

Public Document Pack



County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Thursday, 2 February 2017

Notice of meeting:

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

**Friday, 10th February, 2017 at 1.30 pm
Rooms 6 & 7, Innovation House, Wales 1 Business Park,
Magor NP26 3DG**

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence.	
2.	Declarations of interest.	
3.	Minutes and actions from the previous meeting.	1 - 10
4.	Curriculum development update:	
4.1.	NAPfRE 'What Is Good RE?' document (Verbal Update).	
4.2.	Report from meeting with Manon Jones (Welsh Government) (Verbal update).	
5.	New GCSE Specification for Wales Local Authority grant to support non-core subject teachers with new GCSE specifications - current developments.	11 - 12
6.	WASACRE.	
6.1.	To receive and note the draft minutes from the WASACRE meeting dated 18th November 2016.	13 - 20
6.2.	Preparations for hosting WASACRE on 3rd March 2017.	21 - 22
6.3.	Nominations for WASACRE Executive Committee.	23 - 30

6.4.	To note the dates of future WASACRE meetings.	
7.	SACRE News Bulletin.	
7.1.	To receive the Autumn 2016 News Bulletin.	31 - 40
7.2.	Draft SACRE News Bulletin for the Spring term.	41 - 44
7.3.	Information briefings from members for inclusion in the next SACRE News Bulletin.	
8.	To note the proposal for Estyn Thematic Review of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in 2017 / 2018.	45 - 54
9.	To consider Religious Diversity in Primary Schools Project.	
10.	To set and note dates and venue of meetings:	
10.1.	For 2016 / 2017: 9th June 2017.	
10.2.	For 2017 / 2018.	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

E. Hacket Pain

P. Clarke

A. Easson

J. George

D. Jones

B. Strong

Representing the Church in Wales (1)

Mrs V. Howells

Representing the Roman Catholic Church (1)

Mr. R. Cottrell

Representing Free Churches (4)

Baptist: Revd. Dr P. Baines

The Salvation Army: Major S. Wilson

Vacancy

Representing the Bahá'í Faith (1)

Mrs S. Cave

Representing the Buddhist Faith (1)

Shé-zér Khandro

Representing the Hindu Faith (1)

Mr S. Sharma

Representing the Jewish Faith (1)

Mr A. Davidson

Representing the Sikh Faith (1)

Mrs N Baicher

Representing the Muslim Faith (1)

Mrs F Jilani

Representing the Teachers Associations (7)

Mr A. Jones
Mrs R. Davies
Ms C. Cooper
Ms S. Perry Phillips
Ms M. Millington
Mrs J. Thomas
Mr. S. Oram

Co-opted Members (2)

Mrs K. Fitter
Mr. T. Thomas

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Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Outcomes we are working towards

Nobody Is Left Behind

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

People Are Confident, Capable and Involved

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

Our County Thrives

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of SACRE held
at Rooms 6 & 7 Innovation House Magor on Tuesday, 15th November, 2016 at 1.30 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor E.J. Hacket Pain (Chair)

County Councillors: A. Easson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Gill Vaisey	RE Consultant
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Roman Catholic Church	Mr. R. Cottrell
Buddhist Faith	Ms. S. Khandro
Teachers' Associations	Mr. A. Jones, Ms. S. Perry-Phillips, Mr. S. Oram
Co-opted Members	Ms. K. Fitter, Mr. T. Thomas

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: P. Clarke, J. George, D. Jones and B. Strong

Mrs. V. Howells, Revd. Dr. P. Baines, Mrs. S. Cave, Mrs. F. Jilani, Mrs. N. Baicher and Ms. M. Millington

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 10th June 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendment:

Page 5, agenda item 13 – SACRE News Bulletin, first bullet point:

Children from Monmouth Comprehensive School had visited Auschwitz and Krakow in Poland which had proved to be a very moving experience for teachers and students.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A teacher representative advised the Committee that the correct version of the RE Levels within the Incerts Programme were now highlighted in bold.
- The Goytre Fawr Primary School RE Day had been included in the RE Newsletter.
- SACRE Committee's nominations for the WASACRE Executive Committee had been successful, namely, Mary Parry, Huw Stephens and Mathew Maidment.

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- Curriculum Review – WASACRE had recently provided feedback on its view regarding progress in respect of the development of the new curriculum. It was noted that partnership working with schools was expected. Teacher representatives expressed concern that schools were not being kept up to date with regard to developments.
- A response was being awaited from the Education Achievement Service with regard to the invitation that had been extended inviting representatives to attend a SACRE Committee meeting.

3. Feedback from the RE Day at Caldicot School (school evaluation forms and responses from pupils)

We received feedback from Caldicot School regarding the RE Day that was held on 28th June 2016.

SACRE Members were pleased with the results of the event as many positive responses had been received. Pupils had taken part in and experienced different workshops and had gained valuable insight into various faiths.

We thanked the RE Adviser, teachers and the faith representatives for their involvement.

4. Training event for faith representatives and teachers - sharing faith provider workshops

We agreed that the RE Adviser and the Head of Achievement and Attainment would consult with primary school head teachers about the possible demand for a training event for faith representatives and teachers around the theme 'sharing faith provider workshops'.

5. Get recognition for your SACRE

The RE Adviser informed Members that Monmouthshire SACRE had been invited to apply for the 2017 Accord Inclusivity Award, which seeks to reward SACRE's that work hardest in their area towards boosting the growth of inclusion, cohesion and mutual understanding between those of different religions and beliefs. The Chair had decided to apply for the recognition and would complete the application form on behalf of the Committee.

6. Presentation regarding WASACRE collation of survey responses from schools

We received a presentation from WASACRE, presented by the RE Adviser, regarding the new Welsh BaccaLaureate and RE. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- 16 out of 22 SACRE's were able to send in returns from their schools.
- 70 schools in total completed the survey.

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Responses to the following questions were received:

Q1. Since the implementation of the new Welsh Baccalaureate, does your school provide statutory Religious Education according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE at Key Stage 4?

10 schools said no (14%).
60 schools said yes (86%).

40 schools provided details to support their answer.

Q2. Since the implementation of the new Welsh Baccalaureate, does your school offer a Religious Studies GCSE qualification as one of the supporting qualifications for Welsh Baccalaureate at Key Stage 4?

11 schools said no (16%).
59 schools said yes (84%).

28 schools provided details to support their answer.

Q2.a) If yes, is the RS GCSE course taught within: a) Core RE time (for all Key Stage pupils), b) Option only, c) other?

32 schools (46%) said a) Core RE time.
21 schools (30%) said b) Option only.
11 schools (16%) said c) other.

29 schools provided details to support their answer.

Q3. Has the new Welsh Baccalaureate had more of a positive / negative or no impact on RE?

47 schools (67%) said no impact.
11 schools (16%) said positive impact.
12 schools (17%) said negative impact.

1 school provided details to support its answer.

SACRE Members were surprised by the figures.

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Q4. How has the new Welsh Baccalaureate had a positive effect on RE in your school?

Q5. How has the new Welsh Baccalaureate had a negative effect on RE in your school?

20 negative responses (40%).
28 positive responses (60%).

Q6. Do you require any support from your local SACRE?

8 schools (11%) said yes.
53 schools (76%) said no.
9 schools (13%) gave no answer.

23 schools provided details to support their answer.

We resolved to receive the presentation and noted its content.

7. Advice from Welsh Government on non-compliance of RE

We received a letter regarding advice from Welsh Government to SACRE's on non-compliance of RE requirements in light of the new Welsh baccalaureate.

Welsh Government had been asked at a WASACRE Executive meeting to confirm what action could be taken by SACRE's in the event of a school or schools within their local Authority, that, as a result of the new Welsh Baccalaureate qualification are currently not meeting their statutory requirement for Religious Education in Key stage 4.

The advice given was as follows:

- In the first instance, SACRE's are advised to formally inform / advise the local authority.
- If the situation remains the same and the school or schools involved continue to not meet the statutory requirement for RE, SACRE's are advised to inform the Wales Association of SACRE's.
- WASACRE is advised to write to the local authority involved to advise / remind them of their duty.
- WASACRE is advised to pass the information on to Welsh Government.

We resolved to receive the information and noted its content.

