

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/01574/15

Libby Jones

Libby.Jones@wrexham.gov.uk

7 September 2015

Dear Libby

Thank you for your e-mail dated 11 August regarding proposed changes to Religious Education (RE).

Firstly, I would like to make it absolutely clear that I am not removing RE from the curriculum in Wales, despite what some of the tabloid press might allege. In my view, RE has a vitally important role to play in supporting learners to explore their personal beliefs and values in our 21st century, multicultural society. I am instead considering how RE, philosophy and ethics might be strengthened within the context of the new Humanities Area of Learning and Experience.

As such, in June, I announced my support for the development of a new curriculum in Wales by accepting, in full, the recommendations contained within the Successful Futures report by Professor Graham Donaldson, including recommendation 9 which relates to RE remaining as a statutory curriculum requirement.

Your support and contribution to Professor Donaldson's review has been valuable and the vision that has been set out for a new curriculum in Wales is, both, exciting and ambitious. The scope and scale of the change has radical and wide-ranging implications for our education system.

In line with the recommendations in Professor Donaldson's report, I am determined that our schools and practitioners, as well as other key stakeholders, will be at the forefront of the design and development of our new curriculum.

I have invited regional education consortia to work with their schools – primary, secondary and special – to apply to become Pioneer Schools. These schools will lead on the design and development of the new curriculum, as part of an all-Wales partnership, alongside other key stakeholders.

Meaningful engagement will be essential to achieving the vision set out in Professor Donaldson's report – a vision that I share. For this reason, I very much welcome your offer of support. Further details of how you and others can be involved in this process will be communicated in due course. We are currently developing a plan which will set out how Professor Donaldson's recommendations will be taken forward - this will be published in the autumn.

I am aware that you have a regular meeting scheduled with my officials on 24th September at which I understand these issues will be discussed, I have asked my officials to provide me with an update following this meeting.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that the changes to our curriculum going forward will be subject to full public debate and consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis'.

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills