

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC) held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 10th September, 2025 at 3.00 pm with remote attendance**

PRESENT: FAITH AND BELIEF REPRESENTATIVES

Revd. J. Greaves
Phillip Middleton
Clare Werrett

COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

County Councillor Laura Wright (Chair)
County Councillor Louise Brown
County Councillor Rachel Buckler
County Councillor Su McConnel
County Councillor Paul Pavia
County Councillor Angela Sandles

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES

Charlotte Rhodes
Clare Rosato
Susan Marles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Geraint Edwards	Head of Litigation and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Hayley Jones	Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE)

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor John Crook (substituted by Su McConnel), Bev Bannon, Maddie Sareireh, Sue Cave.

1. Confirmation of the appointment by Council of the Cabinet Member for Education as Chair of SAC

It was confirmed that Council had appointed the Cabinet Member for Education, County Councillor Laura Wright, as Chair of SAC.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

County Councillor Louise Brown was appointed as Vice Chair.

3. Welcome, Introduction of New Members and Apologies for Absence

The Chair noted that several new members had been recruited to SAC, as follows:

Bev Bannon, representing the Roman Catholic Church
Tina Bryant, Teacher Representative

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Gareth James, Teacher Representative
Susan Marles, Teacher Representative
Phillip Middleton, Humanist
Charlotte Rhodes, Teacher Representative
Clare Rosato, Teacher Representative
Clare Werrett, representing the Church in Wales

The new members were all welcomed to SAC. Those in attendance introduced themselves.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Presentation: Staff from Archbishop Rowan Williams Church in Wales VA Primary School

The Chair welcomed Nicky Wheeler, Deputy Headteacher of Archbishop Rowan Williams Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School to the meeting who provided a presentation about life at the school.

She explained about the Welsh Curriculum; the four purposes, cross curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence, the six different areas of learning and experience of Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Humanities, Languages, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics and Numeracy, Science and Technology.

She explained the 'What Matters' statements and the 5 cross-curricular themes of Relationships and Sexuality Education, Human rights, Diversity, Careers and work-related experiences and Local, national and international contexts.

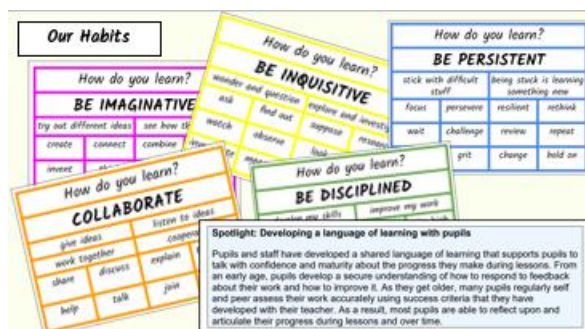
Mrs Wheeler presented the school curriculum vision statement. She explained the Curriculum offer at the school and that supporting provision includes using Understanding Christianity, Forest Schools and Eco schools to help teach the children to be responsible and ethical citizens and Thrive and ELSA to support the children's social and emotional skills.

The School's RVE Provision was explained. RVE is no longer a stand-alone topic but is delivered as part of a theme, a topic, or is the topic driver or the centre of a topic. The RVE Lead has written clear guidance and policy and has worked with the Church in Wales Diocesan Director of Education to conduct a mock Section 50 inspection. The RVE Lead now shares her good practice with other RVE Leads across the diocese. Christian values permeate through all learning; other faiths and non-religious beliefs are also taught. Mrs Wheeler explained how the school's values are embodied in worship and emphasised the importance of Visitors and visits to provide examples of lived experience.

Touching on professional learning, it was explained that every year staff choose a book to read together and reflect upon. Parents, and Governors are also invited to read the chosen book (examples were provided). Policies and practice are updated based on this reflection e.g. practice has changed to improve the children's language of learning used when listening to learners (see below). This approach is to be developed across the cluster.

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Mrs Wheeler shared a typical day in the life of the school and encouraged members to visit the school website to view photographs and information about the school.

A Member welcomed the school's stance on the time allocated to worship and collective worship. Other Members had visited the school and felt very welcome. They confirmed they had experienced the school's positive ethos and practices as explained in the presentation. The Chair and SAC Members thanked Mrs Wheeler for her presentation.

6. To note the record of the previous meeting held on 19th March 2025 and the Recruitment Panels held on 19th March 2025 and 26th June 2025

The notes of the following meetings were approved as an accurate record:

SAC Meeting: 19th March 2025

SAC Recruitment Committee: 19th March 2025

SAC Recruitment Committee: 26th June 2025

Arising from the minutes, a Member noted that the census on faith and belief had not been circulated to schools. It was agreed this matter should be followed up. [ACTION: Hayley Jones/Sharon Randall-Smith]

7. Membership Update

Regarding the two vacancies for teacher representatives, it was confirmed that trade unions have been approached again.

A Member noted that there are also three vacancies for Free Church Council representatives. The Clerk advised that Cytun is no longer able to assist with filling vacancies but have provided a list of churches/organisations within the Free Church Council to approach and also suggested that there may be contacts from within SAC.

8. To receive an update from the EAS RVE Advisor

The RVE Adviser provided an update as follows:

In terms of Professional Learning (PL), there will be continued emphasis on PL throughout the year. Schools will receive support for curriculum planning and development where needed with a shift towards exploring progression within the curriculum. The EAS will continue to identify and share examples of effective practice across schools.