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8. Situation in Monmouthshire schools

We received a verbal update on the situation in Monmouthshire's schools. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Each of the four secondary schools have a different approach to the provision of RE alongside the Welsh Bacculaureate.
- Two schools are currently fully complying with the requirements to provide RE.
- One school is not fully complying with statutory requirements to provide RE for all pupils as some pupils only have RE as an element of the Welsh Bacculaureate.
- One school is still in the process of determining how it will provide for RE alongside the Welsh Bacculaureate.
- Some Schools are confident of meeting the required measures whilst others are not.
- Uptake for the full RE Course at GCSE is high.
- There is high uptake at A Level for subjects linked to RE.
- In one school (Year 10) there is an option to take RE at Key Stage 4, then at Key Stage 5, but the situation is reviewed annually.
- The Welsh Bacculaureate is now established.
- Some schools are confident of meeting the required measures.
- It is heartening to see that there is a good uptake for RE.
- There is a statutory requirement to provide RE provision up to post school education. Concern was expressed that the Welsh Bacculaureate might not be able to provide full RE provision.
- Monmouth School has attempted to support RE provision by integrating it into the Welsh Bacculaureate curriculum but it has been difficult to achieve as there has been pressure put on non-professional staff having to prepare students for GCSE qualification. It is difficult to achieve full RE provision in the time available.
- It was necessary to recognise the position that school were being put in.
- The Head of Achievement and Attainment stated that she would take back the issues raised and discuss with the schools concerned.
- Caldicot School has fought to divorce RE provision from the Welsh Bacculaureate and has designated time in Year 10 for RE Provision. RE provision is taught by specialists.

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Having received the verbal update and the views expressed, we resolved that the Chair and the RE Adviser would prepare a letter to be shown to SACRE members before being sent to Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education, outlining the SACRE Committee's concerns. A copy of the letter would also be sent to WASACRE.

We resolved to receive the verbal update and noted its content.

9. WJEC accredited RS Specification

We received the WJEC accredited Religious Studies specification which meets the GCSE Qualification Criteria to be taught in Wales from September 2017.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The specification contained a heavy emphasis on Christian concepts and theology.
- It was too heavy and systematic and there was a fear that students might not enjoy the course which in turn, might affect take up of the subject.
- It will be difficult to achieve via the RE short course.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content and will monitor the take up of the course and pupils' achievements in future examinations.

10. Local Authority grant to support non-core subject teachers with new GCSE specifications - feedback on current developments

We were informed that the NAPfRE group has been advised that Welsh Government has made available to each Consortia funding to support non-core subject teachers in working together to prepare for the new GCSE specifications.

The Head of Achievement and Attainment stated that she will follow this matter up with the EAS.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

11. Judicial Review of the Religious Studies GCSE in England

We received the following information:

- Response to High Court Ruling from Dr. Satvinder Juss on Religious Studies GCSE and including non-religious views in RE.
- Guidance documentation produced by the British Humanist Association.
- Response from the Department for Education in England.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

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- The document referring to the High Court ruling on Religious Education is not an official document. The author seems to be promoting the inclusion of Humanism in school studies.
- The document entitled 'Supporting Schools in Teaching Humanism' is an educationally sound document and refers to a useful website with concrete teaching materials contained within it. Resources for teachers are being provided.

We resolved to receive the documentation and noted the content.

12. Draft minutes from WASACRE meeting 23rd June 2016

We received the minutes of the WASCRE meeting held on 23rd June 2016. In doing so, the following points were noted:

Guidance on managing the right of withdrawal from Religious Education

The guidance would help parents if they have withdrawn or were thinking of withdrawing their children from RE provision. The document has been out for consultation and positive responses have been received. Support from faith groups has also been good. The document will be published and made available to all schools.

We resolved to receive the minutes and noted its content.

13. Preparations for hosting WASACRE 3rd March 2017

We received the preparation check list for hosting WASACRE on 3rd March 2017. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Gwent Music will provide some musical entertainment on the day.
- A combination of primary and secondary schools will also provide musical entertainment.
- A display board of Monmouthshire SACRE members will be available. This could be extended to include faith displays.
- Rooms have been booked and refreshments will be provided.
- Heads of RE in Monmouthshire schools are invited to attend.
- The Chairman of the Council has also been invited to attend.

We resolved to receive the update and noted its content.

14. Draft Annual Report 2015 / 2016

We noted the draft annual report 2015/16.

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15. Monmouth Comprehensive School Self Evaluation report

We received the Monmouth Comprehensive School self-evaluation report.

The school had indicated an excellent / good rating in respect of the key questions outlined in the report.

It was noted that the Key Stage 5 information had inadvertently been omitted. This information would be provided by Sharon Perry Phillips.

We resolved that the RE Adviser should write to the Head Teacher congratulating the school on producing a good self-evaluation report.

16. Kymin View Primary Self Evaluation report

We received the Kymin View Primary School self-evaluation report and it was noted that the school had produced a detailed and positive report.

We resolved that the RE Adviser should write to the Head Teacher congratulating the school on producing a good self-evaluation report.

17. SACRE News Bulletin draft Autumn 2016

We received the draft Autumn 2016 SACRE News Bulletin. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The News Bulletin will be finalised and available from the end of November / early December 2016.
- The draft Annual Report 2015/16 could be made available via a weblink.
- The Buddhist Faith representative will write an article for the News Bulletin regarding fundraising for a rural retreat in rural Wales.
- Two faith schools have been inspected.
- Section 50 training will shortly be held.
- The Roman Catholic Church representative will write an article for the News Bulletin regarding a retreat that he had attended recently at Llantarnam Abbey.
- Simon Oram will write an article for the News Bulletin regarding the Faith Day that was held at his school.
- Information regarding Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 will be outlined in the News Bulletin.
- Information regarding Farmington Scholarship opportunities 2017-2018 will be outlined in the News Bulletin.

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We resolved to receive the News Bulletin update and noted its content.

18. Dates and venues of meetings for 2016 / 2017

The next meetings of the SACRE Committee are as follows:

Friday 10th February 2017 at 1.30pm – Innovation House Magor.

Tuesday 23rd May 2017 at 1.30pm – County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm

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EAS WEEKLY BULLETIN ITEM
EITEM BWLETIN WYTHNOSOL GCA

TITLE / TEITL:	GCSE Religious Studies
DATE / DYDDIAD:	26/01/16
SERVICE AREA / MAES:	Wider Curriculum
SECTOR/: (Primary / Secondary) (Cynradd / Uwchradd)	Secondary
ACTION REQUIRED:	<p>To provide support for non-core WJEC GCSE subjects first teaching September 2017 EAS is looking to appoint a lead schools for Religious Studies</p> <p>The successful department will receive £4,900 to develop a support programme for the new GCSEs.</p> <p>Supporting activities are likely to include: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Promoting the development of resources for the new GCSEs 2) The running of half-termly network meetings for HODs to share good practice (resources and pedagogies) and develop an understanding of the requirements of the new Specifications (assessment etc.) 3) Run at least one teach-meet style event (twilight) open to all practitioners to share most effective lesson ideas. <p><i>*Full details will be agreed on a subject by subject basis dependent upon needs arising from a survey of practitioner</i></p>

	<p><i>requirements.</i></p> <p>Departments are invited to apply using the online application form provided at the link below: -</p> <p>English: -</p> <p>http://goo.gl/forms/QV1yA4ZEwC4a0IJW2</p> <p>Cymraeg: -</p> <p>http://goo.gl/forms/620qxfMjk9Pjyc3W2</p> <p>Closing date for applications is: Friday 3rd February, 5pm</p> <p>Successful schools will be notified by Tuesday 7th February.</p> <p>Successful schools will be selected on the basis of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Last three years of performance data in KS4 * Direction of travel of data * Relative performance of FSM pupils * Staffing capacity to support the running of the support programme * Approaches to teaching and learning * Options numbers (proportionate to year group size)
<p>CONTACT / CYSWLLT:</p>	<p>For any further clarification please contact: -</p> <p>James.kent@sewaleseas.org.uk</p>



Cyfarfod Cymdeith as CYSAG au Cymru,

Wales Association of SACREs meeting, Carmarthenshire

Attendance

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Bethan James Rheinallt A. Thomas</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Phil Lord</p>	<p>Powys John Mitson Margaret Evitts</p>
<p>Blaenau Gwent Gill Vaisey</p>	<p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Phil Lord</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Paula Webber Mathew Maidment</p>
<p>Pen-y-bontar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans Vicky Thomas</p>	<p>Gwynedd Bethan James</p>	<p>Abertawe / Swansea Vicky Thomas Brinley Jones Alison Lewis</p>
<p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Vicky Thomas John Taylor Enlys Hawthorn Janet Jones</p>	<p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Gill Vaisey</p>	<p>Torfaen /Torfaen Vicky Thomas Daniel Foster</p>
<p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Gill Vaisey Janet Jones</p>	<p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot</p>	<p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Paula Webber Dafydd Treharne</p>
<p>Casnewydd / Newport Vicky Thomas Huw Stephens</p>	<p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire Mary Parry</p>	<p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Samantha Jesson Ruth Holden</p>
<p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Mary Parry</p>		<p>Sylwedyddion / Observers Emlyn Doyle (Cyngor Sir Fâr?) Tudor Thomas (REMW) Kathy Riddick (Wales Humanists) Vaughan Salisbury (CYSAG Ceredigion) Jean Lewis (Cyngor Sir Gâr CYSAG CAERFYRDDIN) Gwyneth Thomas (Cyngor Sir Gâr CYSAG CAERFYRDDIN)</p>
<p>Ceredigion Alwen Roberts</p>		
<p>Conwy Phil Lord Nicholas Richter</p>		

Minutes

1. Introduction and welcome

Chair of WASACRE, Phil Lord, welcomed members to Carmarthenshire. The Leader of the Council, Emlyn Doyle, welcomed WASACRE to the Council Chamber. Members enjoyed the performance of the choir from Ysgol Gynradd Llangennech. Emlyn Doyle shared his support for SACREs and recognised the importance of WASACRE and of RE in Wales in a climate of educational change. He acknowledged that Carmarthenshire takes RE seriously and ensures a holistic education, which aims to develop empathy, tolerance and respect. As such it employs a Challenge Advisor to provide training and practical help to implement effective RE.

