

# SACRE

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Spring  
2018



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This News bulletin has been produced by RE Consultants Paula Webber and Gill Vaisey with contributions gratefully received from SACRE members and pupils across several Local Authorities. Contents may not necessarily reflect the views of the authors.

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## Torfaen Holocaust Memorial Day Service

By Libby Bevan and Trinity Parry – Year 9, West Monmouth School



On the 27<sup>th</sup> of January every year we commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. On this day, many years ago, the most brutal concentration camp, Auschwitz, was liberated. We use this day to remember those who lost their lives and the survivors who endured time at any of the concentration camps set up by the Nazis in World War II. We also remember victims of subsequent genocides in places such as Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.



To help commemorate this day there was a service held at Holy Trinity Church, Pontnewydd on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January. Throughout the service there were items such as school choirs, individual performances, prayers, Bible readings and hymns. There was also a performance by the Gwent strings

orchestra.

The service welcomed many special guests for example, The Reverend Canon Herald Thomas MBE who led the service and local MP Nick Symonds. Other guests were pupils and teachers from West Monmouth School, St. Albans RC School, Abersychan School, Cwmbran High School, Croesyceiliog School and the Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit.

During the service we reflected on the horrific events of the past as to not repeat them again. In doing so we sang hymns such as 'Make Me a Channel of your Peace' and 'Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah'. The service was attended by approximately 100 people and it reminded us of the horrors of the Holocaust. All in all it was a very moving service with a strong message within it.

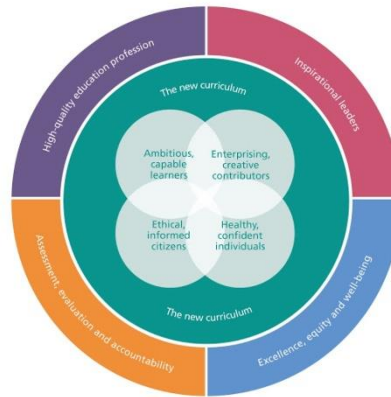


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## Curriculum Review Update

During the Spring Term Welsh Government have written a second newsletter to SACREs regarding Religious Education and the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) within the new curriculum for Wales. They express gratitude for the responses that SACREs sent with regards to the newsletter to SACREs in July 2017. The communication from SACREs will be collated and the feedback will inform the development work. During the Spring Term, SACREs will respond to the information received in the current newsletter, the content of which is outlined as follows:



### Timelines

In September 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Education published 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. This action plan includes revised timelines for the new curriculum. Please see below the relevant key dates:

- April 2019: Draft curriculum available for feedback
- January 2020: Final curriculum available
- September 2022: All maintained schools and settings using new curriculum and assessment arrangements (roll-out starting with primary and Year 7 and then year by year)

### The What Matters approach

In considering an approach to developing the new curriculum, pioneer school practitioners involved in the design process identified that teaching 'what matters' was the starting point from which to build the new curriculum. As a result, pioneer groups – including the Humanities – have begun the process of developing key concepts to organise their AoLE by identifying 'what matters' in their fields i.e. the key elements that all learners should experience within their areas during their journey along the continuum of learning.

Each AoLE will consist of What Matters key concepts. These concepts are being developed to avoid excessive variation from school to school while allowing for local flexibility. The What Matters key concepts across the AoLEs will support the development of the Four Purposes of the new curriculum and will also reflect current

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ideas about important disciplinary knowledge, skills and competencies for each domain.

### **The development process for Humanities**

In order to identify 'what matters' within the various subjects and disciplines that form the Humanities, we commissioned experts to prepare a series of papers to support the pioneer group's work. These included papers relating to history, geography, business, social studies and Religious Education. The focus of these papers was to outline for each discipline:

- the core of knowledge/concepts and associated skills and competencies deemed essential for all pupils to learn.
- progression for the above, and an indication of what pupils should learn/experience relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14, 16.
- building on the above, suggested What Matters key concepts.

