

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE NEW CURRICULUM QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK**

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### **What are your views on the proposed relationship between the agreed syllabus and the Humanities AoLE?**

Monmouthshire SACRE Members are very pleased to see RE back in a prominent position in the curriculum. There are concerns, however, that RE might become subsumed within the Humanities AoLE. Religious education should be easily identifiable within the Humanities AoLE. SACRE members present at the consultation in Cardiff reported that it is easy for a specialist RE teacher to see the RE within the current draft. However, there was concern among members that non-specialists would not have the subject knowledge to do this easily. It is essential to marry a good curriculum with excellent specialist teaching for the best experiences and outcomes for our learners. It is important that RE continues to be multi-disciplinary in terms of theology, ethics and philosophy and the subject specialism needs to be strong to maintain that.

Members stated that the supporting framework will be very important to maintain parity with other subjects. Despite often not being given equal standing in the past, RE has seen rapid growth across Wales England and in England at GCSE level in recent years. It is important to build upon this in the New Curriculum and not to lose the value of religious education. SACRE members attending the Welsh Government Consultation appreciated Prof. Donaldson's video in which he highlighted the importance of placing RE within the Humanities AoLE. SACRE have agreed to watch this in the next meeting to gain a greater understanding of the thinking behind placing RE within the Humanities.

### **Would the supporting framework be a good way of supporting the Agreed Syllabus Conferences to fulfil their statutory role?**

SACRE understands its duty to convene an agreed syllabus conference and to produce an agreed syllabus. SACRE appreciates the support Welsh Government is offering in producing a supporting framework.

Monmouthshire SACRE has a specialist RE adviser to advise on the curriculum who is provided by the EAS consortium. However, as things currently stand, that is not the case in all local authorities. A strong framework, written by experts and specialist RE teachers would ensure all local authorities have expert input into their Agreed Syllabus. Therefore, a supporting framework is essential. A supporting framework would also assist in preparatory work prior to 14-16 qualifications. The Supporting Framework will greatly support the SACRE Agreed Syllabus Conference.

### **Is there anything we should consider when developing the supporting framework?**

The availability of good training and recruitment of specialist teachers is key to maintaining good quality religious education in schools. SACRE would suggest that Welsh Government take this into account and invest in this area.

The supporting framework needs to be written by subject experts. Whilst it is SACREs opinion that RE should be taught by subject specialists, the supporting framework should consider that this may not always be the case and it should be detailed enough to support the non-specialist too. Monmouthshire SACRE members suggest that it would be best practice to have the support of a dedicated specialist RE Adviser within each local authority to support schools in implementing the Agreed Syllabus/supporting framework. This adviser would then enable the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties surrounding RE and Collective Worship as is the case in Wrexham. This would be possible if enough funding were available to employ a RE Adviser and support SACREs.

As RE has previously sat outside the National Curriculum, SACRE would recommend Welsh Government look specifically at developing good resources to support the delivery of RE within the Humanities AoLE in New Curriculum.

SACRE also suggests that it is very important to consider progression to A Level when the framework is being written. Welsh learners need to be able to compete on an international stage and they should not be disadvantaged by studying a diluted curriculum. Learners need to have studied the rich breadth as well as depth of study within religious education to underpin further study when they move into post 16 education. Consideration should also be given to how religious education prepares learners for life as an adult in today's world.

### **What are the implications of these proposals for you?**

If SACRE is to adopt or adapt the RE Framework as its Agreed Syllabus, then consultation during the writing process would be appreciated.