2. Quiet reflection

PL led a reflection, asking members to consider the need to work towards unity within communities. RE is in a position to remind people of this responsibility.

3. Apologies

Libby Jones, Jen Malcom, Tania ap Sion, Leslie Francis, Ernie Galsworthy, Sally Northcott

4. NAPfRE presentation

Headteacher, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Myrddin presented on collective worship in the secondary school. Assemblies are organised so that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in and deliver a daily act of collective worship. They share ideas and celebrate success as well as reflect. During questions the Headteacher was thanked by a WASACRE member who had previously been a teacher at the school. PL expressed WASACREs thanks and reflected that newly built secondary schools have no communal space and would, therefore, find it difficult to develop a sense of community via bringing all pupils in a school together.

Comments included the positive contribution collective Worship could make to a pupil's experience in a secondary school and the good practice that could be shared from the presentation provided by Bro Myrddin.

5. Minutes of meeting held in Rhyl, 23 June 2016

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Huw Stephens and seconded by Edward Evans.

6. **Matters Arising.** VT said the new GCSE had been approved and was on WJEC website. She informed WASACRE that concerns had been raised at SACREs that there were training issues as there was an increase in content and more emphasis on textual concepts. Dan Foster – Head teacher representing Torfaen SACRE expressed concern that the cost of training by the WJEC has risen rapidly. Schools are finding this difficult because of financial constraints. Tudor Thomas agreed but said that training for new specifications was free. He said schools are on tight budgets and that representation is needed to WJEC suggesting that it carries a responsibility for schools in Wales in particular as it is the sole Examination Board in Wales. The WJEC are offering one free training place for all schools on four dates during this academic year.

ACTION: PL agreed to find the link to RE Ideas on the Peniarth website. Copies going back as far as 2000 have been made available by REMW. Every SACRE Clarke should have a copy of the list of RE Ideas publications to share with SACREs.

P 4. Item 4. The reply was sent to Lynda and LJ maintained email contact with WJEC regarding this issue. However, the letter to QW was not sent due to the Specification being accredited during the Autumn term.

P4. Item 5 Humanists on SACRE – Kathy Riddick from Humanists Wales has been invited to attend the Carmarthenshire meeting following a letter she sent to WASACRE highlighting this issue.

P5: Item 5 – Incerts: GV informed members that LJ had requested a statement from Welsh Government that we could use to inform Incerts that the level descriptions contained within agreed syllabuses are statutory. However, the response from Welsh Government did not address the original question. NAPfRE suggest we should go back to the original legislation which states that the Agreed Syllabuses are statutory and, therefore, the Levels within them are statutory. Rheinallt Thomas said officers in the Assembly are aware that it is the right of every SACRE to adopt the National Framework, but that this can only be done legally at a local level by individual SACREs, not at a national level. He also said Welsh Government must go forward carefully if RE is placed within humanities as RE has to be determined locally. GV proposed that WASACRE should make a second request to WG for a statement on the status of an agreed syllabus.

P6. Welsh Baccalaureate – A discussion was held on the consequences of not delivering statutory RE, which isn't just an issue at Key Stage 4. There is a local responsibility to ensure the Agreed Syllabus is being implemented. It was noted that some Pioneer Schools are confused as to the status of the Agreed Syllabus. WASACRE were told that this was discussed at the NAPfRE meeting. Some SACREs intend to write to schools reminding them of the obligation to follow the Agreed Syllabus. It was felt that there should be a consistent message sent out by SACREs across Wales.

Action: VT has written letters from her SACREs to schools reminding them of their statutory requirements and has agreed to share this with NAPfRE members so that they and their SACREs can consider whether to they should write something similar to their schools.

GV raised the issue that only 70 responses were received to the Welsh Bacc Survey and asked whether WASACRE would follow this up to get a fuller picture. Monmouthshire SACRE felt it worthwhile to get broader picture of what is happening across Wales, expressing concern about schools that had not responded to the survey. Dan Foster asked whether a misunderstanding of the statutory nature of an agreed syllabus could mean that Pioneer Schools could be acting illegally. The letters from SACREs would help in reminding them of the statutory nature of the Agreed Syllabus. Local Authority Officers sit on SACRE and they should be the link to schools. A teacher representative said that he is aware that one school in his LA is not complying with its statutory obligation for RE because of the Welsh Baccalaureate. This could be a slippery slope and SACREs have to act on it. PL reminded members that they have been advised by Welsh Government of the process for dealing with schools that are not complying and that SACREs should be following that. Tudor Thomas raised concern that due to the changes in GCSE specifications, the content has become heavier and that is worrying for the RE community in Wales as schools may now only deliver token RE.

It was agreed that WASACRE would not re-send the survey to schools but that each SACRE should follow-up with their own schools and feedback to WASACRE. MM suggested that SACREs should try to ensure that the survey goes directly to heads of department and not the school secretary or the headteacher.

7. Presentation - Support for schools in delivering the new GCSE specification for Religious Studies and the role of Lead Practitioners

Presented by Tonia Antinarzi who is seconded to ERW as Leader of Learning of Non-Core subjects. Tonia's responsibility is to work with lead practitioners to establish networks and to establish support for the non core subjects. Lead practitioners for RE have set up in each of the regions. They are working to create resources to support the implementation of the new WJEC GCSE and are beginning to share information and resources via Hwb. Resources will be translated into Welsh and Quality Assured. Lead practitioners are keen to hear from classroom teachers who would like to work together to create resources. A SACRE rep raised concerns that increased content of the new specification could mean that that grades may not be as high if they are expected to deliver GCSE Religious Studies in an hour a week. VT asked whether there was an intention to share resources wider to other

consortia. Tonia affirmed this and said that links are already being made with EAS in Newport. Alison Lewis, a Lead Practitioner, highlighted the difficulty in getting schools to use Hwb but said that the resources are there if they want access them. Tonia said that the launch of Lead Practitioners was on 21st Oct and they have already made a lot of progress. A member asked if there had been involvement from SACREs in this process. Tonia confirmed this and is interested in hearing from schools with strong RE departments, especially Welsh language schools. Tonia will share the details of the lead practitioners for RE with WASACRE. Lead practitioners have written to all schools in the area to draw attention to the work they are doing. They are conducting a survey to map strengths.

BJ said that lead practitioners in North Wales have been getting organised and preparing resources. She asked whether they are doubling up on the work in Wales and whether they would benefit from working with colleagues across Wales. Tonia said that she sees her job as coordinating links with other consortia. A member asked who would be Quality Assuring. Tonia said that whilst the WJEC can't endorse the work they were able to check that they were on the right track. They would also be using teachers in the area and Mary Parry as the Advisor. Everything should be ready by the end of June. Tonia will follow up those who aren't involved. MM asked when the GCSE books would be made available. He highlighted the issue that the books only cover 3 religions Christianity, Judaism and Islam. VT agreed that there was an issue that there are no resources for Eastern Religions. Tonia said that the whole course was being mapped out and that it has covered all religions. PL said that there will be a presentation from a lead practitioner in summer WASACRE meeting and we look forward to an update and the end of the process.

8. Updates:

Update: Curriculum Review – BJ said that many of the schools are trying to imagine what the Donaldson Curriculum will look like. Pioneer schools are hoping that by January Step 2 will begin and they will develop models for their Areas of Learning and Experience across Wales. BJ informed WASACRE that Phil Lord, Libby Jones and Gill Vaisey had represented WASACRE at regular Stakeholders' meetings with Welsh Government to discuss the new curriculum. There is also a meeting to be held with officers of the Welsh Government on 14th December. The role of WASACRE in the curriculum review process will be discussed.

A member highlighted a concern about the slow progress in the development of the new curriculum and said that Welsh Government has not given any suggestion of what the curriculum will look like. It was brought to the attention of WASACRE that some schools are under impression they don't have to follow the Agreed Syllabus. BJ also raised the issue of lack of time for teacher training on what good RE is. This is especially important to non-specialists. BJ suggested that we need to scrutinise the contribution of the pioneer schools and would welcome having an input into that. NAPfRE are preparing a document entitled "What is Good RE" to share with schools and are meeting before the end of term to finish this. Members of WASACRE are informed of the progress of the new curriculum and regularly feed back to members.

