to any question, please provide full details			
(this box should expand as you type)			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.	
Full risk assessment completed and appended? Yes ☐ No ☒	
Risks to participants For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information	
The risk to participants is that they could be part of the research without giving consent. Therefore, I will ensure that all consent procedures are in place by informing children and staff about my research project. Further, I will explain to staff and children they have the right to withdraw and can leave the research, or express that they do not want any data to be used, at any time. For example, I shall ask permission from the children to use their answers in my research and offer to share my notes. I will monitor the children's wellbeing and stop any activity if they become uncomfortable or distressed.	
If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
N/A	
Risks to investigator For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
The risk to the researchers is that I could be accused of unprofessional practice. I will manage this risk by adhering to BERA guidelines and the Data Protection Act 1998 and also follow my plan for ethical practice.	
University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
There should be no risk to the University if I manage the risk to the participant and the researcher as detailed in this ethics form. I will conduct the research and represent the results honestly. I will always adhere to comply with ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards as required by the statutory and regulatory authorities, as well as with the university's Research Integrity and Ethics Code of Practice.	
Adverse outcomes List measures put in place to limit any adverse effects or outcomes of research activity where appropriate. Include any emergency protocols.	

I will manage the potential risks by adhering to BERA guidelines and following my plan of ethical practice. I will constantly adhere to ethical, legal and professional frameworks, guidelines and standards required by stator and local authorities as well as the University Research Code of Ethics and Integrity. Upon collection of the research, I will assume full responsibility for the safekeeping of observation notes which are confidential and no-one is identifiable as pseudonyms will be used throughout my observation book.

Disclosure and Barring Service

If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.

Has a DBS certificate been obtained?

YES

NO

N/A

☒

☐

☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

Feedback What feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when? Following the research, I will not be providing feedback to participants as it is not relevant for the research. However, if the participants request feedback from the response then I, as the author, will provide a summary of the data collected.
Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded.
Participation consent (Children) I will converse with my class teacher and relevant members of staff to inform them of the research I will be undertaking, providing reason and rationale behind the research. However, I will verbally ask children whether they wish to participate. Children will also be informed they can approach me at any time and discuss their contribution to the research project and explain whether they want to participate. When the children are being questioned by myself their wellbeing and best interests will be paramount and if they do not wish to complete the activity they can withdraw at any time. Participation consent (Teacher) For the class teachers, I will ask them to sign a document if they agree to take part in the research. If they are not willing to sign the document, then I shall not use them in my research. The consent form will include a box for the participant to tick if they agree with the statements, one of which is I have read and understand the information sheet dated 11/02/2019 for the above study. The teachers will understand that the information I obtain is confidential and it is voluntary for them to participate and they can withdraw at any time.
Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case. I shall ensure that no individual data are made available to schools or parents. Only non-identifiable summary data can be provided in this way. I will also place a statement on the consent form indicating that 'if you decided to remain anonymous maintaining your anonymity will be a priority and every practical precaution will be taken to disguise your identity'. Also, all materials generated from any interview will remain confidential.

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

	YES	NO		
Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act)? <i>"personal data" means data which relate to a living individual who can be identified—</i> <i>(a) from those data, or</i> <i>(b) from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of, the data controller, and includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller or any other person in respect of the individual.</i>	☐	☒		
If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:				
Does it involve sensitive personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act)? <i>"Sensitive personal data" means personal data consisting of information as to –</i> <i>(a) the racial or ethnic origin of the data subject,</i> <i>(b) his political opinions,</i> <i>(c) his religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,</i> <i>(d) whether he is a member of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),</i> <i>(e) his physical or mental health or condition,</i> <i>(f) his sexual life,</i> <i>(g) the commission or alleged commission by him of any offence, or</i> <i>(h) any proceedings for any offence committed or alleged to have been committed by him, the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings.</i>			☐	☒
If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:				
(this box should expand as you type)				
Will the research activity involve storing personal data on one of the following:	YES	NO		
Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐		
University computers?	☐	☒		
Private company computers?	☐	☒		
Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒		
Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐		
"Cloud" storage or websites?	☐	☒		
Other – specify:	☐	☒		
For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption and anonymisation:				

Confidentiality will be upheld by not requesting participant names on any piece of data obtained. Data will be stored in a locked drawer and on a password protected computer. Any correspondence between myself and my tutor will be through a password protected email account.

Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
Sharing of data with others at the University?	☐	☒
Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
Use of data management system?	☐	☒
Data archiving?	☐	☒

If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act (and/or any international equivalent):

(this box should expand as you type)

List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:

The researcher, Bethan Petty, supervisor and module co-ordinator.

List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:

The researcher, Bethan Petty.

Give details of data storage arrangements, including where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.

Participants that provide responses will have their data store securely by the researcher. Once the data has been analysed by the researcher then it will be destroyed so there is no physical trace of the data. This process will also be in accordance to the Data Protection Act (1998)

This research project and data gathered will comply with the University Data Guidelines. It will also adhere to the requirements of the data protection act 1998. The data collection period will range from 11/02/2019 until 29/04/2019. Following the 29/04/2019, there will no longer be use for the data and all data will be destroyed at this point in time.

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's [Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice](#)

Signature of applicant:

B. J. Petty

Date: 31.01.19

For students:

Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Sioned V Hughes
Signature:	<i>B. J. Petty</i>
Date:	06.02.2019

For staff:

Head of School/Assistant Dean:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate)
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Head of School.

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgrresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name. You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages: <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/>

Application Process

All staff research projects and all research students must submit the Ethical Approval Form to the University Ethics Committee via the Academic Office (pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk). Staff research directly in relation to personal study for taught undergraduate or Masters programmes should be submitted via the Faculty procedures explained below.

Taught masters and taught undergraduate research Ethical Approval Forms are considered within Faculties. Faculties will provide details of the specific processes for this. Where the Ethical issues within any single ethical application are of particular concern the Faculty will refer these to the University Ethics Committee. Any student activity that involves the collection of primary data needs to undergo Ethical approval, this includes assignment work as well as dissertations.

Notes for guidance in completion of this form

Section A: About You

Please complete all relevant sections

Section B: Approval for research activity

Research proposals must be approved in principle before applying for Ethical Approval. The proposal approval only becomes final when the ethical approval is received.

The process for proposal approval varies according the individual and programme of study:

- Research students, by application on form PG1 to the Research Degrees Committee
- Taught students by review of research proposal within Faculties (Faculties provide specific details of these processes)
- Staff, by agreement by the Head of School/Assistant Dean

Section C: External Ethical Guidance materials

Many discipline areas are required to operate with the discipline specific codes of research ethics (for example health, psychology, education etc.), any such codes must be listed and you must tick to confirm that you have consulted with these.

Section D: External Collaborative Research Activity

Provide details of the external collaborative partners, where appropriate you might want to submit a copy of the external collaboration agreement with the Ethical Approval Form. If the partner requires the research to be subject to its own internal Ethical approval process then please provide details of that process and a copy of any final (or interim) approvals received from the organisation.

Section E: Details of Research Activity

Remember that the individuals reviewing this Ethical Approval Form may not have seen your research proposal, and also may not be experts in the specific area of your research. The information provided should therefore be jargon free and clearly stated.

Indicative Title: please use the same title as used on the research proposal.

Purpose: the Ethical approval process will want to ensure that the methods you propose are adequate and appropriate to address the research aims and objectives. Excessive additional data collection can be seen as unethical.

Proposed Methods: the Ethical approval process seeks to ensure that you understand the methods that are intended, and that the implementation of those methods will be appropriate and without unnecessary impact on respondents. Please be specific.

Location: this needs to mention geographical location and also local situation (for example, within Local Authority Offices in Cardiff, using a private room but close to other individuals). If you are collecting data within an organisational setting then you need to explain the permissions that you have obtained to do this.

Research Activity outside of the UK: please complete this section in detail, and note any guidance you have received. Also describe your own familiarity (or not) with the location that you will be utilising.

Section F: Scope of Research Activity

Please tick ALL of the research activities that might be undertaken. If any additional types of activity are intended then please add an extra box and describe these.

If you have answered no to all questions in F then sections G and J do not need to be completed. Section H should be considered, and may be completed. Signatures are still required in section K.

Section G: Intended Participants

Please tick all categories that might apply.

Numbers & Source: if you are using a series of different methods or research activities please list numbers for each stage/phase. Be clear about how you will find respondents. Will you use intermediaries, and if so how? How will you ensure compliance with your sampling strategy?

Information for participants: all participants should be appropriately informed about the research, what is expected of them and what will happen to the information that they provide. The Ethical review process does not ask to see this documentation, but requires this to be reviewed and approved by the Director of Studies in the case of research students, the supervisor/module tutor in relation to students on taught programmes and the Head of School/Assistant Dean in relation to staff research.

