

Annual Report



CYNGOR
monmouthshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
sir fynyvy

Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education (SACRE)

1st August, 2014 - 31st July, 2015

Annual Report Of Monmouthshire County Council Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education (SACRE)

1st August, 2014 - 31st July, 2015

Contents

	Page
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Advice To The LA	
2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus.	6
2.2 Standards in Religious Education	7
2.3 Methods of teaching and the choice of teaching materials	8
2.4 Teacher training	10
2.5 Collective Worship	11
2.6 Advice to the LA on other issues	12
3. Annexes:	
A) Number of meetings	16
B) The Composition of SACRE	16
C) Membership	17
D) Distribution of the Annual Report	18

1. Executive Summary

Summary of advice given to the LA:

- **RE Today Art in Heaven competition**

On SACRE's recommendation details of the RE Today Art in Heaven competition were sent to all schools.

- **Farmington Fellowship 2015 – 2016**

Opportunities provided through the Farmington Fellowship were distributed to all schools with the LAs support.

- **Holocaust Memorial Service**

All schools were provided with details of the 2015 Holocaust Memorial Service.

- **RE Celebration Days**

On SACRE's recommendation, the LA authority agreed to pursue the arrangement of RE Days for Year 6 pupils to attend at their cluster secondary school in 2016 / 2017.

- **Artefact Loan Service**

Due to the closure of the School's Library Service, the artefacts had since been handed back to the schools which had met the criteria of supporting the service since the start of the scheme.

- **Withdrawal Clause**

A guidance document for schools on managing the parental right of pupil withdrawal from RE is being prepared by the RE Consultant.

- **RE and the Welsh Baccalaureate**

SACRE recommended that the LA consults with schools on how the provision of RE will be managed alongside the introduction of the new Welsh Baccalaureate from September 2015.

- **RE News**

It was agreed to advise schools that the formerly published RE News was now available to view on line at the following address: www.religious-education-wales.org

- **Footballers in the Premier League**

SACRE commended the the CD Rom aimed at engaging boys in RE and this was subsequently made available to all schools and highly recommended as an excellent teaching resource.

- **SACRE RE News Bulletin**

The LA agreed to support the introduction of a termly SACRE RE News Bulletin and distribute to all schools via the Monmouthshire Headteachers' Association.

2. Advice To The LA

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Date of adoption of current Agreed Syllabus: September 2008
Last review held: 24th January, 2008
Agreed Syllabus implementation date: September 2008

2008 Agreed Syllabus

Printed copies of the Agreed Syllabus were distributed to all schools within the authority. Each primary school received 2 copies with each secondary school receiving four copies. This is in addition to the electronic copy previously distributed.

The concepts and skills based Agreed Syllabus is fully in line with other curriculum subject documentation and the Foundation Phase. It is supported by comprehensive guidance material.

Training opportunities have been provided to support the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus for Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2. A course for Key Stage 2 / 3 was offered but was cancelled due to insufficient number of applicants. Secondary schools have been advised of other training opportunities.

Review

SACRE initiated a review of the 2008 Agreed Syllabus as required within the five year period. Teacher representatives on SACRE have considered the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus and reported back to SACRE at several meetings.

It was felt that overall the programmes of study are effective however, the Level Descriptions need to be reviewed and revised.

It was agreed that any changes made to the Agreed Syllabus for RE should be in line with the National Curriculum and therefore the review of the Agreed Syllabus would be ongoing until the outcome of the WG National Curriculum review and the review of the Foundation Phase was known.

In its spring and summer 2015 meetings SACRE received and discussed a presentation regarding the Curriculum Review: Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales.

Members felt that the emphasis in the review regarding Religious Education was pleasing in that it was recommended that it remained a statutory subject on the curriculum. It was also positive that it was being recommended that religious education be placed in the Humanities area of Learning and Experience. It was noted that Religious Education was not a statutory function for nursery provision and it was hoped there was an opportunity via the Donaldson Review to change this. The Committee resolved to respond to the review as a SACRE before the 8th May 2015 deadline. The RE Consultant subsequently formulated a response to the review on behalf of Monmouthshire SACRE and this was submitted as part of the Great Debate consultation process.

SACRE will continue to monitor and respond to developments in this area.

2.2 Standards in religious education

Monitoring of Standards

The LA does not have a subject Adviser for religious education. An RE Consultant is employed to support SACRE. This does not allow time for extra activities and support such as visiting schools and monitoring provision. SACRE analyses school inspection reports and gleans what information it can in relation to religious education and collective worship. Since the 2010 inspection framework, this has become increasingly difficult with little or no evidence of religious education or collective worship contained within the reports. Therefore SACRE has in place a process of asking schools to provide their own evaluation of the provision of religious education and collective worship shortly after the school is inspected by Estyn.