WASACRE have had correspondence from Carmarthenshire SACRE raising concerns about what RE will look like in the new curriculum and what the role of SACRE will be.

WASACRE have a meeting with The Minister for Education on 2nd March 2017 and will pose a question around the status of the Agreed Syllabus.

A member spoke about the concerns of the Presbyterian Church about the uncertainty of what is happening. They have sent a letter to Carmarthenshire SACRE and WASACRE as well as to Kirsty Williams because they are concerned about how Christianity will be taught in the new curriculum. RT suggested that Church Schools might find it difficult to become part of this curriculum and that the Church in Wales and the Roman Catholic Church should use its links to the Welsh Government to discuss this.

PL asked how RE would work if it is based in the humanities curriculum and suggested that it is important to keep a watching brief on that.

Update: Guidance on Managing the Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education. GV said that the document is now out for consultation with a variety of organisations, faith representatives and educationalists. She is delighted with the support and positive tone in which the document is being received. The document was initially produced in response to a headteacher, but the document has evolved and is now for parents, teachers and all parties. GV shared the document with colleagues in England at the REC Conference and there had been lots of interest. The document will go to a graphic designer for professional design and printing. Translation is needed but it should be available in the Summer Term.

Update on REC

GV said that Rudy Lockhart, CEO of REC, has been actively talking to MPs to ensure they understand what RE is. REC reps attended Party Political Conferences for the Labour and Conservative Parties to raise the profile of RE and to build good relationships with MPs. It was suggested that local SACREs should be informing their local politicians about standards achieved in GCSE locally as this is something they will care about.

REQM have a new manager, Linda Rudge.

There is a minimum subscription for REC of £250 but the average being given is £370.

There was a presentation on new resources at the conference.

1. Understanding Christianity Project: The National Society aim to raise standards in the teaching of Christianity following a survey which highlighted inadequacies. A resource and two day training package has been created for teachers who will be provided the pack of resources at the end of the course. They are training people to deliver the courses and GV will be attending.
2. Understanding Humanism: The Humanist Association has created a website with excellent resources for moral and social education as well as RE. They are hoping to translate all resources into Welsh.
3. The Board of Deputies of British Jews has produced a book to support Judaism GCSE Religious Studies: The Definitive Resource by Clive Lawton to help teachers with the quality of education on Judaism.

Update: EFTRE – PL attended the conference in August. The conference discussed what RE looks like across Europe and most countries take a confessional approach. There was discussion about how students are seen as commodities for economic growth with documentation from systems across Europe showing a move away from wellbeing and holistic and spiritual approaches.

PL will attend the Exec meeting of EFTRE next week in Finland.

Update: Welsh Government contact meeting - WASACRE are keeping in contact with WG via regular meetings. The next meeting is in December. Discussions have included 10/94 and the Agreed Syllabus. There has also been discussion on the Welsh Bacc and the new curriculum.

Annual reports issue – This issue is still unresolved and WASACRE will be pushing for WG to maintain its current responsibility to collate the reports as per 10/94. WASACRE will be kept updated on progress.

9. Report from the Executive Committee

Minutes from meeting –

P1 Action 1 - Letter to Kirsty Williams.

Edward Evans has written to Welsh Government to ask whether changing the law with regards to Religious Education in England would have an impact in Wales. – What are the residual powers of

Westminster? The response received did not adequately address the question and he would therefore write again, this time directly to Kirsty Williams.

REC subscription – PL advised that as a small organisation WASACRE was entitled to pay a reduced subscription to REC and this would be £99.

Lead Practitioners - There will be a presentation updating us on the work done in the Summer meeting.

PL said that WASACRE is pleased to see John Mitson is still able to attend and that WASACRE will still draw upon his skills.

The next Executive is meeting next on the **1st Feb.**

10. Correspondence

1. Letter from Neeter Baicher – about the book *Unsung* by Dr Darminster Singh Chada raising awareness and paying tribute to the Sikh soldiers to the British Empire.
2. Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary of Education agreed to a meeting with WASACRE on Thursday 2nd March, 2017 as a result of the request for a meeting LJ sent.
3. Pam Evans, CEO of Peace Mala, wrote informing WASACRE about the Peace Mala at Llandaff Cathedral on Thursday 20th July, 2017
4. Correspondence with Kathy Riddick, Development Officer, Wales Humanists discussing the place of Humanists in SACRE. Kathy Riddick was invited to attend WASACRE as an observer in order to begin a positive dialogue between the two associations. Kathy was in attendance in the meeting and explained that the Humanist Society wanted non-religious views represented alongside religious views as well as a positive relationship with SACREs. Kathy informed WASACRE that the Humanist Society has school speakers available across Wales. Edward Evans said that a Humanist had faithfully attended and made a valuable contribution to Bridgend SACRE for number of years. However, he reminded WASACRE that we are bound by circular 10/94 and therefore, non-religious belief systems can only be co-opted members and this is still the legal position. PL said that this is an issue for Welsh Government. Kathy Riddick said that the Humanist Society has written to Welsh Government on this issue.

11. A.O.B.

Tania and Leslie have published materials on the St Mary's Website and reminded WASACRE of the A Level journal So far there have been 10 issues with over 40 articles published. There are two new Foundation Phase resources available for free from the St Mary's Centre website. The 'Exploring Why' series and 'Exploring Our World' series are available from <http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resoruces>

A Level resources for the new curriculum -MP raised the issue of this need, suggesting that we might seek funding for lead teachers to create resources to share in the same way lead practitioners are working on resources for GCSE. She suggested WASACRE and/or the REMW might consider funding this work. TT suggested that the WJEC have a role to play in this. He said that there are textbooks available written by chief examiners. The WJEC is a benefactor and they need to benefit from it and could perhaps act as a coordinator. BJ said that there are new GCSE and A level groups working together voluntarily. She would be interested in other groups working together in a more formal sense providing a network of sharing good practice who are able to produce resources which is fully endorsed by WJEC. Someone would need to manage this. PL asked who their employer would be. A member suggested using the Hwb to share resources. It was suggested that two or three teachers could coordinate it. JM discussed the financial issues and suggested that it would be difficult for WASACRE to fund this alone and would need to work with others. GV suggested asking REMW if they could also provide some funding and that we might also think about asking other organisations to help. RT said the residual balances of REMW do not match that of WASACRE but that this could be discussed in the next meeting of REMW.

TT felt strongly that as the WJEC is a profit making organisation and it is their product that they should be key players.

WASACRE voted that it would like to see this investigated further as speed is of the essence.

WASACRE minutes – RT brought it to the attention of WASACRE that old WASACRE minutes are not stored on the website. He suggested that it is important that the reports of the previous conferences are on the website and that with modern technology it would be easy to do this. **Action: PL is to look into is situation.**

PL informed WASACRE that Jen Malcom is retiring. He thanked her for her contribution to WASACRE and expressed best wishes for her retirement and for the future.

12. Date for next meeting: 3rd March 2017, Monmouthshire. Venue: County Hall, Usk.

Future meeting dates:

- Summer 2017, Wrexham
- Autumn 2017, Bridgend
- Spring 2018, Swansea

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Hosting WASACRE Preparation Check List for Local Authorities

Action Required	By Whom	Action / Progress	Complete
Decide upon and advise WASACRE Secretary of date of meeting (NB NAPfRE meets the day before so therefore do not book WASACRE for a Monday)	GV	Friday 3 rd March 2017 County Hall, Usk	√
Book venue for meeting Average of approximately 40 delegates attend 10a.m. for 10.30a.m. – 3p.m.	RW	Booked Council Chamber from 9am to 5pm	√
Arrange IT equipment as required: usually data projector, sound facility. WiFi access if possible	RW	The Council Chamber is fully equipped. WiFi access is also available. The WASACRE Conference may be live streamed, if required.	√
Book and fund live translation facility	RW	Alan Burkitt, MCC Welsh Language Officer, has arranged for a live translator to be available for the WASACRE Conference. To be funded via the CYP Directorate's budget.	√
Provide to WASACRE Secretary map of venue / directions / car parking facilities / public transport options.	RW	Details have been provided to the WASACRE Secretary via links to the MCC website.	√
Arrange and fund refreshments and lunch: Tea / coffee / biscuits or pastries on arrival at 10am Buffet lunch with drinks approx 12.30p.m. (NB provide vegetarian options clearly labelled and some Gluten Free choices) Water in meeting room	RW	Lunch, tea, coffee and biscuits to be provided for the WASACRE Conference on the 3 rd March catering for 35 people, with a good selection of vegetarian and gluten free options available. The CYP Directorate will pay for the lunch / refreshments etc. via its departmental budget.	√