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Secondary Schools receive support for the new GCSE, particularly the Non-Examined Assessment (NEA). PL and network meetings are planned to embed this.

In collaboration with Bangor University, training for teachers without a background in RE/RVE is planned with the aim of building confidence and skills for effective RVE teaching. To enhance effective pedagogy, the EAS is revisiting and introducing new teaching strategies to provide tangible tools for immediate classroom application, PL sessions and network meetings for both primary and secondary phases. Enquiry-Based Learning is being explored looking specifically at enquiry processes in RVE to enhance curriculum development.

The first meeting of the Youth SAC is scheduled in two weeks. The Youth SAC will be hosting an Interfaith panel with diverse religious and non-religious representatives. The Youth panel members have been asked to prepare questions for discussion. The event is aligned with Interfaith Week.

A member asked to see the resources provided to the Youth SAC particularly about the religious and non-religious groups. It was confirmed that there are no formal resources only questions devised by the schools themselves. These will be provided in advance to the panels. Topics include climate, science, religion, and Artificial Intelligence

More information was requested on the structure of the Interfaith panel, which religious and non-religious groups are represented and how representatives are chosen.

The EAS continues to provide bespoke School support based on individual schools' needs.

The RVE Adviser noted that no RC Primary Schools in Monmouthshire were able to provide a presentation on the S50 inspection due to workload pressures. The RVE Adviser provided a presentation from St. Helen's RC Primary School in Caerphilly which outlined how Religious Education (RE) is structured and delivered in a Catholic school:

1. Identity and Mission of a Catholic School

Catholic schools must clearly understand and embrace their unique identity.

Faith should permeate all aspects of school life.

RE is taught as truth, not just belief (e.g., Jesus as the Son of God).

2. Structure of Religious Education

RE is delivered through three interconnected areas:

Knowledge – Religious Education Directory (RED): "To know you more clearly"

Worship – Prayer and Liturgy: "To love you more dearly"

Life – Catholic Life and Mission: "To follow you more nearly"

3. Aims of Catholic Education

Systematic study of Catholic beliefs.

Authentic teaching of faith.

Dialogue of encounter with other worldviews.

Critical and personal engagement.

Application across subjects (e.g., history, literacy).

4. Teaching Methodology

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RED is structured around: Hear, Believe, Celebrate, Live.
Teachers are supported with background notes and professional development.
Creative teaching methods include drama, art, outdoor activities, and cross-curricular links.

5. Assessment and Planning

Assessment is in transition; outcomes are defined but not yet formalised.
RE follows a liturgical calendar with consistent themes across school years.

6. Teacher Support and Inclusivity

Teachers of all faiths (or none) can teach RE with proper training.
Culture of honesty and support for teachers unfamiliar with Catholic teachings.
Use of governors and parish priests for guidance and development.

7. Prayer and Liturgy

Daily prayer, Christian meditation, and weekly assemblies.
Creative worship practices (e.g., burying and resurrecting "Hallelujah").
Formal liturgies like Mass are integral and unchangeable.

8. Catholic Life and Mission

Based on the Jesuit Pupil Profile – virtues integrated into curriculum planning.
Purpose planning starts with virtues and links to Welsh curriculum.
Catholic Social Teaching and ethics taught discretely.

9. RSE and Ethics

Fertile Heart and Life to the Full programmes used to meet Welsh Government requirements.
Faith-based approach to relationships and ethics education.

10. Inspection and Accountability

Schools are inspected every three years across all three areas.
Grading system similar to Ofsted; all areas must be addressed.

11. FAQs Addressed

Non-Catholics can teach in Catholic schools.
Teachers lead prayer regardless of personal belief.
RE must constitute 10% of the weekly timetable.
Bishops' Conference of England and Wales sets guidelines.

9. WASACRE Business

1. Nominations to the WASACRE Executive Committee: Noted
2. WASACRE Minutes of the March 2025 meeting: Noted
3. SAC Annual Reports: Slides from Phil Lord presentation: Noted
4. WASACRE Letter to Lynne Neagle, Cabinet Secretary for Education: It was noted that schools have to teach the mandatory RVE and examinations. This has caused a problem for schools because of time available/workload. It was considered that the letter

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and that the letter may not have fully addressed that point. It was also noted that officials are going to update on the outcomes and an updated response may be provided.

5. Papers for WASACRE Summer meeting – 2nd July 2025: Noted

10. Annual Report

The draft Annual report was received, and comments were invited.

It was noted that there were no visits to observe collective worship in schools this year. It was queried if that was something that could be considered in the coming year. The Head of Achievement and Extended Services announced that a collective worship survey has been prepared. The survey will be shared with SAC members for comments over the next few weeks. When finalised, the survey will be sent out to schools. The survey will also ask if schools are willing to have SAC Members observe collective worship.

in response to a question, the legal representative confirmed that the SAC's Terms of Reference and the Monmouthshire County Council Constitution include advising the authority on collective worship and RVE in its schools. Worship is distinct from and falls outside the remit of the RVE curriculum.

11. To note the Forward Plan

Noted.

12. Date of Next Meeting: 3rd December 2025 at 3pm

The meeting ended at 4.40 pm