

NEW WELSH BACCALAUREATE AND RE



With the launch of the new Welsh Baccalaureate in September 2015, WASACRE has been interested to know how schools have managed the implementation of the new qualification in their individual setting, and whether the Welsh Baccalaureate has had a positive or negative impact on religious education in schools across Wales.

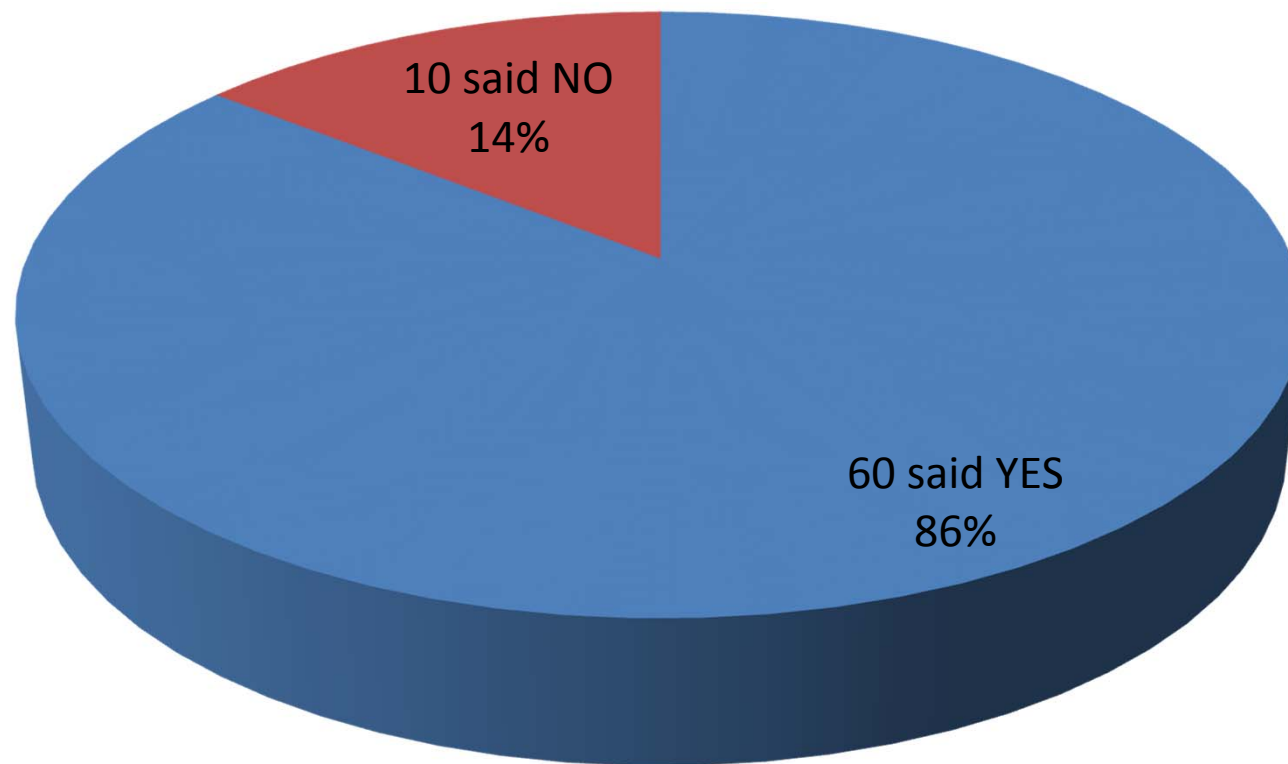
In order to monitor this situation and to gain a deeper understanding of what is actually happening in schools across the country, WASACRE produced a brief survey which was circulated by SACREs to all of the secondary schools within each local authority for them to complete and return.

16 out of 22 SACREs were able to send in returns from their schools.