Five nursery schools, one primary schools and one secondary school received inspections during this reporting period.

In considering the nursery inspection reports it was noted that legally, nursery schools are not required to provide religious education, however they are encouraged to do so alongside the rest of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

In nursery school 1, SACRE noted from the inspection report that the nursery's current performance and prospects for improvement were good. It was also noted that the nursery has good links with the community and that an appropriate range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, cultural, moral and social development effectively. For example, children celebrate a range of festivals from other cultures such as Divali and Chinese New Year.

In nursery school 2, SACRE noted from the inspection report that the playgroup's current performance and prospects for improvement were good and that arrangements to ensure children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are good.

In nursery school 3, SACRE noted from the inspection report that the nursery's current performance and prospects for improvement were good and that learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

In nursery school 4, SACRE noted from the inspection report that the pre-school's current performance and prospects for improvement were good and that learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral and social development.

In nursery school 5, SACRE noted from the inspection report that the nursery's current performance and prospects for improvement were good. It was also noted that suitable learning experiences promote children's personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their awareness of the wider world is developed through celebrating festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Divali.

It was noted that nursery schools generally tend to do well at celebrating festivals and that a wider coverage of RE could be encouraged. The Monmouthshire Early Years Education Officer suggested that she could make the provision of religious education a focus of her regular visits to nursery settings in the summer term and report back to SACRE at a future meeting

The RE Consultant subsequently wrote to the under-five settings and schools to congratulate them on their good practice. A recommended resource list to further encourage provision of religious education was also included with the letter.

In the primary school report SACRE noted from that the overall performance was good. No reference had been made in the report regarding collective worship. The curriculum allows for the celebration of diversity and different cultures. The school had submitted a self-evaluation report however, the comments made were general across the curriculum and there had been no specific reference made in respect of religious education. The RE Consultant had written to the school and was awaiting a response.

It was resolved that the issues raised regarding self-evaluation could be discussed at the next meeting of the Monmouthshire Association of Primary Headteachers.

In the secondary school report SACRE noted that the school's current performance and prospects for improvement were adequate. There were no recommendations in the report regarding Religious Education or collective worship. Members were pleased to note that the school promotes equality and diversity through assemblies. Assemblies and tutorial sessions provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their spiritual and moral development.

A self evaluation of RE had been requested and would be submitted to the next SACRE meeting.

It was reiterated that members of the SACRE Committee were available to visit schools and talk to students about religious education and this would be communicated to the school.

2.3 Methods of teaching and the choice of teaching materials

Comprehensive advice on methods of teaching and the choice of teaching materials is provided by the authority. Schools also have access to the professional adviser to SACRE on an independent basis for individual school support.

- **2008 Support Material**

Foundation Phase

Comprehensive Foundation Phase support material entitled 'Think Topic' was distributed to all settings and schools within the authority in summer 2008.

The production of the material in the form of a CD and hard copy was a joint project with two other authorities. A working party of teachers, Foundation Phase Training Officers and the RE Consultant developed topic based support material with Religious Education included as appropriate. Additional religious education support material was included in the pack as it was recognised that this area of learning often needs additional guidance.

Key Stage 2 / 3

The Key Stage 2 / 3 Agreed Syllabus Support Material was made available to all schools in autumn 2008. The material includes an updated outline long term plan for Key Stage 2 'straight classes' and a long term plan for 'mixed classes' over a two year cycle. There are twelve units of work, six of which are exemplified with samples of pupils' work. All of the units promote a skills based approach to RE and provide a wealth of activities and specific learning objectives. The units are aimed to be supported by the use of the 'Developing Primary RE' series produced by RE Today Services and schools have been encouraged to invest in the purchase of these publications.

Key Stage 3 teachers should find the support material helpful in providing an insight into the provision of RE at Key Stage 2 and the quality and standards of pupils' work being achieved. Many of the units identify key resources and areas of exploration for Key Stage 3 which will effectively build on prior learning.

Feedback from schools using the support material has been extremely positive. Teachers have found the material easy to use and very effective in supporting a skills based approach to Religious Education. SACRE will continue to monitor the impact of the use of the material across schools within the authority.

- **RE Today publications**

To accompany the locally produced support material, schools were advised that it was highly recommended that they purchase the '*Developing Primary RE*' and '*Developing Secondary RE*'. A significantly reduced cost was negotiated with RE Today Services and schools were invited to place an order via the authority. Sixteen primary schools subsequently purchased the resources which have been cross-referenced with the Agreed Syllabus Support Material units of work.