Section H: Anticipate Risks

All research carries some level of risk. The answers you provide to questions in this section will be reviewed to ensure that you have an appropriate understanding of the type of risks involved and how you can mitigate against these risks. If you have completed a full risk assessment, as required for example for laboratory work, field work, clinical tests, diving operations, or by a collaborative partner, you may append that to this form. In that case, please tick the box indicating this has been provided. You will not then be required to complete Section H.

Risk to participants Think very carefully about how your actions/questions/discussions might affect the people you are involving as participants. You might identify the risk as small but it would still be a risk. Many types of question have the potential to make respondents less content with their life / job; you need to recognise and try to ameliorate any such effects

If these are business owners, time with you may reduce profit.

In some locations physical risk is very real to both participants and yourself, please consider this.

Risk to you, the researcher Think about where you will meet people, if there are any dangers involved in the location. If you are meeting people as individuals think about using a public place. In general do not visit people in their own homes or remote locations. If you are talking to individuals about certain issues think about how their responses might affect you emotionally. What about the risk of collecting insufficient data?

Risk to the University When undertaking your research, you are acting as a member of the University (student or staff). Professionalism is important, so it is important to be well organised and well prepared. Punctuality, clarity etc. are all part of this. What will you do to ensure this? You must ensure you do not harm the good name of the University in any way and do nothing to undermine the reputation of the research it conducts and sponsors. Upholding high standards of conduct and integrity are vital in this regard. You must also conduct the research in such a way to minimise the potential for claims of negligence made against the University, its researchers and any collaborating individual or organisation. In this respect you should always comply with ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards as required by statutory and regulatory authorities, as well as the university's Research Integrity and Ethics Code of Practice. Research misconduct in this respect can take many forms, including:

- fabrication: making up results or other outputs (eg, artefacts) and presenting them as if they were real
- falsification: manipulating research processes or changing or omitting data without good cause
- plagiarism: using other people's material without giving proper credit
- failure to meet ethical, legal and professional obligations: for example failure to declare competing interests; misrepresentation of involvement or authorship; misrepresentation of interests; breach of confidentiality; lack of informed consent; misuse of personal data; and abuse of research subjects or material
- improper dealing with allegations of misconduct: failing to address possible infringements such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers

Adverse Outcomes. Think carefully about the possibilities, and cover here

Section I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

Feedback to participants: outline your approach. Will interview transcripts be shared with respondents to check accuracy? Will summaries of questionnaire analysis be made available to respondents in some way? Will an overview report be provided? How and when?

Informed consent: Draft letter / e-mail / or heading (or footer) section of questionnaire must be approved by DoS/supervisor (if research student), supervisor/module tutor if taught student, or Head of School / Assistant Dean if a member of staff.

Confidentiality/Anonymity. Explain clearly how you will ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Section J: Data Protection and Storage

Before completing this section it is necessary to read the University's Research Data Management information. The questions that follow are designed to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act as well as established research protocols.

Many research activities will involve electronic transfer of data and use of data management systems in the summarisation and analysis of data. You will need to explain these in relation to compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Think carefully about who will have access to your data, this will include supervisors and examiners. Also that a thesis will be made available via the University library and the British Library system. If you are seeking an access bar for a period of time after completion then mention it here. If you will provide a copy of your findings, or intend to give a presentation, to a facilitating/ supporting/accessing organisation then explain that in this section. But also think about the general principle of data sharing, as explained in the Research Data Management information.

In terms of storage of data please ensure security, and also mitigate against loss of data.

Section K: Declaration

Ensure the appropriate countersignatures have been provided

Look carefully at the checklist and ensure that you comply with and tick all that are relevant to your research.

Appendix Four- Interview Schedule For Pupils

Interview Schedule For Pupils

- Explain purpose of research and BERA guidelines.

Context

- What does religious education mean to you?
- What is your opinion on religious education?/Do you enjoy religious education?
- Do you think good questioning can help you think more about RE?

New Curriculum

- Do you think religious education could help you become ‘ethical and informed citizens’ and ‘healthy and confident individuals’?

Moral Development

- What does moral development mean to you?(allow children to provide answer)
- Provide definition of moral development
- Could RE help your moral development?

Spiritual Development

- What does spiritual development mean to you?(allow children to provide answer)
- Provide definition of spiral development
- Could RE help your spiritual development?

Appendix Five- Interview Schedule For Staff

Interview Schedule For Staff

- Explain purpose of research and BERA guidelines.

Context

- Do you enjoy teaching RE?
- What is your opinion on religious education?
- Do you feel confident when delivering RE?

