

# The Roles and Responsibilities of a SACRE

Standing Advisory Council  
for Religious Education

# Acronyms

## **SACRE**

- Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

## **WASACRE**

- Wales Association of SACREs

## **Estyn**

- The Schools Inspection Service for Wales

## **NAPFRE**

- National Advisory Panel for Religious Education

# A SACREs main function is:

‘To advise the authority on such matters connected to religious worship in county schools and religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus...’

(Welsh Office Circular 10/94)

# What is Religious Education

“Religious education in the twenty–first century encourages pupils to explore a range of philosophical, theological, ethical, and spiritual questions in a reflective, analytical, balanced way that stimulates questioning and debate. It also focuses on understanding humanity’s quest for meaning, the positive aspects of multi–faith/multicultural understanding and pupils’ own understanding and responses to life and religion. Religious education in the twenty–first century consists of an open, objective, exploratory approach but parents continue to have the legal right to withdraw their children.”

(National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19–year–olds in Wales)

# What happens in Religious Education?

“In religious education, learners develop thinking skills through a range of activities. Learners ask fundamental questions which are raised by human experience, the world and aspects of religion. They explore and make links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices that they study. They plan investigations by gathering and utilising a range of religious and non-religious sources and use these to evaluate and justify their personal responses. They use a range of critical and creative problem solving techniques in order to develop ideas and explore and challenge interpretations, preconceptions and possibilities.”

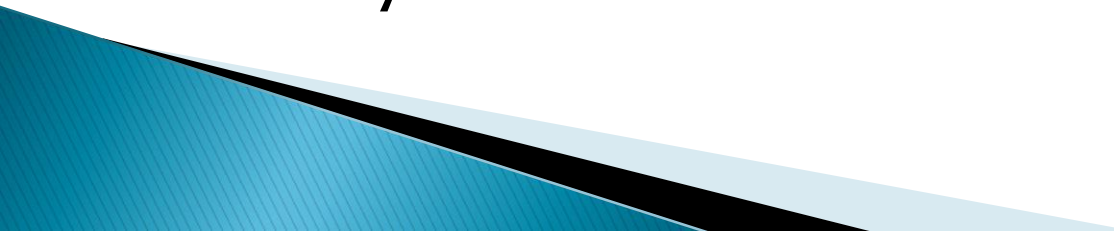
(National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales)

# Religious Education and the Curriculum

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

▶ (Welsh Office Circular 10/94)

# Status of RE

- RE is required to be included, alongside the National Curriculum, in the basic curriculum which all maintained and controlled schools must provide for their registered pupils
  - RE has equal standing in relation to National Curriculum subjects within a school's curriculum
  - RE is not subject to statutorily prescribed national attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements
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# Local Responsibility

- ▶ “...Detailed arrangements for the provision of religious education and collective worship are properly a matter of local responsibility.”
- ▶ (Welsh Office Circular 10/94)



# The broad role of SACRE is:

‘To support the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in schools. Each LA should work with its SACRE whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools.

Similarly it should work with its SACRE to monitor the provision of collective worship and to consider any action which might be taken to improve such provision. (Welsh Office Circular 10/94)

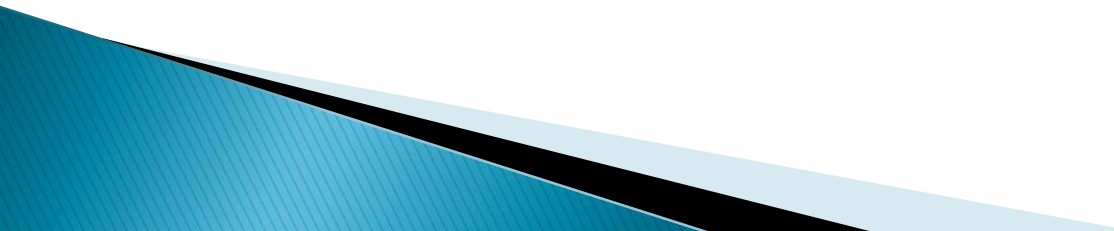
# Composition of SACRE

- ▶ Each local authority in Wales is required by law to establish a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), composed of three groups:
  - Christian denominations, such other religions and religious denominations and representatives of non-religious belief systems as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
  - Associations representing teachers.
  - LA representatives.
- ▶ SACRE may co-opt additional non-voting members in accordance with the constitution.

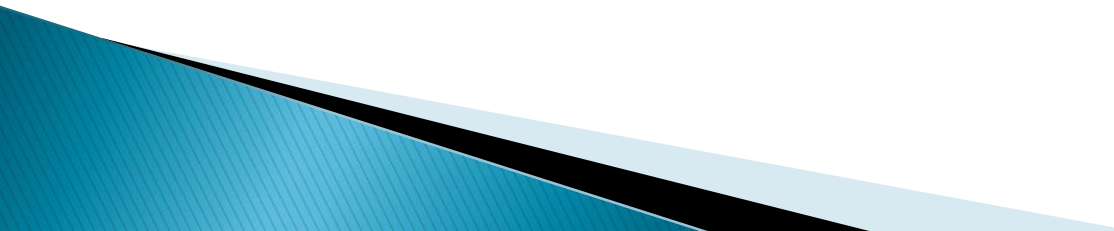
(The LA group on a SACRE and RE Adviser are not entitled to cast a vote)

# The Role of SACRE

## Advise the LA about RE and Collective Worship:

- meet statutory requirements
  - how the agreed syllabus for RE is best delivered
  - methods of teaching
  - resources to be used
  - training of teachers
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# Role of SACRE

- ▶ SACREs should monitor school approaches to assessing pupils' progress in RE and be aware of pupil uptake in examination in RE and RS.
  - ▶ SACREs should be aware of the links between pupils' RE and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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# The Role of SACRE

To require the LA to review its agreed syllabus for RE

- legal requirement for every LA to review its agreed syllabus within five years of the last review
- Any agreed syllabus “shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”

The SACRE is legally separate from the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and is a permanent body. In practice, ASCs and SACREs generally comprise very similar, if not the same, individuals.