<p>Optional form of welcome / reflection of RE in the locality – during tea / coffee time or in meeting room at start of meeting</p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • display of pupils' work • musical item from school pupils • pupils meeting and greeting delegates / offering refreshments • local SACRE members meeting and greeting 	<p>Sharon Randall Smith</p> <p>Liz Hacket Pain</p>	<p>discuss with Headteachers to establish which schools would like to 'perform' a musical item on arrival.</p> <p>Contact Gwent Music for lunchtime background entertainment.</p> <p>Contact Flying Start and Schools for displays of work.</p> <p>Create display board of Monmouthshire SACRE members. Liaise with Dewi for photos.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>
<p>Formal welcome speech to commence meeting from e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor • Chair of SACRE • Director of Education • Head of School Improvement • Local SACRE Members (what does it mean to them to be part of SACRE?) • 	<p>LHP</p>	<p>Invite: Chairman LHP – Chair of SACRE</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>
<p>Invite guests</p>	<p>GV</p> <p>SRS</p> <p>LHP</p>	<p>Monmouthshire Inclusion Group</p> <p>Diocesan Directors – CinW, RC Syrian Refugee Leader</p> <p>Council Members' Chaplain</p>	<p>√</p>
<p>Book meeting room and refreshments for NAPfRE meeting day prior to WASACRE 10a.m. – 5.00p.m. approx 10 delegates.</p>	<p>RW</p>	<p>The Conference Room has been booked on Thursday 2nd March 2017 from 9am to 5pm. Lunch, tea, coffee and biscuits for 10 people to be provided.</p>	<p>√</p>



Cadeirydd/Chairman:
Philip Lord

Ysgrifennydd/Secretary:
Paula Webber
23, Bryngwyn Road, Newbridge, NP11 4GX

e-bost/e-mail: Paula.WebberConsultancy@gmail.com
ffôn/ tel : 07540 172596

23 Ionawr 2017

Annwyl Glerc CYSAG,

Gan ddilyn ein proses flynyddol arferol, rwyf yn ysgrifennu i wahodd CYSAGau i gynnig enwebiadau am aelodau newydd i Bwyllgor Gwaith CCYSGAU Cymru ac am swydd yr Is Gadeirydd. Byddwn yn ddiolchgar pe bai'ch CYSAG chi yn trafod unrhyw enwebiadau y dymunant eu cynnig yn eu cyfarfod CYSAG yn nhymor y gwanwyn. Sylwer, os yw'ch CYSAG yn cael ei gynrychioli ar y Pwyllgor Gwaith yn barod, ac eithrio Ysgrifennydd, Ysgrifennydd Cynorthwyol a Thrysorydd, yn ôl Cyfansoddiad CCYSGAU C, ni fyddwch yn gallu enwebu rhywun o'ch CYSAG chi y tro hwn.

Ynghlwm y mae ffurflen y dylid ei llenwi a'i dychwelyd i mi yn y cyfeiriad e-bost/post uchod erbyn **Dydd Gwener 31 Mawrth 2017**. Byddaf yn anfon y rhestr enwebiadau i chi cyn Dydd Gwener 28 Ebrill 2017, fel y gall eich CYSAG eu trafod yng nghyfarfod tymor yr haf mewn pryd ar gyfer y bleidlais yng Nghyfarfod Blynyddol y Gymdeithas ym mis Gorffennaf.

Sylwch bod disgwyliad y bydd enwebeion ar gael i fynychu cyfarfodydd gweithredol yn rheolaidd dylent fod yn llwyddiannus yn yr etholiad yn y CCB ym mis Gorffennaf.

Hoffem ddiolch i chi a'ch aelodau am eich cymorth yn y mater hwn.

Yn gywir,

Paula Webber
Ysgrifennydd Cymdeithas CYSAGau Cymru

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Philip Lord

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ffôn/ tel : 07540 172596

23 January 2017

Dear Clerk to SACRE,

Following our normal annual process, I am writing to invite SACREs to make nominations for new members of the WASACRE Executive Committee and for the position of Vice Chair. Please would your SACRE discuss any nomination that they wish to make at their spring term SACRE meeting. Please note that if your SACRE is already represented on the Executive committee, with the exception of Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer, according to the WASACRE Constitution you will not be able to nominate a person from your own SACRE at this time.

Please find attached a proforma that should be completed and returned to me at the above email/postal address by **Friday 31 March 2017**. I will send to you the list of the nominations before Friday 28 April 2017, so that your SACRE is able to discuss them in their summer term meeting in time for the vote at the Association's AGM in July.

Please note there is an expectation that nominees will be available to attend executive meetings regularly should they be successful in the election at the AGM in July.

We would like to thank you and your members for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Paula Webber
Secretary to WASACRE

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LIST OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS SEPTEMBER 2016/17

Philip Lord- Flintshire (Chair)

Edward Evans- Bridgend (Vice Chair)

Tania ap Sion- Wrexham (Immediate Past Chair)

Paula Webber- RCT (Secretary)

Libby Jones- Wrexham (Assistant Secretary/Welsh Government Liaison officer)

John Mitson- Powys (Treasurer)

Bethan James- NAPfRE

1. Vicky Thomas- Torfaen -period of office 2014-2017

2. Gill Vaisey- Monmouthshire (REC Rep for WASACRE)- period of office 2014-2017

3. Cllr Ernie Galsworthy- Merthyr Tydfil - period of office 2015-2018

4. Mathew Maidment- RCT- period of office- 2016- 2019

5. Huw Stephens- Newport -period of office 2016- 2019

6. Mary Parry- Carmarthenshire -period of office 2016- 2019

Vacant seats as of WASACRE AGM July 2017

Quorum is 5 members

Majority vote will count

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**Enwebiadau ar gyfer Pwyllgor Gwaith CCYSAGC/
Nominations to WASACRE Executive Committee**

2017

Enwebiad / Nomination	Enw / Name	ENW CYSAG / SACRE NAME
Pwyllgor gwaith/ Executive Committee		
Is-gadeirydd / Vice Chair		

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Autumn

2016



In The News

In this bulletin:

1. Farmington Fellowships 2017 - 2018
2. Holocaust Memorial Day 2017
3. A Festival of Faith at Goytre Fawr Primary School
4. SACRE Annual Report 2015 - 2016
5. Visits and Visitors Guide
6. New Publication: Unsung
7. Diwali for Three Faith Traditions
8. Mongolian Café in Monmouthshire
9. RE Day at Caldicot School

FARMINGTON SCHOLARSHIPS



Primary, Secondary and Special School teachers are welcome to apply for the 2017 – 2018 scholarships. Scholars are free to study any aspect of Religious Education they wish but preference will be given to applicants whose work can be seen to be of direct value to the teaching of RE in schools.

The Scholarship will cover the cost of tuition, board and lodging where appropriate, essential local travel and, by negotiation with the school, the salary of a replacement teacher up to point 6 of the main pay scale.

School/home-based Scholarships may be taken in the form of day release, for instance for one day a week over a term or over the year or for continuous periods up to a maximum of 30 days.

University-based Scholarships may be taken as a block of up to eight weeks or in the form of day release up to 30 days.

For more information: www.farmington.ac.uk or E-mail: farmington@hmc.ox.ac.uk

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY



Holocaust Memorial Day is an annual event that takes place on January 27th.

HMD was established in the UK in 2000 and the first HMD was held in January 2001. January 27th marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz- Birkenhau concentration camp by soviet troops in 1945. Holocaust Memorial Day seeks to change the future by learning from and remembering the past. Schools are encouraged to participate in Holocaust Memorial Day in order to remember the victims of the Holocaust and more recent genocides. It provides a framework to explore issues of morality, human reactions, individual experiences, responsibilities and larger questions of the role of governments and democracies. The government, including the Welsh Government, encourages schools and LAs to commemorate this event in some way.

Further information and **free educational materials** for primary to post 16 students specific to the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day can be accessed online at <http://education.hmd.org.uk>

The theme for 2017 is 'How can life go on?'

Six HMD 2017 life stories have been translated into Welsh. These stories feature people affected by the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides. Each story is relevant to this year's theme How can life go on? - See more at: <http://hmd.org.uk/resources/stories/hmd-2017-welsh-bilingual-life-stories#sthash.DkxU91gB.dpuf>

The aftermath of the Holocaust and of subsequent genocides continue to raise challenging questions for individuals, communities and nations. How do people react in the immediate aftermath of unimaginable suffering? How can life be rebuilt after such trauma? Is justice after genocide possible? What role do we in the UK have towards individuals, communities and nations who have survived genocide?

Holocaust Memorial Day is not only about commemorating past genocides and honouring those who died, but about standing with those who survive.

By phrasing the theme as a question, HMD 2017 asks audiences to think about what happens after genocide and of our own responsibilities in the wake of such a crime.

This year's theme is broad and open ended, and there are few known answers.

We hope that you will find the materials useful if you wish to commemorate

A FESTIVAL OF FAITHS

On Wednesday 16th of March Goytre Fawr Primary School held 'A Festival of Faiths' to support their Religious Education work. During the day, the pupils took part in a variety of workshops, from creating lanterns decorated with lotus flowers for the Buddhist festival of Wesak, to making a large Sukkah for the Jewish celebration of Sukkot.