70 schools in total completed the survey

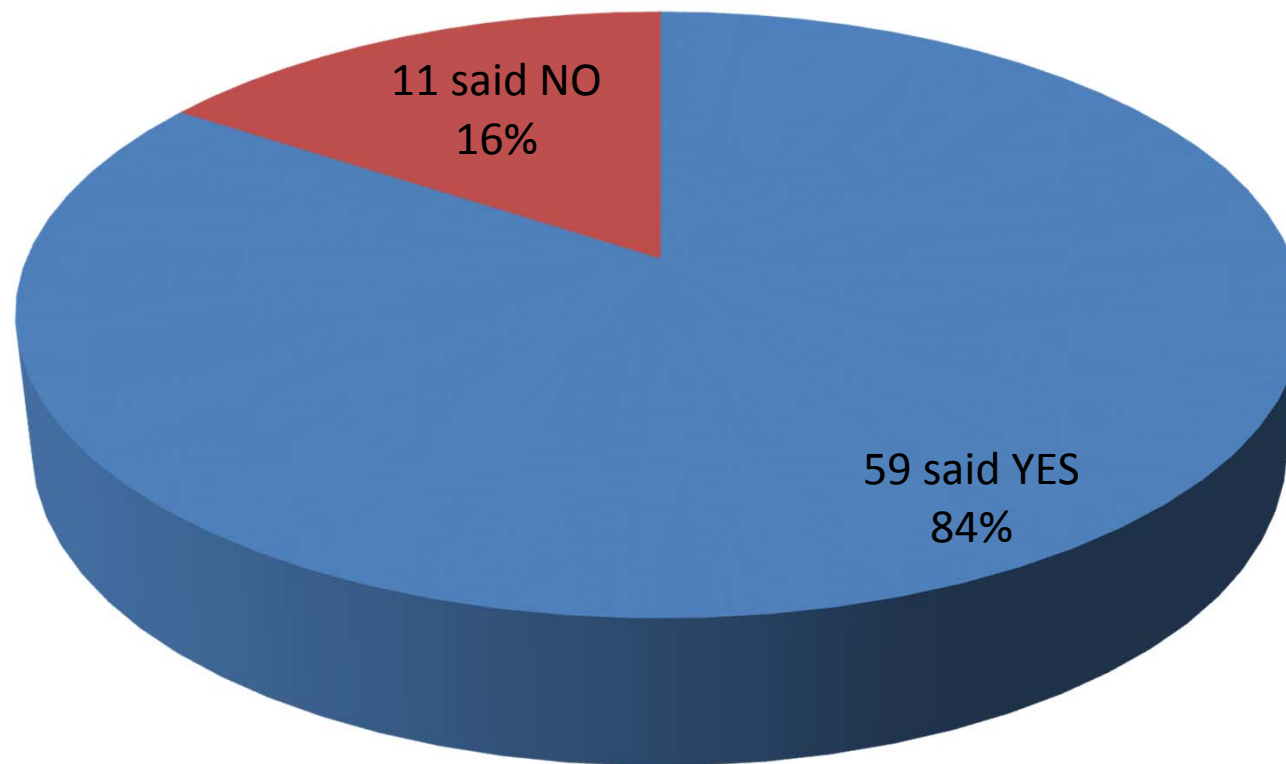
The following slides show an overview of the survey's results

Q1. Since the implementation of the New Welsh Bac, does your school provide statutory Religious Education according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE at KS4?