New Curriculum

- Do you think religious education could help children become ‘ethical and informed citizens’ and ‘healthy and confident individuals’?

Moral Development

- Do you think RE could help children’s moral development?

Spiritual Development

- Do you think RE could help children’s spiritual development?

Appendix Six- Report on RE at elective school

Report on Religious Education at [REDACTED] Primary School

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight the impact of religious education (RE) on children at [REDACTED] Primary School. The report provides an overview of standards and the quality of provision of RE for children from year one to year six. The report evaluates the learning and teaching of RE and identifies examples of good practice, including delivery of lessons, meeting pupils' needs, and leadership.
2. The report is intended mainly for teachers who are involved in teaching RE in primary schools and senior management. The report may also be of interest to institutions that train teachers.
3. The author intended to gain a better understanding of how RE could potentially impact and influence key stage two children's moral and spiritual development and if effective questioning strategies could help probe children's deeper thinking.
4. There are many aspects in the learning and teaching of RE. This report does not aim to provide a definitive account of all of these aspects but merely highlight areas of interest.
5. Throughout the report there is reference to the new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015) and how RE can impact upon children's moral and spiritual development.

Background

6. In most schools, religious education should be part of the broad and balanced curriculum that Estyn inspects.
7. For majority of schools that are non-faith, religious education lessons are delivered in line with the locally agreed syllabus.
8. All schools must provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. The aim of collective worship is to develop pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally (Estyn, 2018).
9. In 1988, the Education Reform Act required the local education authority to create a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) in order to offer advice on matters relating to the teaching of RE, in agreement with their locally agreed syllabus (Grigg & Hughes, 2013).
10. RE should encourage pupils to explore a range of questions in a reflective, analytical, balanced way.

11. Schools work local authorities and SACREs to improve the opportunities for professional development and support learning networks for teachers of religious education.' (Estyn, 2013, p. 5)
12. RE is within the 'Humanities' Area of Learning and Experience in the new curriculum. Donaldson (2015) suggests that RE should provide valuable experiences for children that contribute to each of the four purposes of the curriculum. RE could be misunderstood as being about the promotion of a particular faith or belief rather than developing pupils' respect and understanding of different forms of religion (Donaldson, 2015). Donaldson (2015) proposes that under the new curriculum the national expectations for RE should remain a statutory curriculum requirement.

The evidence base of the report

13. The findings and recommendations in this report draw upon:
 - an analysis of the school's RE policy
 - observations of various RE lessons ranging from foundation phase to key stage two
 - interviews with children and staff (including RE co-ordinator)

Main Findings

Standards

14. Overall, the standard of RE witnessed at [REDACTED] Primary School is very good.
15. RE was often delivered in a cross-curricular manner throughout lessons such as PSE and Knowledge and Understanding of the World in foundation phase.
16. RE observed in key stage two was predominantly about exploring religious beliefs and other cultures which was of interest to most children.
17. Many pupils have a positive attitude towards RE. Children in Key Stage Two provided some excellent responses and understanding of what religious education is. Children in upper key stage two have a good articulate understanding of what 'moral development' and 'spiritual development' means and how RE could help with this and how this is encouraged in school.
18. Majority of staff are confident in their delivery of RE but mentioned the need to research the area well when planning.
19. Staff make highly effective use of questioning strategies during RE lessons, and probe children's critical and analytical thinking.

20. Staff invite children to share their personal responses and experiences making the learning arguably more meaningful and giving the children possibly more understanding of how to be compassionate and empathetic towards other religions.
21. Pontarddulais Primary School have effectively incorporated Donaldson's Four Purposes into the RE Policy in preparation for the new curriculum.
22. Children are constantly invited to build upon prior knowledge.

Provision

23. The school effectively organised an external speaker (local Vicar) to visit pupils in the upper foundation phase and all students engaged really well with this experience.
24. Children in foundation phase were provided with an opportunity to get involved with daily worship (prayer) at the end of the day.
25. The school has a very positive whole-school ethos and emphasis on children's rights and values.
26. The four core purposes of the new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015) are clearly displayed in all classrooms and throughout the school corridors, and elements of RE and moral and spiritual development is included within some of these.
27. There is a lot of RE resources available at the school to enhance teaching and learning experiences.
28. Children are invited to explore RE in various different ways, for example, circle time activity and partner talk.
29. Children are invited to embed understanding of RE through creative activities (lesson observed in year four). Understanding of the purpose of the activities was reinforced during the plenary making the learning experience purposeful.
30. Throughout most lessons observed there was a focus upon symbolism and children were allowed to gain a better understanding of what the religious symbols represent.