WASACRE was commissioned to prepare a discussion paper relating to Religious Education. Representatives also attended a Humanities pioneer group workshop in November 2017 to present the paper and work with the group to develop proposals for the AoLE. Please find attached a copy of the commissioned paper.

Drawing on the expert input outlined above and identifying 'what matters' for each component discipline within the Humanities provided firm foundations for the pioneer group to develop overarching What Matters key concepts as a means of organising the AoLE.

### **The What Matters Proposals**

Initial proposals for the What Matters key concepts for the Humanities AoLE were developed in December 2017 for submission to the Curriculum and Assessment Group. The content of the report reflects the Humanities pioneer group's thinking at that time. The group continues to meet every three weeks and has begun developing progression frameworks to underpin each of these What Matters statements. In developing these frameworks as well as the detail of the AoLE during the spring term, the wording of the key concepts outlined will naturally change and be refined.

Welsh Government invited SACREs to consider these initial What Matters proposals and provide comments and/or suggestions for consideration during the next phase of the development work.

Further information, as well as the proposals for all six of the AoLEs, including the Humanities, has been published on the Welsh Government website:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?lang=en>

Currently the Humanities pioneer group is focusing on developing progression frameworks for the AoLE, supported by the CAMAU project (colleagues from University of Wales Trinity St David and Glasgow University). The content of the AoLE is being developed in more detail. Welsh Government will send the next update to SACREs at the end of May and invite views on the proposals produced.

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# Interfaith Week

Blaenau Gwent SACRE member, Christine Abbas, was busy over Interfaith Week (12<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November) having been invited to Afon Taf school in Merthyr and Coleg y Cymoedd in Nantgarw two days later. Afon Taf held its first Interfaith event on the Monday and three members of Chris's family went at short notice to cover some empty slots. Other speakers included several Christian denominations, a Muslim and a Jewish representative. The topic was Interfaith Work and Social Justice and the students had ready prepared sheets of questions to ask. The pupils carouselled around the speakers so each twenty minute presentation was repeated nine times.



The AV facilities were excellent so Christine was able to present part of her session on a powerpoint followed by a short video, which showed Bahá'í communities, in various parts of the world, who were involved in community building activities. These were focused on children's classes for spiritual and moral education and the empowerment of junior youth.

An interactive activity invited the students to leave a comment around the words "The betterment of the world can be accomplished through...?" Although the pupils seemed quite shy in asking questions many left very interesting thoughts from –'eat healthily', or 'more sport', 'stop bullying', 'love one another', 'have better understanding between religions' to 'unity' and 'have a day with festivals all around the world to promote "There's only one world –treat it right"'.

Two days later Christine went as part of a team of three to Coleg y Cymoedd's first Interfaith event. There were table displays in the main corridor for the Jewish faith, Mormon, Pagan and Bahá'í faith and a competition for students to win a £10 voucher (as a way of encouraging students to engage). At first, students walked past but half way through the morning there seemed to be a surge in interest, some students even walking up to the table of their own accord. Several interesting conversations took place ranging from 'I'm an atheist' to 'I'm really interested in different religions.'

Finally, on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November the Interact youth group of Blaina held an Interfaith event supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, Jeff Cuthbert, the Rotary Club (Brynmawr) and Nantyglo Community Shop. The youngsters had the opportunity to try henna patterns and hair braiding after opening the event with two songs. Local Buddhists came to chant, a street dancer and a beat boxer performed and Tribal Dance gave a workshop and then showcased the dance they had learned.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK works to promote understanding cooperation and good relations between organisations and persons of different faiths in the UK.



## Inter Faith Network Bulletins

The November-December and January-February Inter Faith Network Bulletins are available in the following links:

[https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Inter\\_Faith\\_Network\\_for\\_the\\_UK\\_e-bulletin\\_-\\_November-December\\_2017.pdf](https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Inter_Faith_Network_for_the_UK_e-bulletin_-_November-December_2017.pdf)

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/IFNe-bulletinJan-Feb2018.pdf>

## FAITH FESTIVALS - GUIDANCE ON SENDING GREETINGS 2018

**A document about the most appropriate festivals on which to send greetings and the form of greeting to use.**

In the UK today a range of festivals are celebrated by different faith communities, and greetings are sent for many of them.