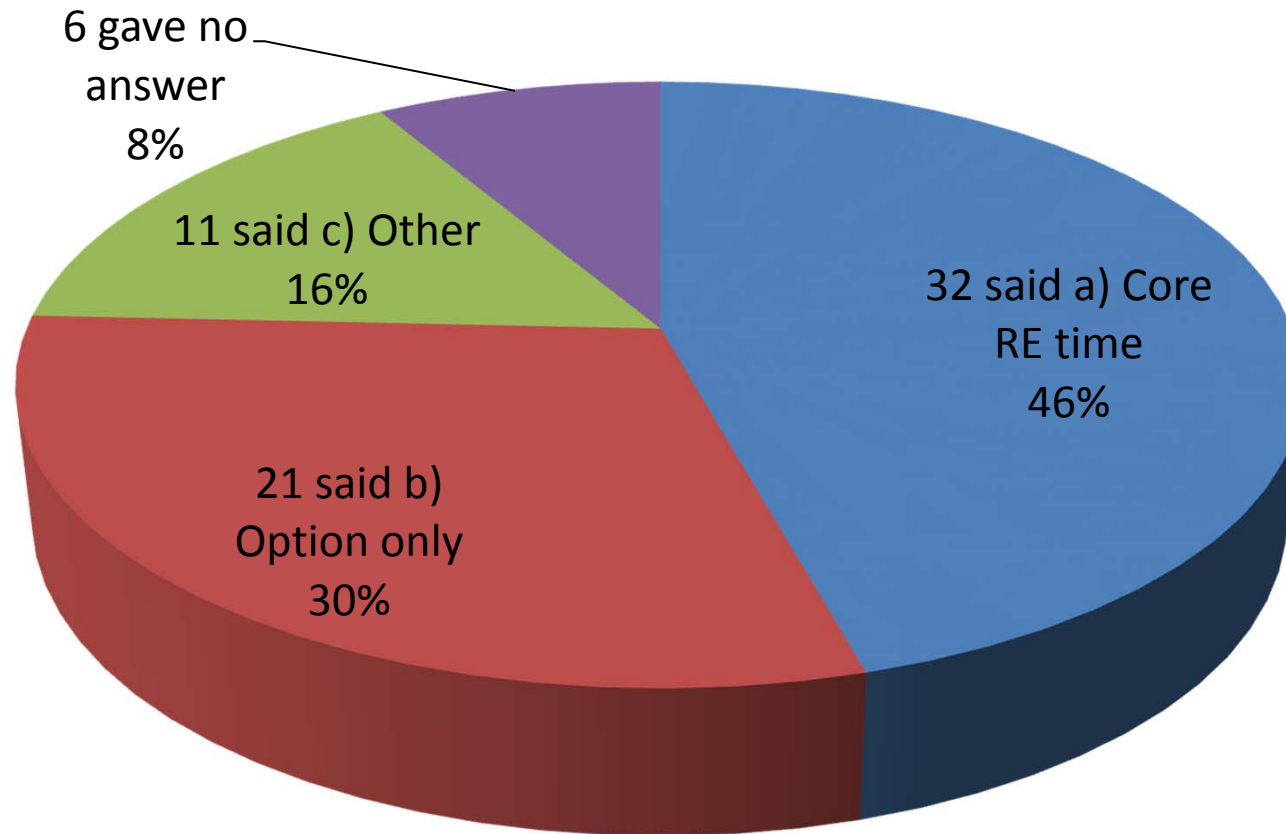
*40 schools provided details to support their answer

Q2. Since the implementation of the New Welsh Bac, does your school offer a Religious Studies GCSE qualification as one of the supporting qualifications for Welsh Bac at KS4?