- **Farmington Fellowship 2015 – 2016**

Opportunities provided through the Farmington Fellowship were distributed to all schools with the LAs support.

- **Holocaust Memorial Service**

All schools were provided with details of the 2015 Holocaust Memorial Service.

- **RE Celebration Days**

On SACRE's recommendation, the LA authority agreed to support the arrangement of RE Days for Year 6 pupils to attend at their cluster secondary school in 2016 / 2017.

- **Artefact Loan Service**

Due to the closure of the Schools' Library Service the comprehensive collection of religious education artefacts has been distributed amongst five schools within the county. The artefacts are available for other schools to borrow subject to making arrangements with the host school. To date, no other school had requested to loan the artefacts, however, each of the host schools is making good use of the resources with their pupils in their own schools.

- **RE News**

Schools were advised that the formerly published RE News was now available to view on line at the following address: www.religious-education-wales.org

- **Footballers in the Premier League**

The valuable resource pack for schools, produced by Mary Parry, the RE Adviser for Carmarthenshire, explores some of the issues of being a Muslim and a footballer. The CD Rom, aimed at engaging boys in RE, was made available to all schools and is highly recommended as an excellent teaching resource.

- **Withdrawal Clause**

The RE Consultant is writing a guidance document for schools on managing the right of withdrawal from RE. This will be offered to WASACRE as a resource to be shared with all schools across Wales.

2.4 Teacher training

WASACRE

It was noted that WASACRE had agreed to provide training courses for teachers across Wales and that a programme of possible courses was being considered.

These would be made known to schools as soon as details have been finalised.

Local Consortium Training

It was agreed that as training courses for RE had not been provided locally for the last two years, the RE Consultant would consider arranging some courses for the next academic year. These would be facilitated by the South Wales Education Achievement Service and details would be made known to schools as soon as available.

2.5 Collective Worship

Inspection Findings

SACRE continued to analyse inspection reports in order to monitor the provision of collective worship in schools within the authority although evidence is limited. Self evaluation reports are requested from schools in order to provide details of collective worship provision.

One primary school and one secondary school received inspections during this reporting period. SACRE was pleased to note that neither of the reports stated that statutory requirements in relation to collective worship were not being fulfilled.

In primary school 1, SACRE noted from the inspection report that the “Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development is effective.” There was no direct reference to collective worship. The school’s own self-evaluation for collective worship was helpful and indicated good provision in this area.

In the secondary school report SACRE was pleased to note from the inspection report that “Assemblies and tutorial sessions provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their spiritual and moral development well.”

A letter was sent to each of the schools acknowledging their achievements.

Collective Worship Guidance

In 2010, locally produced guidance on the provision of collective worship was distributed to all schools within the authority together with Estyn’s Collective Worship Guidance document and the WASACRE guidance on sixth form provision.

On the recommendation of SACRE faith representatives, schools have also been advised that the guidance should prove useful to visiting clergy who contribute to the school’s collective worship.

In July 2012 the WASACRE Guidance on Collective Worship was distributed to all schools.

Christian Aid Assemblies

Details of Christian Aid Assembly ideas are forwarded to schools on a regular basis.

Determinations

SACRE did not receive any requests for determinations this year.

2.6 Advice to the LA on other issues

Local Issues:

Visit to Krakow

Forty Year 11 pupils from Caldicot School benefitted from a four day residential visit to Krakow where they met a survivor of the Holocaust. Pupils also visited Auschwitz / Birkennau. One of the evenings was spent having a meal at a kosher restaurant where pupils also enjoyed Jewish folk music.

Monmouthshire Equality and Diversity Group

SACRE is represented on the Monmouthshire Equality and Diversity Group by the RE Consultant who regularly attends meetings.

Monmouthshire SACRE Members support Blaenau Gwent School

Liz Arthur, RE Co-ordinator from Ebbw Fawr Primary School in Blaenau Gwent had organised an RE week and was most grateful to several Monmouthshire SACRE Members for attending and working with the pupils.

Mrs Jilani had worked with the nursery children and gave them opportunity to dress in traditional clothing. Children were shown books written in Arabic and had also written their names in Arabic.

The Reverend Peter Baines had undertaken a Bible Workshop with Year 6 pupils.

Mr Soam Sharma provided a workshop using the Map from Memory strategy encouraging the children to understand the different aspects and significance of items found at a Hindu shrine.

Sue Cave had also provided a workshop on Virtues and Values for pupils.

