

To The Headteachers of all Secondary and Special schools

Summer 2017

Statutory Requirements for Religious Education

Dear Headteacher

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) has asked me to bring to your attention the statutory requirements for Religious Education in state maintained schools. As the curriculum review is getting under way it is believed that some schools are confused as to the status of agreed syllabuses in schools and this letter is being sent to outline to schools what are the statutory requirements for Religious Education.

As I am sure you are aware Religious Education is part of the basic curriculum and therefore sits outside the National Curriculum. The RE curriculum is locally determined by the LA and its SACRE. This means that there is a statutory requirement for LA's to provide Religious Education according to an agreed syllabus and monitor that statutory requirements are being adhered to by schools. With regard to the position of the Agreed Syllabus for RE it was re-adopted in 2013 and therefore the current syllabus stays in place with an understanding that the syllabus will be reviewed once the shape of the new Donaldson curriculum is defined. There would need to be a change in legislation for the delivery of RE according to an agreed syllabus to be rescinded.

Professor Donaldson report *Successful Futures - Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales* recommended that *Religious education should form part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience, and should remain a statutory curriculum requirement from reception.*

SACRE is aware that the Pioneer schools are now meeting in order to shape the new curriculum. Until such time as the detail of the AOLE are shaped and a review of the agreed syllabus takes place then SACRE wish to ensure that schools understand that **coverage of the programmes of study of the locally agreed syllabus is the main statutory requirement.**

I attach a copy of the current agreed syllabus for RE where you can see the programmes of study for all key stages in the secondary school on pages 27-29.

SACRE is particularly interested in the delivery of **Religious Education at KS4**. Some schools appear confused regarding statutory requirements at KS4 and we would like to draw your attention to the programme of study which can be found on pages 27-29. Many schools in Wales are providing statutory RE by following either a GCSE Short Course or a GCSE Full Course or a combination of the two courses. SACRE wish to inform you that this would fulfil statutory requirements as long as **all** pupils are receiving religious education whether or not they are entered for accreditation.

Some schools are delivering RE at KS4 within the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ). In 2016, the Wales Association of SACREs conducted a survey of the impact of the WBQ on religious education in schools across Wales. SACRE understands that some schools believe that coverage of the Global Citizenship element of WBQ is sufficient to cover the RE requirements. SACRE would like to ensure that schools understand that the Global Citizenship unit alone would not be sufficient to cover all aspects of the agreed syllabus programmes of study as outlined on pages 30-31 of the agreed syllabus. The WASACRE survey (2016) showed that in some cases WBQ had some positive impact when schools increased the time allocation for RE within the WBQ so that all aspects of the agreed syllabus could be covered. That has to be measured against those schools who commented that the introduction of the WBQ was having a negative effect on RE such as loss of Short Course accreditation, over use of non specialists in the teaching of RE and RE subject specific skills being sacrificed to cover the more generic skills of WBQ.

SACRE would like schools to confirm receipt of this information by completing the attached pro forma below and returning to the Clerk to SACRE. The pro-forma concentrates on delivery at KS4 in particular because this is the area most identified as of concern to teachers of RE and also identified as raising issues in the WASACRE survey. Schools providing this information enables the LA and its SACRE to fulfil

its monitoring role of RE in the curriculum and be assured that statutory requirements according to the agreed syllabus for RE are being met.

SACRE hope that this information is useful to you.

Yours sincerely

(LA representative on SACRE)

Name of School _____
Name of Staff member completing pro forma _____
Position in school _____

I have read and understood the statutory requirements for RE at all key stages **YES/ NO (please circle)**

How is RS/RE delivered at KS4?

Please tick ALL relevant comments below:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All/nearly all pupils receive RE according to the agreed syllabus | How many classes? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All/nearly all pupils undertake a full course RS GCSE qualification | How many classes? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All/nearly all pupils undertake a short course RS qualification | How many classes? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All/nearly all pupils receive statutory RE during Welsh Bacc lessons | How many classes? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some pupils undertake a full course RS GCSE qualification | How many classes? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some pupils undertake a short course RS qualification | How many classes? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some pupils receive statutory RE during Welsh Bacc lessons | How many classes? _____ |

Other (Please Specify)

Please could you describe how KS4 is timetabled: (e.g. one weekly 60 minute lesson)

Who delivers KS4 RS/RE lessons?

- All KS4 pupils are taught by specialist RS teachers
- Most KS4 pupils are taught by specialist RS teachers
- Few KS4 pupils are taught by specialist RS teachers
- No KS4 pupils are taught by specialist RS teachers

Any further comments:

We are collating information about the new RS specifications at KS4, if you have any comments on the examinations you would like SACRE to know about, please include them here.