The Inter Faith Network reports that its office often receives enquiries about the most appropriate festivals on which to send greetings and the form of greeting to use. The document below has been produced with the IFN's Faith Communities Forum which brings together National Faith Community Representative Bodies in IFN membership.

Each faith community has many different festivals but has chosen two festivals on which greetings from those of other faiths and none would be particularly appreciated. These are included in a table with greetings that the faith communities suggest.

Full listings of this year's religious festivals can be found [here](#).

**[Faith Festivals - guidance on sending greetings 2018](#)**

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## **Estyn Thematic Review of Religious Education**

Estyn have completed a thematic review of religious education provision in 2017 – 2018. A sample of schools across Wales were selected to take part in the review. The review focused on the provision and quality of KS2 and KS3 RE. A separate review on the Foundation Phase has been undertaken which included RE alongside the other areas of learning. The report on these reviews will be published in the Summer Term.

Estyn will give a presentation on their findings at the Summer Term WASACRE meeting in Anglesey on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.

## **WJEC Religious Studies**

### **Presentation to WASACRE**

Lynda Maddock gave an update on GCSE Religious Studies in the Autumn Term WASACRE meeting at Swansea. Teachers may find it helpful to read the minutes which are published on the WASACRE Website <http://www.wasacre.org.uk/meetings.html>

### **Digital Resources from the WJEC**

Resources to support teachers are regularly updated on the WJEC website.

GCSE Religious Studies Resources can be found at <http://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceByArgs.aspx?subId=26&lvlId=2>

GCE Religious Studies resources can be located at <http://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceByArgs.aspx?subId=26&lvlId=1>

Teacher Share Space is available on the WJEC Website.

For AS/A Level these resources are available at:

[http://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/r-religious-studies-gce-asa-from-2016/File%20Sharing%20for%20GCE%20Religious%20Studies%20WJEC.pdf?language\\_id=1](http://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/r-religious-studies-gce-asa-from-2016/File%20Sharing%20for%20GCE%20Religious%20Studies%20WJEC.pdf?language_id=1)

Also see the Twitter Page which is found at [https://twitter.com/WJEC\\_RS](https://twitter.com/WJEC_RS). The Welsh account is: @CBAC\_AstCref

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## The Bahá'í Faith, Unity and Heart of the Forest Community Special School's World Faiths Week

By Sue Cave (Monmouthshire SACRE Member)

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February three members of the Bahá'í Faith visited the Heart of the Forest Community Special School in the Gloucestershire to contribute to the school's bi-annual World Faiths week. Sue Cave, Jenny Lockwood and Midge Ault (from Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire and members of their SACREs), organised a Bahá'í faith activity day based on the theme of Unity. The day spent working with the primary and secondary pupils, teachers, and assistants was inspiring and enjoyed by all and everyone actively engaged with the two assemblies and three art workshop activities. The five collages produced were displayed in the school and a Bahá'í faith resource pack for teachers was presented to the school and the feedback from the school was very positive.



During this week the school had visits from other faith representatives and they ended the week with a performance from the Gospel Choir from Wydean School.

Mr. Mike Hobbs, Head of the Primary Department kindly wrote the following about the day's activities for the 'School Visits' webpage of the Bahá'í RE webs (<http://re.bahai.org.uk/school-visitors/>).



'As a school we recently held a World Faiths Week and invited three members of the Bahá'í faith to come to school to run a series of assemblies and art workshops for our pupils. The sessions were very informative and were enjoyed by all pupils. The art sessions were inclusive throughout and provided a calm and peaceful environment for all pupils to engage with and learn about the Bahá'í faith whilst making a series of wonderful collages. Feedback from staff and pupils has been incredibly positive and I would have no hesitation in recommending the group for similar school visits.'





