

Religious Education and the New Curriculum for Wales

Welsh Government workshop 28 September 2018

Summary of updates

Presentations were given by Welsh Government, Professor Donaldson (video clip), P Webber and L Jones. Slides will be forwarded in due course to participants

Time was allowed for questions and suggestions from workshop participants

NB it was made clear that the new curriculum is still emerging

Main issues raised

1 Professor Donaldson:

- RE is integral to Humanities AoLE but has distinct contribution to make
- If separate subject would be vulnerable
- It will remain statutory but be strengthened as part of mainstream curriculum
- Need for learning to focus more on “purpose” rather than just “what” learned
- Importance of learners understanding nature of faith and belief
- RE is at centre of developing learners’ well-being
- SACREs will have a critical part to play in this developing curriculum

Feedback to this session:

- Changes to legislation?-not at present
- Possible “tweaks” to locally agreed syllabus to link to new curriculum
- Positive response from participants to integration of RE into Humanities
- New version of draft curriculum in progress-spirituality will be strengthened
- Changes will happen at end KS3-not same continuum
- Pity no science –RE link
- Reiteration of need for RE to be distinct because of right of withdrawal

2 Manon Jones WG:

- Wider policy issues described, e.g. nursery schools , 6th Forms, need to amend locally agreed syllabi to ensure local arrangements support integration of RE into Humanities curriculum. Group to be set up to draft a framework to support this

3 Paula Webber-how this framework might look:

- PW showed some drafts for participants to comment on “what matters statements”
- PW raised issues for participants to discuss and they contributed as follows:

E.g.-large number of changes to GCSE RE, involvement of learners, how will framework be translated into good practice? Will RE be easily identifiable? Yes as individual descriptors will not be lost. Concern re. lack of RE specialist teachers.

Knowledge skills and experience will be linked. Schools need freedom to plan but core knowledge needs to be in new curriculum. Was there value in a cross-consortia approach to support teachers? As RE sits in Humanities any training will support RE within this framework.

4 Libby Jones-the Supporting Framework for RE:

- LJ outlined the possible structure for the above, including link to Successful Futures, outline of the “What Matters” approach and the role of the Framework document-the latter could be the Agreed Syllabus. In addition there would be an input from Professor Donaldson
- LJ underlined the importance of involving all in process-local authorities, consortia, schools, Challenge Advisers, SACREs
- Withdrawal from RE should be very much be an exception in new framewo-14 statements to be considered as core
- LJ set out ideas for “What’s essential in RE”.

Feedback to above included: need for advice on how RE can contribute to cross-curricular elements, how the AoLE supports the 4 Core purposes, role of the SACREs in all this.