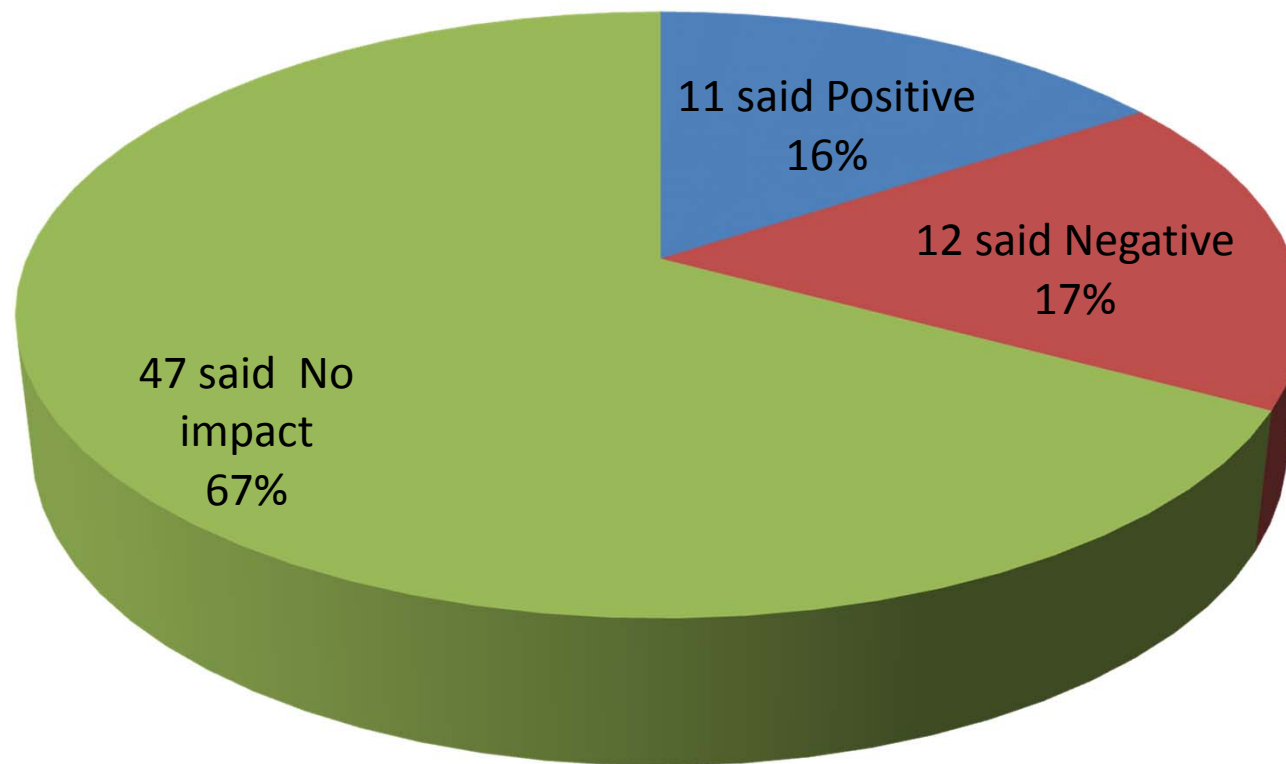
*28 schools provided details to support their answer

Q2. a) If YES, is the RS GCSE course taught within:
a) Core RE time (for all KS4 pupils), b) Option only, c) Other



*29 schools provided details to support their answer

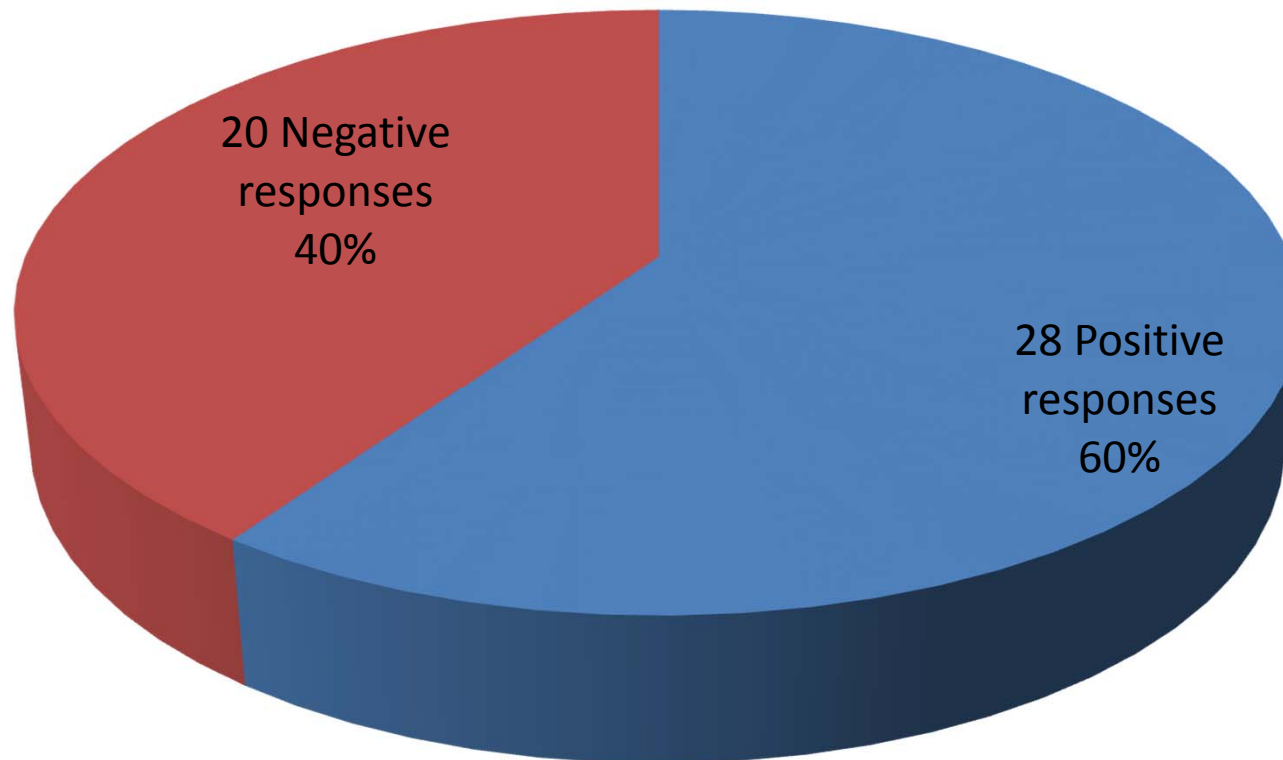
Q3. Has the New Welsh Bac had more of a positive/negative or no impact on RE?