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## Support with teaching about Humanism

By Kathy Riddick (Coordinator of Wales Humanists and Blaenau Gwent SACRE Member)

Humanism is a non-religious and ethical life stance shared by millions of people in Britain. Humanists trust to the scientific method, evidence, and reason to discover truths about the universe, and place human welfare and happiness at the centre of their ethical decision making.

Humanists UK have launched [Understanding Humanism](#), an exciting, website of education resources to help young people learn about Humanism. Designed by teachers for teachers, the website features comprehensive, flexible, and **free** resources for primary and secondary schools.

Additionally, we have developed a free guide, linking our resources on humanism to the [WJEC / CBAC](#) RS GCSE specification, to help teachers and students across Wales <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/resources-for-wales/>

We also have **free**, trained, and experienced volunteers across Wales, who can help schools. Using their life experience and knowledge, our School Speakers can bring a personal dimension to young people's study of Humanism that goes 'beyond the textbook'. They offer a range of services and will fit around teachers needs and requirements.

Below are just some of the ways they can contribute:

- Talk about Humanism and take part in a Q&A in an assembly or in the classroom
- Share their personal experiences, beliefs, and values and explain what being a humanist means to them
- Give a humanist perspective on a contemporary debate (eg. assisted dying, wealth and poverty, prejudice and discrimination)
- Contribute to a specialist day (i.e. 'collapsed' or 'off timetable' day) for a whole-year group
- Provide remote support to pupils when researching a particular topic, project, or investigation
- Take part in a multi-faith panel dialogue exploring different viewpoints
- Work directly with teachers by providing specialist information or material

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## BBC Religion and Ethics Review

The BBC has plans to enhance its religion and ethics coverage, ensuring that it better reflects the UK, the world, and the role that religion plays in everyday life.

In December 2017, the BBC published a review of its Religion and Ethics programming to re-assess its role and strategy in this area, and reconsider how best to deliver its public service mission. This includes a new commitment to reflect better the diversity and plurality of faith and belief in the UK today.

Among its key recommendations are:

- to help the public develop its religious literacy;
- to expand coverage of religion in News output; and
- to broaden the reach of Religion and Ethics content to diverse audiences, including those aged under 45.

The report also says that the BBC will partner with other organisations to host a summit discussing the role that belief plays in British society, to be held every two years, and that it will be designating 2019 'A Year of Beliefs' when special programming and content will be featured.

The BBC report states that:

"Globally, 84% of people affiliate with a religion and this is predicted to rise above 90% over the next few decades. It can be hard to appreciate the importance of this whilst living in the UK, where the figure is around 50%, but if we really want to understand what is going on in the world and what the future holds, then we need to be able to make sense of our beliefs and those of others. The BBC has always done great work in the area of Religion & Ethics. As UK society becomes more diverse and complex, with so many passionately held conflicting views, our role in helping audiences to understand belief in a fast-changing world has perhaps never been more important."

The full report can be accessed on the BBC website. This also includes reference to current and future programming which could be used as informative classroom resources.

[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/reports/pdf/religion\\_and\\_ethics\\_review.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/reports/pdf/religion_and_ethics_review.pdf)

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## Children's Commissioner for Wales Tackling Islamophobia Resource

### The resource

The resource consists of three lesson plans, designed for secondary schools, to help increase awareness of Islamophobia, tackle common myths and misconceptions about Islam, and present the real life experiences of young Muslims in Wales. It includes four videos to use in the classroom

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/our-work/resources/tackling-islamophobia-resource/>



### What's happening at the Religious Education Council?

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/>



The Religious Education Council of England and Wales was established in 1973 to represent the collective interests of a wide variety of professional associations and faith communities in deepening and strengthening provision for religious education.

It provides a multi-faith forum where national organisations with an interest in supporting and promoting religious education in schools and colleges can share matters of common concern.

