

Annual Report

Of

Flintshire

Standing Advisory Council

For Religious Education

2021-2022

Foreword

This is an exciting time for our work with Religious Education in Wales, as we move towards the implementation of the new curriculum, including Religion, Values & Ethics (RVE), from September 2022.

It has also been a very busy time for SACREs across Wales as Agreed Syllabus Conferences have been convened to prepare and recommend an agreed syllabus for RVE for the local authority to adopt.

We know that the new curriculum is very much focused on making provision for learners to develop an appreciation of belonging (in their locality, Wales, and the wider world) and to experience the natural world, value the environment and work towards sustainable futures for all.

In each of our local communities, wherever we are in Wales, our schools and their learners have a very rich history, alongside their lived experiences of our vibrant communities today, to draw on and learn from.

Here in Flintshire, we have our wonderfully diverse natural environment, our vibrant religious traditions, as well as many opportunities to celebrate arts and culture, and in particular, our Welsh history and culture.

RVE within the Curriculum for Wales can offer a distinctive contribution to the realisation of the four purposes for all learners. There are so many opportunities through RVE for learners to experience a curriculum that is engaging; and as a SACRE, we have taken time to reflect the 4 purposes of the new curriculum for Wales:

Supporting learners to become

- Ambitious and capable, ready to learn throughout their lives,
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work and as
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Chair of SACRE
2021 -2022

Chief Education Officer
2021 -2022

The role of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education:

The principal roles of SACRE are:

- advising the local authority on matters to do with Religious Education and Collective Worship, or Spiritual and Moral Development
- Consideration of applications from Headteachers that their school be released from the statutory requirements for Collective Worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character (Determinations)
- Require a Local Authority to review its Agreed Syllabus
- Monitor the provision of Religious Education, collective worship, and spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development in the schools of the Local Authority
- Give advice on teaching the Agreed Syllabus, including choice of materials
- Advising the Local authority on the training for teachers of Religious Education
- Considering complaints about the provision and delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship made to the Local Authority
- To publish an Annual Report on its work.

The composition of SACRE:

The statutory requirements for the setting up of SACREs require three committees of members:

Committee A: the makeup of which will vary from SACRE to SACRE as, by law, the diversity of various religious and non-religious belief groups within the locality should be taken into account.

Committee B: usually made up of representatives of professional teacher associations. It is usual for there to be representation also from the head teachers' associations.

Committee C: It is the responsibility of the local authority to provide their own representatives for this committee. In practice usually they are elected members. The LA may wish to have all parties and viewpoints from across the political spectrum represented on the SACRE.

Details such as the numbers of members in each of the committees will usually be set out in the individual SACRE's constitution. There is also the right to co-opt members

Officers to SACRE usually include the Director of Education, or their representative. In addition, professional support to SACRE is usually provided by a specialist RE Adviser.

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The Annual Report

Advice given by the Local Authority

(a) Religious Education

The Agreed Syllabus

Flintshire SACRE adopted the “National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 3–19-year-old pupils” as the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Flintshire in 2008. This continued to be the basis of the Agreed Syllabus for Flintshire primary schools until September 2022 and for Flintshire secondary schools until September 2023.

Flintshire Local Authority convened the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) on 9th February 2022 and 17th March 2022. The ASC made the recommendation to the Local Authority to adopt the Religion, Values and Ethics guidance in its entirety as the Local Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics - to be implemented in line with the roll out of the new curriculum across the different phases of education.

For all primary schools in Flintshire therefore, this will replace the current Agreed Syllabus with effect from September 2022. For secondary schools in Flintshire, this will replace the current Agreed Syllabus (extended until fully replaced) as the new curriculum is rolled out from September 2023.

From September 2022, there will be no parental right to request withdrawal from RVE in respect of all learners up to and including year 6, as the Curriculum for Wales will be implemented by all primary schools and settings for learners aged 3 -11 from this date. With respect of secondary schools, there will be flexibility with regard to when they begin the roll out of the new curriculum.

For secondary schools in Flintshire the right to withdraw will remain for year 7 learners in the academic year 2022/23, as it will for years 8-11.

From September 2023, there will be no right to withdraw for years 7 and 8 learners, as all secondary schools and settings will have begun the roll out of the Curriculum for Wales for those year groups. After September 2023, the phased roll-out of the Curriculum for Wales will continue and the right to withdraw will be removed for:

- Year 9 learners in September 2024
- Year 10 learners in September 2025
- Year 11 learners in September 2026

Standards

Within the Estyn inspection framework there are no subject judgements within inspection reports. Instead, members usually receive information from the reports relating to Estyn’s comments on a school’s provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC).

Prior to the pandemic, Estyn had already announced that during 2020-2021 they would pause their inspection work in maintained schools and pupil referral units (PRUs). Instead, they planned to visit providers in these sectors to find out how well they were planning and preparing for the rollout of the Curriculum for Wales and additional learning needs (ALN) reform. The pandemic meant that they could only visit a few providers during the year, mainly in the summer term. No inspection reports were presented to SACRE therefore during 2021 -2022.

As COVID-19 restrictions lifted, Estyn resumed face-to-face visits to a small number of providers. This included some engagement activity, pastoral visits to schools in statutory category, and a very few inspections and monitoring visits. Estyn piloted their inspection approaches in maintained schools and Pupil Referral Units during 2021/2022 to ensure that they support the development of Curriculum for Wales and encourage improvement.