*1 school provided details to support their answer

Q 4. How has the New Welsh Bac had a positive effect on RE in your school?

Q 5. How has the New Welsh Bac had a negative effect on RE in your school?



Negative impact on RE

I am concerned that the new, more challenging RS GCSE may require additional curriculum time to deliver. This time is unlikely to be available due to the demands the new WBQ now places on the timetable

The time available for all subjects has been reduced due to the introduction of the new WBQ. It makes coverage of RS GCSE, as all other subjects more difficult

Has led to statutory RE at KS4 being covered in Global Citizenship element of WBQ

Core RE time has been reduced by 50% to accommodate the new WBQ

Loss of compulsory GCSE and a reduction in time allocation for option based GCSE's- this has impacted all option subjects

The time taken developing and practicing the skills required for the Global Citizenship Challenge has taken time away from the development of the RS skills and the examination practice that we would normally build into our lessons

Statutory RE has to be fitted into the WBQ. It is taught by form tutors who aren't RE specialists. Despite SOW and lesson resources from the SL, few teachers find the time to fit in the RE in an otherwise very full WB course. When it is included, RE skills aren't specifically developed but rather the WBQ skills/outcomes

Positive impact on RE

We will be delivering one of the WBQ elements as part of the GCSE provision in Yr 10 (Global Citizenship), but this fits well with topics we already cover such as responses to poverty and justice/injustice

As a school where RS is the highest opted for subject then statutory RS was repetitive and many were put off as a result. WBQ allows us to look at the content so it is different from GCSE course whilst maintaining an RE theme in line with AS and link in with skill development, thus allowing separation from the GCSE keeping pupil interest in both subjects

The unit Global Citizenship has encouraged a thinking style approach to the teaching and learning element which pupils enjoy