**The latest REC newsletter can be accessed at:**

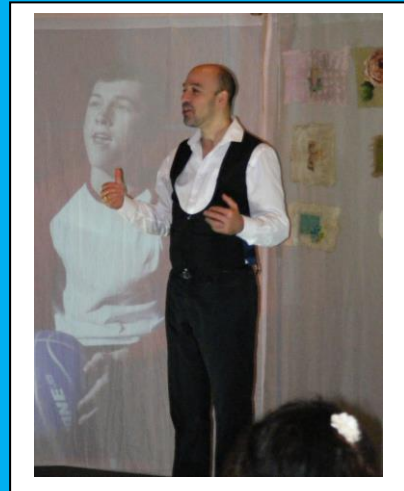
<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/re-council-newsletter-february-2018/>

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## Bicentenary Celebration at the Senedd

Christine Abbas



On January 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 Neeta Baicher, Rheinallt Thomas and Paula Webber were at the Bicentenary Celebration of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay. Together with guests from Interfaith, education, South Wales Police, artists and others from various backgrounds they joined members of the Bahá'í Faith at its first Welsh Assembly sponsored event.

On arrival guests enjoyed a rainbow coloured vegetarian buffet which the caterers said had been the inspiration of one of the chefs, originally from Israel. He had visited the Bahá'í gardens in Haifa and wanted to create a menu that reflected the beauty of the gardens.

After a time to meet and mingle there was a programme which shared some of the life of Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith through a drama storytelling by Ismael Valesco. He connected incidences in the life of Bahá'u'lláh to our own lives and the choices we make throughout our lives. At the end guests were invited to leave an inspiration or thought on a scroll, of anything which might have touched them about the story they'd heard. The messages were very sincere from simple 'get myself fit' to 'write my first book in memory of my mother' through to 'wanting to serve others' and 'accepting that we are all one.' There was a sense of unity, that although there are many things that are different between us, yet there is a desire to get closer to each other and to embrace those differences. Above everything we are all human beings.

Katy Treharne, a young professional singer from Blaenau, sang a piece especially composed for the event from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, in Welsh. She agreed at late notice after the original singers were unable to attend. She had attended the same schools as the children of Christine Abbas, who was one of the organisers of the event. Christine serves on the Blaenau Gwent SACRE.

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## AREIAC Summer Conference 2018: 'Reflecting Plurality in RE'



The Association of RE Advisers Inspectors and Consultants (AREIAC) summer conference will be taking place in Bristol on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.

The theme this year is 'reflecting plurality in RE' and speakers include Denise Cush, Professor of Religion and Education at Bath Spa University; Bob Jackson, Emeritus Professor, University of Warwick; and Dr Farid Panjwani, Director, Centre for Research and Evaluation in Muslim Education (CREME), UCL Institute of Education, University College London.

The conference is open to anyone interested in promoting excellence in RE and teachers are especially welcome. Delegates can attend for one or both days to benefit from a range of stimulating and thought-provoking key notes and workshops.

For more information and to make a booking please contact Gill Vaisey, Conference Organiser at [areiacconference@gmail.com](mailto:areiacconference@gmail.com) or visit the AREIAC website [www.areiac.org.uk](http://www.areiac.org.uk)



## New publication from WASACRE

### *Managing The Right of Withdrawal from RE*

The Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) has published this valuable and comprehensive guide for schools and parents. It provides advice and information around the right of parents to withdraw their children from religious education. The guide includes helpful sections on legislation; minimising situations that might lead to requests for withdrawal; suggestions for managing requests for withdrawal; case studies; the views of different religious and non-religious groups on religious education; consideration of whether requests are based on reasons of prejudice; and requests for withdrawal from visiting places of worship.

The document is produced bilingually in English and in Welsh and costs £8.99. Copies can be obtained via [Amazon](https://www.amazon.co.uk) or from [Books at Press](http://www.booksatpress.co.uk).

