

Matters relating to Religious Education in the current and new curriculum

Ensuring quality provision in your
Local Authority (LA)

Religious Education and Collective Worship

Every school must by law provide religious education and daily collective worship for all its pupils (currently this includes those in reception classes and sixth forms), with the exception of those pupils who are withdrawn from these activities by their parents

Local Responsibility

- Detailed arrangements for the provision of religious education and collective worship are properly a matter of local responsibility
- LAs must adopt a locally agreed syllabus for religious education, as recommended by their Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), for implementation in their maintained and Voluntary Controlled schools and review their locally agreed syllabus every five years.

The Broad role of a SACRE is:

- To support the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in schools. Each LA should work with its SACRE whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools.
- Similarly it should work with its SACRE to monitor the provision of collective worship and to consider any action which might be taken to improve such provision. (Welsh Office Circular 10/94)

Duties in law

The LA:

- To establish (and fund) a standing advisory council on religious education – including appointing members
- To convene (and fund) agreed syllabus conferences in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 5
- To adopt an agreed syllabus for maintained and voluntary controlled schools (and review every 5 years)
- To notify the Secretary of State when a new syllabus is agreed

SACRE:

- To advise the LA on matters relating to RE and Collective Worship
- To vote on requiring an agreed syllabus review
- To publish an annual report
- To consider determinations from Head teachers

Roles and responsibilities include...

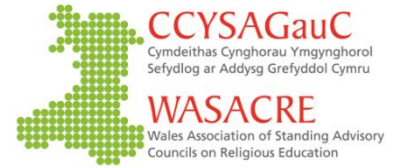
The LA

- Considering the advice offered from its SACRE on matters relating to RE and Collective Worship
- Considering curriculum complaints on RE and collective worship
- Monitoring compliance in RE and Collective worship
- Supporting and facilitating the agreed syllabus conference
- Supporting schools in ensuring quality provision of RE and Collective worship

SACRE

- Preparation of agenda and papers for SACRE meetings
- Ensuring all members' have up to date knowledge of current and new RE legislation and guidance
- Writing annual reports
- Dealing with determinations
- Dealing with withdrawal issues
- Representing SACRE at regional and national meetings (WASACRE/NAPfRE)
- Training and professional learning

Professional RE support



- Professional Support is vital for LAs and SACREs to carry out statutory duties and responsibilities effectively
- The most effective support comes in the form of a dedicated, specialist RE Advisor
- Many SACREs in Wales currently do not have this support
- As a result some SACREs are struggling to carry out basic functions and may risk not meeting requirements set out in law and will not be effective

Summary of current support

- 11 LA's have a dedicated advisory support to SACRE - 6 of which are RE specialists (LA or Regional basis) and 5 are supported by a non-specialist.
- 4 LA's utilize a serving teacher acting as RE advisor for the LA - 1 has some days off timetable to fulfil the role extra to SACRE meetings
- 3 have a non-specialist already working within the LA who carries out basic duties additional to their usual role
- 4 have not confirmed

Accountability and consistency

- Some consortia have responsibility for supporting SACREs, as part of an agreement with each LA
- Other Consortia have recently withdrawn support
- Some support has always remained with the LA
- Legally RE and SACRE is an LA responsibility
- A dialogue needs to take place between LA's and Consortia to establish and agree where this support will come from
- It is the view of WASACRE and NAPfRE that there should be consistency across LA's in the level of support for each SACRE to ensure parity of provision

RE and the new curriculum for Wales

- Forms part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience
- Will be a statutory curriculum requirement from 3 - 16
- Will have parity with other subjects whilst retaining local responsibility
- Agreed syllabi will pay due regard to the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience
- Has parity with other statutory elements - Welsh and Relationships and Sexuality Education (guidance is being developed for each)

RE Framework

- Following consultation with SACREs Welsh Government is developing a new supporting framework for Religious Education
- This will provide detail about how the Humanities AoLE What Matters statements can be achieved in relation to RE
- It is hoped that Agreed Syllabus Conferences will consider recommending to their LA's that this framework should be adopted/adapted to form their agreed syllabus.

Professional Learning



- Without specialist advisory support LA's struggle to fulfil their duty to offer PL to schools for RE and Collective Worship
- WASACRE and NAPfRE are engaging with Welsh Government to discuss PL for RE in the new curriculum
- How, without specialist RE Advisers, will LAs fulfil their duty to provide professional learning for RE when the new curriculum is rolled out?
- This needs to be considered now, given the current situation with regards to RE expertise in Wales.

Estyn Thematic Report: recommendations



Local authorities and regional consortia should:

R5 - Work with SACREs to provide:

- a. suitable professional learning opportunities for teachers of religious education
- b. support for schools to evaluate their curriculum and plan for religious education as an integral part of the development of the humanities area of learning and experience
- c. advice for schools on how to address sensitive issues with pupils and how to deal with parental concerns on visiting places of worship

R6 - Ensure that all leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

R7 - Provide schools with guidance on approved places of worship to visit

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/religious-education-key-stage-2-and-key-stage-3>

Next steps

- Dialogue between Consortia and LA's to establish and agree who is providing support for RE and SACREs
- Consideration of specialist RE Advisers to support SACREs
- Consistency in the level of support provided for RE and collective worship in LA's across Wales
- Consideration of how LA's are going to support professional learning for RE in the current and new curriculum

Thank you

Should you require support or have any questions on any of the points made please contact:

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