Performance Measures

As a result of the covid pandemic, Welsh Government suspended the calculation and publication of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 academic years.

Qualification awards data was not therefore used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level. As a result, SACRE members did not discuss comparative examination data for Religious Studies examinations awarded in summer 2022.

Methods of Teaching

Flintshire SACRE and the local authority have previously provided comprehensive documents and materials in support of the Agreed Syllabus, and these contain advice on methods of teaching and delivery of Religious Education.

The role of Flintshire SACRE is to support schools and teachers with advice and guidance on implementing a new or revised Agreed Syllabus. Given that RVE is very much integral to the new Curriculum for Wales, the regional professional development programme, provided by GwE, for curriculum design and development of Areas of Learning Experiences is also very relevant to developing RVE and implementing the new Agreed Syllabus. GwE also facilitated professional development sessions for Unpacking the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AOLE), aimed at secondary teachers of Humanities, including Religious Education.

Members of SACRE also committed to ensure that this is part of an ongoing dialogue with schools to ensure that RVE becomes fully and embedded within the curriculum.

SACRE does not formally advise schools in the matter of purchasing teaching resources as this is a matter for school themselves.

Resources Recommended

Guidance documents provided by SACRE previously continue to be available to schools. In addition, advice is offered in response to specific requests.

Through the WASACRE, Welsh Government have supported some additional development work for RVE nationally, to produce some focused professional learning resources to support schools on embedding RVE within the curriculum. That work is almost complete and will be shared with all schools via Hwb as soon as available. Flintshire SACRE has recommended these professional learning resources to schools in support of the new Agreed Syllabus.

Schools are encouraged as part of effective school to school collaboration to facilitate opportunities for Religious Education teachers to share resources relevant for GCSE and A level courses.

Collective Worship

As part of the usual process of monitoring, Estyn inspection reports are analysed in relation to Collective Worship, spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC). These are compiled and noted by SACRE. Letters are sent to schools following consideration by SACRE, commending any good practice and offering support as necessary. However, the pandemic meant that Estyn could only visit a few providers during the year, mainly in the summer term.

As COVID-19 restrictions lifted, Estyn resumed face-to-face visits to a small number of providers. This included some engagement activity, pastoral visits to schools in statutory category, and a very few inspections and monitoring visits. Estyn piloted their inspection approaches in maintained schools and Pupil Referral Units during 2021/2022.

No INSET has been provided for Collective Worship in the current academic year.

The Estyn supplementary guidance on inspecting collective worship was updated in April 2018.

WASACRE published guidance for school on the right of withdrawal from Collective Worship during the autumn of 2021. This is available on WASACRE's website.

Determinations

There were no requests for determinations in 2021-2022.

2. Other Matters

Local

Flintshire primary and secondary schools are reminded of the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

During the year, members continued to hold meetings virtually.

SACRE reviewed its terms of reference during the year.

National

Welsh Government

Welsh Government published their Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance in spring term 2022. Revisions to legislation require Agreed Syllabus Conferences to have due regard to this guidance when developing their Agreed Syllabus.

Estyn

SACRE received an update on changes to Estyn inspections. Estyn has introduced new inspection arrangements for schools and PRUs. These are being implemented from September 2022. The main changes are:

- Inspection reports will no longer include summative gradings (e.g., 'Excellent', 'Good' or 'Adequate'). Rather than focusing on a grading, reports will detail how well providers are helping a child to learn. A key overview of findings will be included in the report headline focusing on a school's strengths and areas for development.
- Estyn will produce a separate report summary for parents which will allow parents to access the key information they need about an inspection quickly.
- There is no change to the statutory categories of special measures and significant improvement. Estyn review will also be retained and Estyn will continue to share innovative or effective practice.
- The notice period for inspections has been reduced, following feedback, from 15 to 10 working days.

Over the next few years, Estyn will be working with partners and stakeholders to gather views as they look to further evolve their inspection framework, including moving to 4.

3. Appendices:

(s) Composition of SACRE:

Representing Flintshire County Council: (September 2021– April 2022)

Councillor Chris Bithell, Councillor Janet Axworthy, Councillor Marion Bateman, Councillor Paul Cunningham, Councillor Adele Davies-Cooke, Councillor Colin Legg, Councillor Dave Mackie and Councillor Ian Roberts

Representing Flintshire County Council: (May 2022 – August 2022)

Councillor Marion Bateman, Councillor Paul Cunningham, Councillor Adele Davies-Cooke, Councillor Dave Mackie, Councillor Roz Mansell, Councillor Debbie Owen, Councillor Andrew Parkhurst and Councillor Ian Roberts

Representing Religious Denominations:

Church in Wales Representatives (St Asaph Diocese) Jennie Downes, Marina Parsons

Roman Catholic Representatives (Wrexham Diocese); Wendy White, John Morgan

Presbyterian Church of Wales; Rev. Huw Powell Davies

Representing Teacher Associations

Secondary Headteachers; Catherine McCormack

Primary Heads Federation; Simon Percy

Secondary RE Specialist; Lyn Oakes

College Representative Deeside VI; Robert Hughes

Primary Classroom Teachers; Amira Mattar

Special School Representative; Julian Lewis

(b) Dates of meetings:

- 7th October 2021
- 25th November 2021
- 9th February 2022

- 9th February 2022 and 17th March 2022 Agreed Syllabus Conference

(c) Organisations receiving the report

- Welsh Government
- Flintshire Schools
- The report is also available via the Flintshire Council Website and on the WASACRE for interested organisations.