Leadership

31. The school possesses an excellent RE co-ordinator who is the only primary school member of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

32. The RE co-ordinator has developed an excellent RE policy which is insightful and gives good guidance for staff.
33. The RE co-ordinator highlights in the policy that they will inform colleagues of any courses and examine the suitability of resources and highlight effective practice.

Recommendations and Findings

R1: continue to engage children's interest in RE by;

- utilising external speakers
- giving children a meaningful context
- inviting pupils to undertake creative activities
- probing children's deeper thinking using effective questioning strategies for example Bloom's Higher Order Thinking

R2: understand pupils' attitudes towards RE;

- a few children (in key stage two) have a negative attitude towards RE therefore making it difficult for teachers to engage them throughout lessons.
- incorporate pupil voice and ask children what they would like to learn in RE and engage their interests.
- some parents choose to have their children withdrawn from RE lessons making this difficult to fully give them access to the RE syllabus. However, staff at [REDACTED] are clearly committed to producing an inclusive teaching and learning environment and demonstrate respects for all religions.

R3: incorporate RE into class displays;

- limited displays on RE, however some of the values and four purposes displayed throughout the school reinforce the idea of moral and spiritual development.

R4: potentially help raise teacher confidence by;

- highlighting CPD opportunities
- report to trainee teacher institutions as there is some suggestions that students could benefit from more support with regards to teaching RE

Author: Bethan Petty

UWTSD Trainee Teacher

Appendix Seven- RE policy

AIMS

The central aims of Religious Education in the school are to help children to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- Grow in their spiritual development through reflection on their thoughts feelings and relationships.
- To develop particular skills (reflection, empathy, communication, reasoning, enquiry, analysis and evaluation) and attitudes (respect, open-mindedness, self-esteem, sensitivity, critical awareness, appreciation and wonder) which enable effective learning to take place.
- Explore a range of questions of meaning and how religious teachings have responded to these issues.
- Explore issues within and between faiths to help them understand and respect different religions, beliefs, values and traditions and understand the influence of these on individuals, societies, communities and cultures.
- Extend their thinking and analytical skills as well as developing creatively, imaginatively and emotionally.

OBJECTIVES

We believe the above aims can be achieved if we:

- Help children to understand the religious beliefs, attitudes and activities of other people and develop and express their own beliefs and values.
- Foster children's awe and wonder; extend their natural curiosity and help them to use their imagination in order to extend their spiritual development
- Encourage children to recognise their own value and importance as individuals; promote their social development so that they can give as well as receive, and develop their understanding that life is a series of significant stages.
- Consider some basic religious concepts and ways in which they have been expressed in sacred books, language and writings, symbols and the arts, daily living and rituals.
- Introduce children to the lives of key figures in various religions and to people who have responded to their teaching and example.
- Familiarise children with stories, which are an authentic part of religious traditions.
- Provide opportunities for children to share in memorable and festive experiences from various cultures and traditions, thus stimulating questions about the meaning of such occasions.

Appendix Eight- Case study**Case study 1: Circle time activity recapping religious celebrations (Year Three)****Background**

Children undertook a circle time activity recapping religious celebrations. The teacher is able to focus on individuals understanding of religious celebrations through verbal questioning skills. Also the teacher was able to gain understanding of children's personal experiences of religious celebrations.

Strategy

The session begun with children sitting in a circle and introduced to the 'bag' which they will proceed to pass around. The children take it in turns to pass the bag around and draw out an object. Each object is related to a different religious celebration. There is a vast range of objects included in the bag related to different celebrations. Children as a group then are asked what they think the object is related to. The teacher's gives children opportunity and time to think of answers. Children are given the opportunity to think whether celebrations are a 'good or bad' time, giving them understanding of key subject specific terminology. Teacher asks for children's opinions and ideas but then takes time to explain what the object is and reinforces children's understanding of the symbolic meaning. As a group, children are then asked to sort objects into celebration categories. Children are constantly questioned effectively throughout.

Outcome

Pupils' thinking skills are constantly evoked during the activity. Effective questioning skills enhance the outcome of the experience. Children are asked to relate any personal experiences, making the learning relatable for them, with majority of children eager to explain their personal experiences. Enhancing their moral and spiritual development. Majority of the children completed the activity being able to relate the objects to the relevant celebration. Children appear eager to learn more about the new celebrations they have been introduced to.