In order to bring this event to life, the pupils were joined by representatives from Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Bahá'i and Hinduism. The children were encouraged to ask questions and spend time with these volunteers in order to understand how their faith impacts on their daily life.



At the end of the day, everyone wrote down their thoughts and reflections and came together for an assembly. When the children were asked if they had learnt anything new during the day, every hand went up! Lisa Wilkinson, Deputy Headteacher and RE Co-ordinator said "Our pupils live in a multi-cultural, multi-faith world and days like today help to break down stereotypes and develop understanding and respect for others."



SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – 2016

The SACRE Annual Report was finalised in the autumn term and contains useful information and a summary of all the advice provided to schools over the course of the academic year.

Copies will be distributed to all schools as soon as possible.

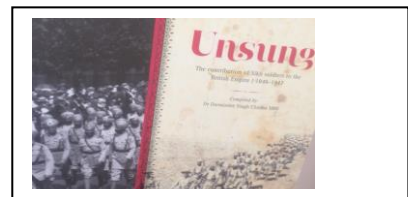
VISITS TO PLACES OF WORSHIP AND VISITORS TO SCHOOLS

SACRE has updated the contact list for school visits to places of worship and visitors to schools. Copies of the revised list will soon be distributed to schools.

If you have a recent experience of visiting a place of worship or receiving a visitor to school and can provide some details for us to share with other schools please do let us know. Details should be sent to Gill Vaisey at gill_press@hotmail.com

UNSUNG

– BOOK BY DR DARMINDER SINGH CHADA



The book *Unsung* has been compiled by Dr Darminder Singh Chadha in order to raise awareness of the contribution of the Sikh soldiers to the British Empire.

The aim of the book, published in the centenary year of the Great War is to remember and pay homage to all Sikh soldiers who served in the British army between 1846-1947 which is the significant part of the Anglo-Sikh history. The author begins the book with a brief history of the Sikh religion followed by the Sikh holocaust where over 30,000 civilian Sikhs were massacred. It shows how Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Kingdom was incorporated into the British Empire. Many young Sikhs fought in the trenches of Western Europe, the deserts of North Africa and the mountains of Italy often in indescribable conditions still holding on to their faith.

The book is for free distribution however, a small contribution of £5.00 is suggested to the Parkinson's Society as the author has suffered from this illness for nearly 14 years now.

Copies can be obtained from SACRE member Neeta Baicher

Neetabaicher@hotmail.com

DIWALI FOR THREE FAITH TRADITIONS

Diwali or Dīpāvālī is a significant religious festival in Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism. It is also popularly known as the "*Festival of Lights*" and is a lunar-calendar based event that occurs between mid-October and mid-November. The word "Diwali" is a contraction of "Deepavali" which translates into "row of lamps".



Diwali is an official holiday in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Malaysia, Singapore, and Fiji.

The festival of Diwali symbolizes the victory of light over dark, good over evil and knowledge over darkness.

Hindu tradition: Diwali is one of the biggest festivals in the Hindu calendar and there are multiple reasons why Hindus celebrate this festival. The most popular narrative, based in the ancient Sanskrit epic Ramayana, is of Lord Rama, his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana returning to their kingdom Ayodhya after defeating demon king Ravana.

Jain tradition, Diwali marks the attainment of enlightenment by Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism who laid down the central tenets of the Jain religion as it is practiced today.

Sikh tradition: Diwali commemorates the release of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Sikh Guru, who was imprisoned by the Mughal emperor Jahangir. When Guru Hargobind arrived in Amritsar, his devotees lit thousands of oil lamps to celebrate his return. For Sikhs, this day is known as *Bandi Chhor Divas* (day of release from prison).

Diwali is also associated with the martyrdom of the elderly Sikh scholar and strategist Bhai Mani Singh in 1737. Bhai Mani Singh was the Granthi (keeper/reader of Sikh scripture) of Harmandir Sahib (popularly known as the Golden Temple). He transcribed the final version of Guru Granth Sahib dictated to him by Guru Gobind Singh in 1704. In 1737, he received permission from Zakariya Khan, the then Mughal governor of Punjab, to hold a religious gathering of the Khalsa for celebrating *Bandi Chhorh Divas* on the auspicious day of Diwali for a tax of 5000 Rupees. He expected to put together the required sum from contributions made by the Sikhs who would assemble that day. But when he discovered the governor's plot to kill the Sikhs during the gathering, he sent out messages warning them not to turn up for the meeting. As a result the tax could not be paid and the governor ordered Bhai Mani Singh's execution at Lahore. Sikhs celebrate Diwali by lighting lamps, distributing sweets, fasting and practising acts of charity.

Local celebrations included a social event in Cardiff and a religious service in the gurdwara in the evening. Our local representative reported that to her the importance of Diwali is sacrifice and charitable work done by faith members and masters and being given strength.

FREE RESOURCES FOR A LEVEL RS

St Mary's Centre website hosts free AS/A Level RE Journals: Challenging Religious Issues which can be accessed via <http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resources/Aleveljournal.html>

Challenging Religious Issues is an online journal supporting A-level Religious Studies for students and teachers. The journal was set up through Welsh Government sponsorship and is published by the St Mary's Centre in English and in Welsh.

- o Articles are written by leading scholars and practitioners
- o A wide range of popular AS and A2 options are covered
- o Activities and live links to recommended websites are included
- o The journal is published every term

Challenging Religious Issues can also be accessed FREE through Hwb Cymru (<https://hwb.wales.gov.uk>).

The Journals cover a range of topics such as Euthanasia, Evil and Suffering, Christian Sexual Ethics and Secular and Religious Meditation.

St Mary's Centre needs evidence to support the continued production of the journal. If you find the journals useful and would them to continue, please take a few minutes to give your feedback. Please reply to gill_press@hotmail.com and your response will be passed on accordingly.

NEW RESOURCES FROM ST MARY'S CENTRE

Two new series of resources for Foundation Phase: Exploring Why and Exploring Our World are available free of charge from the St Mary's Centre.

The link to the English resources are:

<http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resources/Exploring%20Why.html>

(Exploring Why)

<http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resources/Exploring%20Our%20World.html>

(Exploring Our World)

These storybooks and accompanying activities cover aspects of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.

The resources will also be available via the Hwb. Resources via the website are free and a hardcopy of the short story versions will be available for purchase @ £2.99 per book from the Welsh Books Council.

MONGOLIAN CAFÉ AT GOYTRE FAWR PRIMARY SCHOOL

As part of the Year 4 Times for Giving RE unit and linked to their topic, the Year 4 class and the School Councillors organised a 'Mongolian Cafe' to raise money for an internet connection for our link school in Tuvshinshiree, Mongolia. They planned what needed to be done, wrote letters to various supermarkets asking for contributions and worked in teams to decorate and then serve at the 'cafe'.

It was very popular with the whole school and raised £120.



YEAR 6 RE DAY AT CALDICOT SCHOOL

Year 6 pupils from the Caldicot cluster enjoyed another fabulous day of workshops provided by SACRE faith representatives.

The following responses are just a small selection of thoughts about the day shared by pupils.

"I enjoyed everything today but my favourite was Muhammad's lesson on Islam. He was awesome and everything he said was very interesting. He is the best teacher ever and I learned so many new things"

Year 6 pupil at Durand Primary School.

"Today was fun as now I know what people from other religions feel like. So now I can relate to how they feel."

Year 6 pupil at Durand Primary School



“My favourite part of the day was when we learned about good choices and the Bahá’í religion.”

Year 6 pupil at Ysgol Y Ffin.

“Most people thought it was going to be boring, but I found it really fun. All the activities were equally as fun!”

Year 6 pupil at Castle Park Primary School.



“I enjoyed all of the workshops today. I mostly enjoyed the Sikh, Islam and Hindu. It taught me many new things as well as having lots of fun.”

Year 6 pupil at Castle Park Primary School.

“I enjoyed Buddhism because everything is so interesting about their hobbies and style of living.”

Year 6 pupil at Durand Primary School



“We learned about interesting religions today.

I especially enjoyed the meditation

session in the Buddhism workshop.”

Year 6 pupil at Dewstow Primary School.

“I really liked doing Buddhism because it was easy to understand and I liked listening and talking about how you have to kill to survive.”

Year 6 pupil at The Archbishop Rowan Williams C. I. W. Primary School.

“It was brilliant learning about the different religions.”

Year 6 pupil at Dewstow Primary School.

“I enjoyed Hinduism the most as it involved a memory game where we drew the important objects that we remembered from the lesson. I also learned that the Hindus give special sweets to God.”

Year 6 pupil at Durand Primary School.



“I learned that Hindus take different things, such as food, to offer to God. I enjoyed trying on the Sikh clothes.”

Pupil at The Archbishop Rowan Williams C. I. W. Primary School.