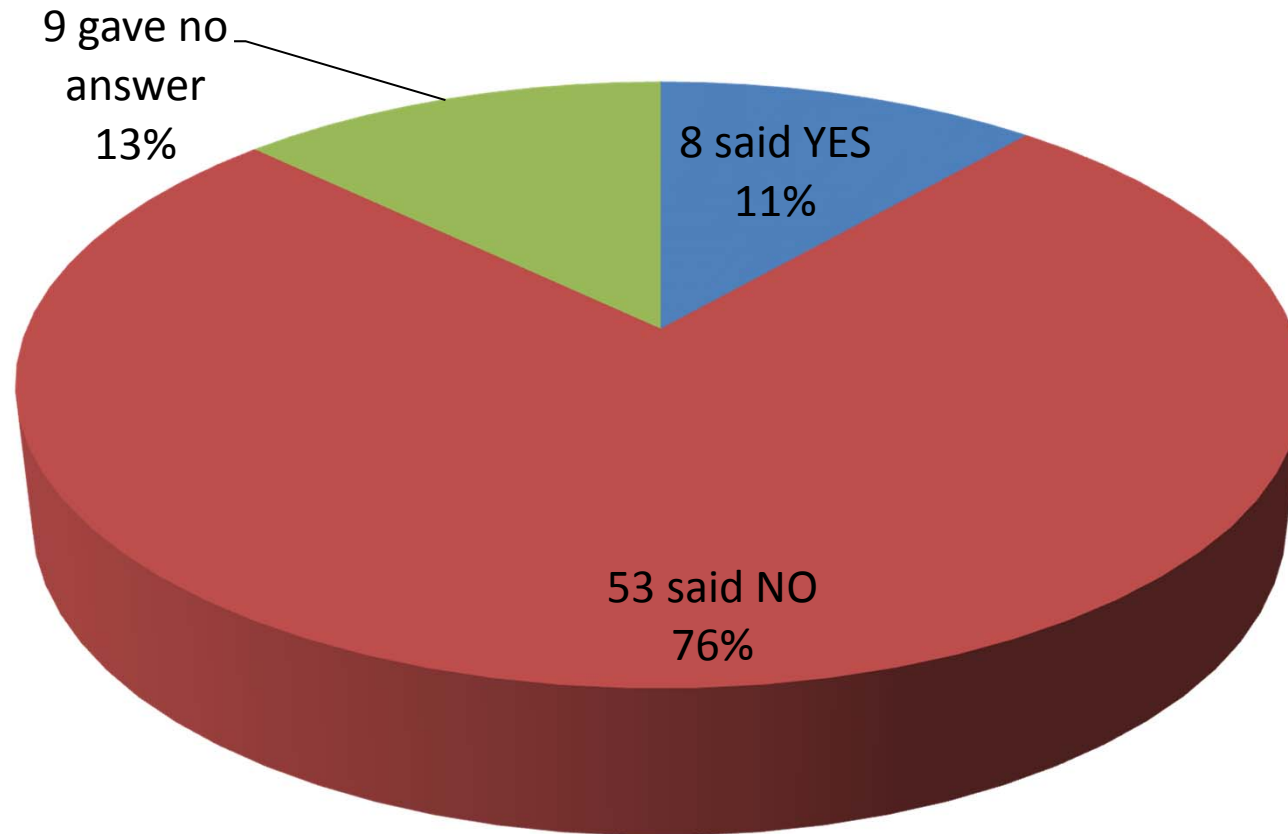
The moral discussion and thinking required for the new WBQ underpins the core values and required empathy included at GCSE RE.

No longer complaints from pupils about RE being a compulsory short course GCSE. We now have the ability to offer a full course RE GCSE

RE curriculum time has been increased by 1 hour a fortnight this academic year as a result of the new WBQ

Due to reconstructing the timetable to accommodate more lessons for WBQ this allowed the school the opportunity to allocate more time for RE. As a result the decision was made to enter all from short course to full course

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



*23 schools provided details to support their answer

Responses to the offer of support from

SACREs

When the new GCSE specification is issued I feel we will need more support with regards to developing resources etc.

Implementation of the new specifications. Not sure if my curriculum time will be enough as it is extremely difficult to complete the course at the moment

An analysis of how many schools are fulfilling KS4 obligations as a result of removal of compulsory RE lessons due to Welsh Bacc

The WBQ is much more demanding in terms of time and skills than we first thought it would be. Although we have redesigned our GCSE Course to integrate it into the WBQ, from what I have seen of the new subject specifications I am not sure that it will be compatible in the future which is a concern in terms of delivering good quality RE.

Support in expressing concern about the mess the new GCSE is in! Even with the delay, the new syllabus seems to be out of step with Donaldson et al, and the idea of skills/PISA style teaching. Rather, it is going back to the 'tell me 50 things about Judaism'. In particular, less able pupils will find this impossible, and all pupils will find this lacking in relevance for them.

Food for thought

How will WASACRE respond?