Secondary School Visit to Jerusalem

Mr. Andrew Jones, representative of the Teachers' Associations, provided an interesting presentation on a recent trip to Jerusalem, for Holocaust Studies.

During the presentation we were informed that:

- The Holocaust's unique dynamics must be observed while teaching the event.
- The story of Anne Frank was only one story within the Holocaust.
- The Holocaust must be contextualised within the larger historical framework.
- Holocaust Education was appropriate at KS3 and above.
- Graphic imagery should be used sparingly and carefully when teaching the Holocaust.
- Teachers must recognise that teaching the Holocaust could be controversial.
- The selection of appropriate methodologies was critical in developing units e.g. no role play!
- The vast numbers associated with the event must be accompanied by personal stories.

We were told that the trip was thought to be very beneficial and that applications could be made to attend annually, via the Holocaust Education Trust website www.het.org.uk. The website also provided helpful resources.

Pilgrimage to Haifa

SACRE received a presentation by Sue Cave regarding her nine day pilgrimage to Haifa in November 2014.

The presentation included photographs of the Bahá'í World Centre, situated in the Haifa-Akká area of northern Israel, and of the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel, in Haifa, whose golden dome overlooks Ben-Gurion Avenue, and of the surrounding gardens.

We were informed that:

- Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is one of the holiest Bahá'í observances set down by Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith and Messenger of God and to receive this bounty of visiting the Holy Places is an inestimable privilege, infinitely precious to every Bahá'í pilgrim.
- The purpose is to pray and meditate in the Sacred Shrine of Baha'u'llah, in Bahjí, which to Bahá'ís is the holiest spot on earth and the point towards which they turn in prayer each day, and in the Shrines of the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- There are no rituals but shoes are removed before entering the Shrines, dress is modest, and there is a special prayer that can be said in the Shrines.
- Pilgrims draw inspiration from the time spent at various historical sites associated with the lives of the Holy Family.
- Sue and her friend June returned home spiritually refreshed to continue to be of service to their fellow human beings and share the joy of their pilgrimage with family and friends.
- The historical association of the Bahá'í Faith with Israel dates back to when Bahá'u'lláh and his family were sent into exile from His native land of Persia (Iran) and arrived fifteen years later in 1868 as a prisoner in Akká, at the time a penal colony of the Ottoman Empire.
- During Bahá'u'lláh's exile, His followers would travel from Persia, sometimes for months and on foot, to visit Him in person. After His passing, Bahá'ís came from farther away, including the first group of Western pilgrims who arrived in 1898. The practice of pilgrimage to the Haifa-'Akká area has continued.
- In July 2008 the Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb were added to the United Nations' World Heritage list, recognised for their "outstanding universal value" as part of humanity's cultural heritage. They are the first sites connected with a religious tradition born in modern times to be added to the list, which is maintained by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

On behalf of the SACRE Committee, the Chairman thanked Sue for providing an interesting and informative presentation.

RE and the Welsh Baccaulaureate

It was reported that the new Welsh Baccaulaureate has impinged on RE time allocation in some schools across Wales. SACRE therefore recommended that the LA consults with Monmouthshire schools on how the provision of RE will be managed alongside the introduction of the new Welsh Baccaulaureate from September 2015.

One secondary school reported that from September 2015 all students will study RS Full Course which means that time has been gained due to the introduction of the Welsh Baccaulaureate.

Another secondary school reported that pupils who do not choose RS at Key Stage 4 study some RE via the Welsh Baccaulaureate which is taught by form tutors. However, this situation creates difficulty in monitoring the RE skills being covered.

In the third school within the LA all pupils will continue to do full course RS, however, teaching time has been reduced at Key Stage 4 from four hours a fortnight to three hours a fortnight teaching although this is not due to the Welsh Baccaulaureate.

Fourth school

In the fourth school, it was reported that the implementation of the new Welsh Baccaulaureate has had no impact on RS to date. The arrangements remain in place for all pupils to take either a short course in RS over two years or a short course in Year 10 with a further short course in Year 11.

National Issues:

Getting on Together Project (GOT)

SACRE member Andrew Jones from Caldicot School had been invited to Bradford City Council to present on the 'Getting on Together Project' which addressed ways of dealing with extremism.

WASACRE

Monmouthshire SACRE is a member of the Welsh Association of SACREs and its representatives regularly attend meetings. Nominated representatives of Monmouthshire SACRE at WASACRE meetings are Bahá'í representative Mrs. Sue Cave, Mrs. Sharon Perry-Phillips, teacher representative and Gill Vaisey, RE Consultant.