“Today was fantastic. I learned about religion and I liked learning about Buddhism.”

Year 6 pupil at Castle Park Primary School.

“I have learned that Hindus offer rice, sweets, water, flowers and candles to their Gods. I have also enjoyed learning about Islam and how they don't eat from 2:40pm until 9:30pm.”

Year 6 pupil at Durand Primary School.

“I have learnt more about Christianity than I thought there was. I really enjoyed the lesson.”

Year 6 pupil at Durand Primary School



Evaluations received from teachers would very welcome to help us build on this success in future years.

“A very successful day, well organised and ran very smoothly. I was particularly happy with the variety of religions shared.”

Sue Thomas, Year 6 teacher at Dewstow Primary School.

“The day was very good. The children were engaged in most of the activities. The variety of activities kept their interest; drama, singing, look and draw.”

Sue Wilsher, Year 6 teacher at Castle Park Primary School.

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Spring
2017



In The News

In this bulletin:

- 1. Free Resources for A Level RS**
- 2. Free New Foundation Phase Resources**
- 3. New Bahá'í Website for Schools**
- 4.**

FREE RESOURCES FOR A LEVEL RS

St Mary's Centre website hosts free AS/A Level RE Journals: Challenging Religious Issues which can be accessed via <http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resources/Aleveljournal.html>

Challenging Religious Issues is an online journal supporting A-level Religious Studies for students and teachers. The journal was set up through Welsh Government sponsorship and is published by the St Mary's Centre in English and in Welsh.

- o Articles are written by leading scholars and practitioners
- o A wide range of popular AS and A2 options are covered
- o Activities and live links to recommended websites are included
- o The journal is published every term

Challenging Religious Issues can also be accessed FREE through Hwb Cymru (<https://hwb.wales.gov.uk>).

The Journals cover a range of topics such as Euthanasia, Evil and Suffering, Christian Sexual Ethics and Secular and Religious Meditation.

St Mary's Centre needs evidence to support the continued production of the journal. If you find the journals useful and would them to continue, please take a few minutes to give your feedback. Please reply to gill_press@hotmail.com and your response will be passed on accordingly.

NEW RESOURCES FROM ST MARY'S CENTRE

Two new series of resources for Foundation Phase: Exploring Why and Exploring Our World are available free of charge from the St Mary's Centre.

The link to the English resources are:

<http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resources/Exploring%20Why.html>

(Exploring Why)

<http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resources/Exploring%20Our%20World.html>

(Exploring Our World)

These storybooks and accompanying activities cover aspects of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.

The resources will also be available via the Hwb. Resources via the website are free and a hardcopy of the short story versions will be available for purchase @ £2.99 per book from the Welsh Books Council.

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Dear colleague,

I'm writing to you on behalf of [Dr Peter Hemming](#) from the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, with regard to his research on religion in the primary school, and related activities and events you may be interested in.

What is the Research About?

The studies draw on original, in-depth qualitative research in English and Welsh primary schools, in both multi-faith, urban locations and rural village communities. Key findings summaries are attached to this email for your information. The research grapples with questions about the following issues in everyday school contexts:

- School ethos, values and community-building
- Inter-faith relations and cohesion
- Recognising and accommodating religious difference
- Engagement with local communities

What Related Activities and Events are We Planning?

Following on from these findings, we are developing a number of activities and events that you may like to become involved in:

(1) On the issue of religious diversity, we are collating together a suite of materials for primary school staff to use across England and Wales. We plan to evaluate their use later in the year to evidence any impact they have made. Resources will include:

- A guidance document for primary school staff and governors
- Training materials for staff
- Materials for engaging with pupils

We are looking for input from experts in the field, such as yourself or your organisation, as to what should be included in these materials. Please reply directly to this email if you have anything that you think would be useful to contribute - we would be very grateful to hear from you and will be sure to acknowledge your organisation on the resource pack.

We then intend to present a first draft of the pack as part of a consultation workshop during our 'Religious Diversity in Primary Schools' seminar event, to be held at Cardiff University on **Thursday 30th March 2017**. We would also be delighted if you were able to attend. Further information will be circulated about this event in due course but numbers will be limited so please contact us if you would like to reserve a place at this stage.

(2) On the issue of the role of rural schools in their local communities, we are planning to collaborate with the Church in Wales on a 'webinar' programme and associated web resources, to be arranged for later in the year. Please let us know if you have any interest in participating in these activities by emailing back to this address.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the findings and how we can build on these to further support primary schools.

Kind regards,
Christopher Dye

Research Impact Assistant
School of Social Sciences

Cardiff University, 1.22 Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff CF10 3WT. +44 (0)29 208 70911
DyeC@cardiff.ac.uk

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KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY: Faith Schooling in Rural Communities

Peter Hemming, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, HemmingPJ@cardiff.ac.uk

Introduction

Over the last decade or so, the issue of faith-based education has featured prominently in media, policy and academic forums. The establishment of state-funded Islamic schools in England has fuelled existing concerns about the potential impacts of faith schools on community cohesion and inter-faith relations, particularly in urban, multicultural neighbourhoods. Yet, much of the faith-based education sector actually consists of small, rural, Anglican primary schools. These schools may feature much less frequently in public or scholarly debates, but are nevertheless important for making sense of the significance of faith-based schooling for children, families and wider society.

Research Context

Educational research on small rural schools in general has been rather limited to date, particularly sociologically informed studies. The relationship between rural schools and their wider communities, including through the eyes of pupils, has been identified as a key under-researched area, but the issue of religious character is rarely mentioned in this context. This represents a serious omission given that, of the 5037 schools in England designated as 'rural' in 2012, over 50% of them were faith-based, compared with around 35% for English schools as a whole. Recent research on rural schooling has engaged with themes such as parental choice, rural gentrification and community politics but the issue of faith-based education in rural contexts has been left largely unexplored. Similarly, researchers have examined the significance of rurality for making sense of contemporary childhoods but have rarely considered religion in this regard.

This study seeks to address the conspicuous gap in the literature by exploring the distinctive role that church primary schools play in contrasting rural contexts, and the implications that this has for understanding faith-based education. It aims to broaden and inform the public policy debate about faith schools, social cohesion and children's rights, whilst also contributing to better understandings of rural communities, childhoods and schooling more broadly.

Research Design, Sample and Methods

This study involved in-depth fieldwork in two Anglican primary schools and their surrounding localities. 'School A' was a Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales school, located 2 miles from the edge of a large urban area in a small village in South Wales. The majority of the pupils here commuted in from a low-income suburb of the nearby urban area. In contrast, 'School B' was a Voluntary Aided Church of England school, located in a larger rural village in West England, situated 8 miles away from the nearest urban settlement. The pupil intake in School B was made up from local residents, as well as children from surrounding villages and towns. Both schools were designated as 'small' with fewer than 150 pupils on roll.

Fieldwork took place during the autumn of 2014, for approximately 12 weeks in each school, for at least one day a week. In both schools, the focus of the research was with pupils from Years 5 and 6 (age 9–11 years). The study employed a range of qualitative methods, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews with senior staff members and villagers, focus groups with parents, and paired interviews, map-making and collaging with pupils. The research was funded by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

Key Findings

(1) The research findings have implications for the debate regarding faith-based schooling and community cohesion. Rural Anglican schools may be limited in the extent to which they can facilitate inter-faith contact, as a result of non-diverse pupil intake and geographical distance from multicultural urban settings. This means they are more reliant on the curriculum to teach pupils about different religions and cultures, as well as general values of respect and tolerance for difference, and there was evidence of success in this regard. However, this does not mean that rural Anglican schools are not relevant to the debate about faith schools and inter-religious cohesion. In this research, School B was very active in facilitating positive relations between two previously divided Christian communities in the surrounding village. However, in so doing, the school inadvertently created tensions with the local non-religious community, which objected to the increase in religious events that were taking place in school as a result of these new relations. This further confirms findings from the author's previous research that faith schools can have *both* a positive *and* a negative effect on community cohesion.

(2) Another way of approaching community cohesion in a rural context is to consider how schools might contribute to a broader sense of village identity and coherence. Many rural communities in twenty first century Britain face significant challenges, such as ageing populations and reductions in local facilities and services. Rural churches have also experienced significant decline in congregation numbers. This research found that church schools can play a role in encouraging vibrant village life, facilitating intergenerational relations and even promoting engagement with the Church. However, success in this regard was influenced by geographical context and was dependent on a number of factors, including the particular approach the school took to engaging with the local community, the

existing facilities or services available in the village, and the views and perceptions that villagers held of the school.

(3) The study highlighted some of the ways in which village schools are valued by their various stakeholders, including for their small size, positive relationships, close-knit community and the images of safety and family that are often associated with these characteristics. These views tended to intersect with constructions of childhood and the rural idyll, which was further enhanced through understandings of religion that emphasised tradition, nostalgia and cultural heritage. However, neo-liberal education reforms concerned with performativity and parent choice that created the demand and the opportunity for pupils outside of the local villages to attend the schools, were paradoxically threatening the very environment that attracted them there in the first place. Increased levels of commuting resulted in parking and traffic problems, tensions with the surrounding village community, and concerns about the effect of changing pupil demographics on school ethos, factors that played out differently in the distinct school contexts.

