

## Five tips for preparing for the RE Quality Mark

If you are thinking of applying for the RE Quality Mark, then you might find the tips below helpful by Katie Martin, an Oldham teacher who has taught in two schools which have achieved the RE Quality Mark.

**1. Make a list of the things you do in RE in your school that you are really proud of,** or that you know are examples of excellent practice before you begin looking through the evidence form. This will inevitably form some of the evidence for a range of the criteria once you start to go through it. I, for example, made a list of all of the 'out of the ordinary' learning opportunities and experiences students have in school e.g. at our school we host 'Faith Day' for all our new Year 7 students which is a journey through each of the major world faiths - we bring in a variety of visiting speakers and encourage the students to get involved in more creative activities, such as Bhangra dancing! This was evidence towards students' learning in a variety of creative ways, having learning opportunities from faith representatives, and being given opportunities for their own spiritual development.

**2. Work on the evidence form with your team/colleagues.** It's not only a brilliant self-evaluation tool as you clearly see what you are doing really well in RE, and areas where you can improve - using the faith day example from above, we now plan to extend our invitation to attend 'Faith Day' to some of our local Primary School students to help support other RE leads in the areas. But you will also find that it enthralls and encourages the team to continually improve their practice. I found that working towards the award as a team ensured that everyone was involved, and therefore everyone felt a great sense of equal achievement once we were awarded the REQM.

**3. Don't try and do it all at once!** You will need to keep coming back to the evidence form over a period of time, not because it is a lengthy or arduous process, but because fresh eyes are needed to remind us of the things we have forgotten we do naturally! I asked other people, from students to the Head teacher, to read over it once I thought it was complete to see if they thought I was missing anything; and they gave me great ideas and other things to include as evidence that I might not have otherwise thought of as being relevant.

**4. Remember that it's an opportunity to 'show off' everything that you are good at!** In my experience of going through the award twice, the assessor is not someone to be feared; but rather someone to acknowledge all the good practice that is happening in RE in your school.

**5. Use the pupil questionnaire to support your evidence.** They will say lots of things in their questionnaires that you didn't know they felt or thought, and give you a real insight into what they think are the good things about the subject. They generally say really nice things, which links back to Tip 2 and why it is good to share it all with your team. I also found that their responses to the REQM questionnaire were far more honest than the normal 'pupil voice' opportunities we give them through lessons and have helped us to form our department priorities for the next academic year.

Katie Martin teaches at Oldham's Bluecoat Church of England School.

Apply for the mark yourselves! Start at: <http://www.reqm.org/>