The LA funds supply cover and travel expenses for teacher representatives to attend WASACRE meetings.

Gill Vaisey also represents Monmouthshire on the WASACRE Executive Committee.

Presentation to WASACRE by Monmouthshire SACRE Members

At its Autumn 2014 meeting, members of Monmouthshire SACRE gave a presentation to WASACRE members describing their part in the successful Transition event where pupils from year 6 from each of the primary schools spent the day at their local secondary school and were involved in a variety of workshops, delivered by different faith group representatives. This opportunity allowed pupils to learn about and experience a number of different faiths in a fun and dynamic way.

A copy of the presentation is available on the WASACRE website for members to view, and to share with their SACREs as an example of the kind of work SACREs could do to support RE in their local schools.

It had been noted that Monmouthshire SACRE had a diverse membership which was commended and acknowledged as an asset to the work of the committee.

National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE)

The RE Consultant to Monmouthshire SACRE, Gill Vaisey, is a member of NAPfRE and regularly attends meetings on SACRE's behalf. In this way SACRE is able to keep abreast of developments in Wales and play a crucial role in informing decisions and policies that affect religious education.

Curriculum Review: Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales.

SACRE received and discussed a presentation regarding the Curriculum Review: Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales.

Having received the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The emphasis in the review regarding Religious Education was pleasing in that it was recommended that it remained a statutory subject on the curriculum.
- It was pleasing that it was being recommended that religious education be placed in the Humanities area of Learning and Experience.
- Sharon Perry-Phillips informed the Committee that religious education had become a part of the Humanities area in her school. It was noted that the experience gained from this had been invaluable.
- Religious Education was not a statutory function for nursery provision. It was hoped there was an opportunity via the Donaldson Review to change this.
- The Committee decided it wished to respond to the review as a SACRE before 8th May 2015. The RE Consultant subsequently formulated a response to the review on behalf of Monmouthshire SACRE and this was submitted as part of the The Great Debate consultation process.

NAPfRE met on 15th April 2015 to discuss the implications for RE of Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales. Following a full day of analysis of the Review's recommendations, NAPfRE formulated its response to the Great Debate. The group will monitor further developments in the curriculum review and respond accordingly on an ongoing basis as appropriate.

3. Annexes

Annex A) **Number of meetings**

Monmouthshire SACRE met on three occasions this year:

7th November, 2014

27th March, 2015

5th June, 2015

Annex B) **The Composition Of Monmouthshire SACRE**

6 Representatives of the Local Education Authority

12 Representatives of Religious Denominations

7 Representatives of Teachers' Associations

2 Co-opted Places

The committee is also supported by the following officers:

Clerk to SACRE

School Improvement Officer responsible for RE

RE Consultant

Annex C) **Membership Of Monmouthshire County Council
Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education**

As at 31st July, 2015:

Representatives of the Local Education Authority:

Councillor E. J. Hackett Pain Chairperson
Councillor P. Clarke
Councillor D.W.H. Jones
Councillor B. Strong
Councillor A. Easson
Councillor J. George

Representatives Of Religious Denominations

Free Churches (4 places):

Gwent Baptist Association	The Reverend Dr. P. Baines
The Salvation Army	Major S. Wilson
2 vacancies	

Church In Wales	Mrs. V. Howells
Roman Catholic Church	Sister D. O'Donnell
Bahá'í	Mrs. S. Cave
Buddhist	Ngakma Shé-zér Chatral
Hindu	Mr. S. Sharma
Jewish	Mr. A. Davidson
Sikh	Mrs. N. Baicher
Muslim	Mrs. F. Jilani

Representatives Of Teachers' Associations

NASUWT	Mr. A. Jones
NAHT	Ms. A. Wiggins
ATL	Mrs. R. Davies
NUT	Mrs. C. Cooper
ATL	Mrs. S. Perry Phillips
NUT	Ms. M. Millington
NUT	Mrs. J. Thomas

Co-option

Mrs. K. Fitter
Mr. S. Mock

Officers:

Ms G. Vaisey	RE Consultant
Mrs. S. Randall-Smith	School Improvement Officer
Mrs. R. Williams	Clerk to SACRE

Annex D) **Distribution of the Annual Report**

A copy of this annual report has been sent to the following organisations:

- Monmouthshire County Council Full Council
- All Monmouthshire County Council maintained primary, secondary and special schools
- Voluntary Aided Schools in Monmouthshire
- University of Wales, Newport
- Welsh Government / DfES
- National Library of Wales

It has been made available to WASACRE and all Local Education Authorities in Wales via the Welsh Association of SACRE's website.