(4) Although not limited to rural contexts, the research raised important issues about the role of religious practices in church schools in the context of debates about children's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The study found that the whilst religiously-inspired ethos values generally attracted broad support from members of the school communities, responses to religious practices in school were more mixed. Furthermore, the ways in which these practices often became intertwined with behaviour management threatened to undermine their intended purpose. This was a particular concern for those non-religious pupils and depending on the specific approach and response of the school, had the potential to compromise the Anglican educational commitment to provide for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY: Religion in the Primary School

Peter Hemming, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, HemmingPJ@cardiff.ac.uk

Hemming, P.J. (2015) Religion in the Primary School: Ethos, Diversity, Citizenship, London: Routledge (www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415714877)

Introduction

Religion and its relationship to schooling is an issue that has become increasingly topical in recent years in the UK, amid on-going debates about the role of religion in public life, and the increasingly multi-faith nature of British society. Whether concerning the effects of faith-based schooling on social and community cohesion, the appropriateness of the daily act of collective worship in school assemblies, or the values promoted in schools within particular faith community contexts, questions regarding the place of religion in education remain prominent. This study explores some of those questions through an in-depth comparison of two English primary schools in a multi-faith, urban location. Drawing on original, ethnographic data, the research grapples with questions about school ethos and values, inter-faith relations, community-building and religious identity and difference in the everyday school context.

Research Context

The study of Religious Education has traditionally received quite a lot of attention from the research community but this work has sometimes been rather narrow in its focus, understandably reflecting an overarching concern with curriculum and pedagogy. Although a renewed academic interest in faith-based schooling has been apparent over the last decade or so, much contemporary work continues to be based around theoretical or political debates and stances. Similarly, while scholarly interest in children's own religious identities, practices and perspectives in the school context is on the

rise, there remains a way to go before this body of literature reaches critical mass. This study further enriches the field by drawing on empirical data to explore the issue of religion and schooling from an inter-disciplinary, social scientific and child-centred perspective. The analysis therefore engages critically with wider contemporary debates on secularisation, citizenship, social cohesion and children's rights and agency to address some of the gaps in the existing literature.

Research Design and Methods

This study involved fieldwork in two state-funded primary schools both within similar multi-faith locations in an urban area in the North of England. They comprised a community school and a voluntary aided Catholic school, both with multi-faith and multi-ethnic pupil intakes. Fieldwork took place during the 2007-8 academic year, for approximately 10 weeks in each school, for three days a week (during autumn for the community and spring for the Catholic school). In both schools, the focus of the research was with pupils from Key Stage 2 (age 7–11 years). The study employed a range of qualitative methods, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews with parents and staff members, paired interviews with pupils, and role-play drama to explore pupils' values. The research was funded by the ESRC.

Key Findings

(1) The research findings have important implications for the debate regarding faith-based schooling and social/community cohesion. One way to think about social cohesion is to consider the values that

schools are imparting. Both schools in the study were encouraging positive inter-group relations between pupils through the promotion of values such as tolerance and respect for difference, behaviours such as empathy and emotional literacy, and a climate where racism and bullying were unacceptable. In this respect, both schools were promoting social cohesion. However, pupils in the schools did not always put these values into practice in their everyday interactions and some children were hearing prejudiced messages at home. Schools may ultimately be limited in how far they can really influence the development of tolerance and respect if they are competing against alternative values transmitted in other spaces.

(2) Another way of thinking about social cohesion is the extent to which schools are involved in community-building. In this regard, the Catholic school was more successful in forging a close-knit school collective through its extensive use of religious rituals. However, this same process also created potential exclusion for non-Christian pupils who could not take part in the rituals. Although both schools were active in their local communities, their focus differed, with the community school directing most of its attention to the neighbourhood community whilst the Catholic school showed more concern with engaging the Catholic community. Taking these and the findings relating to values into account, the schools in this study were therefore more socially cohesive in some ways than others. There will no doubt be different issues facing other schools with less diverse ethnic and religious intakes.

(3) The study also has relevance for the debate over how well different school types are able to provide for children's religious and spiritual needs, through assemblies and religious education, the celebration of festivals, and the provision of food, dress and prayer needs. Although the Catholic school was better at catering

for the needs of its Catholic pupils than the community school was for its Christian pupils, it was less adept at providing for pupils from religious minorities or those with no religion e.g. lack of recognition for other religious perspectives in assembly and religious education. However, there were certain problems in both schools, as demonstrated by the children in the community school who were forced to pray in the school toilets. Pupils attending schools of all types would benefit from a more consistent approach to both valuing and providing for (non-)religious needs.

(4) Opponents of faith-based education often suggest that it can be responsible for limiting children's autonomy through indoctrination and failing to respect the rights of the child to freedom of religion. The study did find limited evidence that non-religious pupils may experience less respect for their positions than those from Christian or minority faiths. However, the study also highlighted how this debate needs to recognise that children are religious agents in their own right rather than dupes unable to question or challenge what adults tell them. Pupil autonomy can be exercised in ways that adults do not necessarily know about or recognise e.g. refusing and pretending to pray, or actively rearticulating the meaning of prayers.

(5) Finally, the research found that although there were many differences between the two institutions, there were also many points of commonality. These included the promotion of common values such as caring, similar techniques for promoting positive inter-group pupil relations, and similar views from parents in terms of what they hoped their children would gain from attending school as well as their tendency to adopt a positive but rather apathetic or vicarious stance on the role of religion in school. It is therefore important not to overstate the differences between schools solely on the basis of their religious or non-religious character.

Religious Diversity in Primary Schools Consultation

Thank you for participating in this work. Your input will help us to create guidance, training and lesson materials for primary schools in England and Wales. We will acknowledge all organisations and individuals who have helped to produce the materials. Please use as much space as you need to answer as many of the questions as you wish and feel free to add any additional information you think might be useful.

Policy

1. What do you think are the important policies to be considered when being inclusive of religious beliefs? What should a good policy look like? - For example, anti-bullying policy, equality and diversity policy, collective worship policy.

2. What do you think would help to ensure these policies are consistently put into practice?

Any other comments?

Training

3. What do you think training for staff should include in order for all staff to be confident in recognising and accommodating all religious beliefs?

Any other comments?

Curriculum

4. How can religious diversity be woven into all areas of the curriculum, not just RE and PSHE and citizenship? Do you have any examples of how you and your colleagues have done this?

5. What does a good religious education curriculum look like? Do you have any examples?

6. How do you think PSHE/Citizenship should include religious diversity?

7. What does good collective worship/assemblies look like? What does it include?

8. Does your school mark a range of religious festivals and celebrations and how? Any examples?

Any other comments?

School environment

9. What can we done to be inclusive of all religious identities in school? Do you have any examples of how a school has done this?

10. What steps do you think should be taken to ensure pupils' needs relating to their religious beliefs are recognised and accommodated? For example, dietary, dress and prayer needs or taking time off for religious purposes?

Any other comments?

Involving the whole school community

11. How do you think schools can best involve the whole school community?

12. How do you think conflict can be managed, for example resistance or objection to school practices from members of the school community? Any examples?

Any other comments?

General

13. What main issues, if any, relating to religion and belief do you think face primary schools in England and Wales and how does this affect pupils?

14. What positive steps can be taken to make your school inclusive of diverse religious beliefs, including non-religious pupils?

Any other comments?

And finally...do you have any lesson plans that have worked well in your school you would like to share with others? If so please send to HemmingPJ@Cardiff.ac.uk.

Thank you for your time.

Religious Diversity in Primary Schools

**FREE Seminar and Workshop Event for teachers
and other professionals working in the primary education sector**

Thursday 30th March 2017, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Glamorgan Building, Cardiff University, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WT

Find out

about the latest policies relating to religious diversity in primary schools and ways to implement them

Explore

practical tools primary schools can use to be inclusive of religious diversity not only as part of the curriculum, but as part of school ethos and values



Network

with primary schools and other professionals from across England and Wales to learn from and share good practice

Contribute

to a workshop to develop a new suite of materials for primary school staff and pupils to support them in raising awareness and creating an inclusive environment for all staff, children and families

Speakers include:

Dr Peter Hemming, Cardiff University
Professor Jonathan Scourfield, Cardiff University
Abigail Beacon & Victoria Fletcher, St Monica's CIW Primary School
& other speakers to be confirmed

Registration and tea/coffee from 9:30-10:00.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Places are limited so please book your free place/s early to avoid disappointment.

To secure your place and for further information, please contact Dr Peter Hemming:

HemmingPJ@cardiff.ac.uk

by Friday 24 March 2017.

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