# Agreed Syllabus

- LAs must adopt a locally agreed syllabus for religious education, as recommended by their SACREs, for implementation in their maintained and voluntary controlled schools and review their locally agreed syllabus every five years.
- The 'National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales', created by RE professionals in Wales and published by ACCAC in 2008 has been written to comply with the legal obligations for a locally agreed syllabus.
- It also offers an opportunity to provide a coherent and consistent assessment framework for the whole of Wales.

# Agreed Syllabus

- Each of the 22 LAs adopted or adapted the exemplar framework to create their own agreed syllabus, in their agreed syllabus conferences in 2008 and 2009.
- The Agreed Syllabuses in Wales are statutory documents



# The Role of SACRE

To consider applications from school for **determinations**

- Determinations are requests to be exempt from “broadly Christian worship”

To **consider complaints** about the provision and delivery of religious education and collective worship

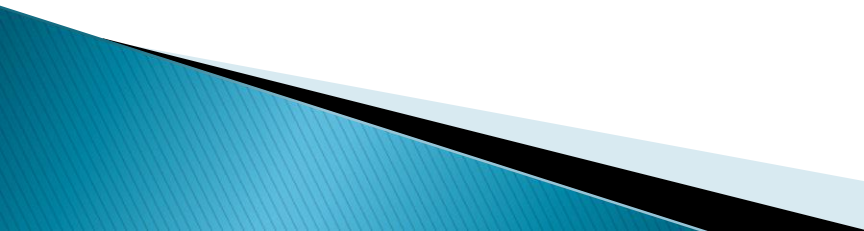
- To play a part in the local statutory complaints procedure where cases are referred to SACRE by the LA.



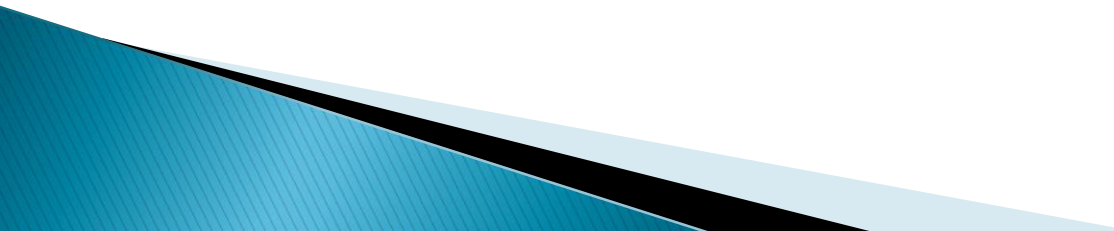
# The Role of SACRE

- ▶ **To publish an Annual Report on its work**
  - This is to be submitted to Welsh Government by 31st December of each year.

# The responsibilities of the LA in respect of SACRE

- ▶ Establish and fund a SACRE (including a clerk)
  - ▶ Appoint members to SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference
  - ▶ Determine and provide the advice and support required by SACRE
  - ▶ Inform SACRE on matters relating to religious education and collective worship
  - ▶ Provide information on school inspection and / or self-evaluation reports
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# The responsibilities of the LA in respect of SACRE

- ▶ Respond to advice offered by SACRE
  - ▶ Constitute and facilitate an agreed syllabus conference when required by SACRE
  - ▶ Notify the Minister for Education when a new syllabus is agreed
  - ▶ Consider curriculum complaints on RE and Collective Worship.
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# Impact of Successful Futures on RE

Since 2013, due to the proposed changes in the curriculum with the publication of Successful Futures, LA agreed syllabus conferences agreed to continue with their current agreed syllabi until such a time as the new curriculum for Wales and the implications for Religious Education are understood. This means that all schools, including those that are experimenting with their curriculum in light of Successful Futures, need to ensure that they are fulfilling the statutory requirements for RE according to their current locally agreed syllabus.

It is the role of SACRE to ensure this is the case.

# What can SACREs do?

- ▶ Provide support, help and advice on issues to do with the Local Agreed Syllabus;
- ▶ Form strong partnership between schools and SACRE in terms of reviewing RE,
- ▶ Identify what support the LA should give schools to improve the quality of RE
- ▶ Advise on and provide information on visits and visitors;
- ▶ Identify people to come in to the school to talk about faith and beliefs;
- ▶ Act as a vehicle for celebrating success disseminating effective practice in schools on matters of RE teaching and resources.
- ▶ Offer support to subject leader or co-ordinator.
- ▶ SACREs are places where inter-faith dialogue takes place in an education context and this can be of help to schools
- ▶ SACREs more and more are looking at involving children and young people in their work.

# Further information

**So you're joining your local SACRE...**

A handbook for SACRE members in Wales

<http://www.wasacre.org.uk/publications.html>

**Felly rydych yn ymuno â'ch CYSAG lleol...**

Llawlyfr ar gyfer aelodau CYSAGau yng Nghymru

<http://www.wasacre.org.uk/cym-publications.html>