

A Message from Monmouthshire Standing Advisory Council on Religion, Values, and Ethics

We are pleased to present the Monmouthshire Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values, and Ethics (SAC) Annual Report for the academic year **2024/25**. This report highlights the Council's ongoing work and commitment to supporting high-quality Religion, Values, and Ethics (RVE) education across Monmouthshire. We hope it serves as a valuable resource for practitioners, leaders, and stakeholders in education.

The Council would like to extend sincere thanks to all those working in education for your continued dedication to the wellbeing and learning of children and young people in Wales. As schools deepen their engagement with the **Curriculum for Wales**, your efforts in shaping inclusive, thoughtful, and values-driven learning experiences are deeply appreciated.

SAC remains committed to supporting practitioners with expert advice on curriculum design, pedagogy, and resources for RVE. We encourage all educators to refer to the **Monmouthshire Agreed Syllabus**, which outlines the recommended approach to RVE within our local authority.

👉 [Click here to access the Monmouthshire Agreed Syllabus](#)

Support is also available for the **Daily Act of Collective Worship**, and SAC welcomes any queries or requests for guidance.

Monmouthshire SAC welcomes correspondence via the contacts below:

- Wendy Barnard, Clerk to Monmouthshire SAC:
wendybarnard3@monmouthshire.gov.uk
- Hayley Jones, Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE) - Southeast Wales EAS
hayley.jones@sewaleseas.org.uk

The Annual Report of the Monmouthshire Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics 2025-2025

CONTENTS	PAGE
SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT SAC	4
1.1 Duty to Establish SAC	4
1.2 Composition of SAC	4
1.3 Membership of SAC	4
1.4 Functions of SAC	5
1.5 Meetings	5
1.6 Circulation of Report	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ADVICE GIVEN BY SAC	6
SECTION 2: ADVICE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	10
2.1 The Locally Agreed Syllabus	10
2.2 Standards in RE/RVE	10
2.3 Methods of Teaching, Teaching Materials and Teacher Training	11
SECTION 3: ADVICE ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	13
3.1 School Inspection Reports	13
3.2 Applications for Determinations	13
3.3 School Visits	13
SECTION 4: OTHER ISSUES	14
4.1 WASACRE	14
4.2 Holocaust Education	14
4.3 Curriculum for Wales 2022	15
4.4 Training of SAC Members	15
4.5 Membership of SAC	15
4.6 EAS Professional Support to Monmouthshire SAC	15
APPENDIX 1: MONMOUTHSHIRESACRE MEMBERSHIP AUTUMN 2025 – SUMMER 2025	16
APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE AND AGENDA OF MEETINGS	17
APPENDIX 3: CIRCULATION OF REPORT	19

The Annual Report of the Monmouthshire Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics 2024-2025

SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT SAC

1.1 Duty to Establish SAC

All Local Authorities are required to constitute a Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC) within their local area under s 390 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.

At a meeting of its Full Council on 18 May 2025, Monmouthshire County Council formally constituted its SAC, replacing the predecessor body Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Legacy functions of SACRE will be exercised by SAC pending the phase out of the pre-Curriculum for Wales 2022 syllabus.

1.2 Composition of SAC

Representation on SAC is required as follows: -

- i. Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations, and non-religious philosophical convictions, the number of members appointed to the group to represent a religion, denomination or non-religious philosophical conviction being broadly reflective, so far as is consistent with the efficient discharge of the group's functions, of the proportionate strength of the religion, denomination or non-religious philosophical conviction in the area ("faith and belief group");
- ii. Representatives of teachers' associations;
- iii. Representatives of the local authority.

The Local Authority determined that the SAC representation be allocated as follows: 13 representatives for the faith and belief group, 7 representatives for teachers' associations, and 6 Local Authority representatives. In addition, SAC can co-opt up to 2 individuals as non-voting members. Both co-opted places are currently vacant.

1.3 Membership of SAC

The membership list showing the position for 2024 – 2025 is attached at Appendix 1.

In line with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, SAC membership now includes a broader range of representation than the former SACRE, with members from Christian denominations, other religions, and non-religious philosophical convictions. Monmouthshire SAC is pleased to confirm that a representative for non-religious philosophical convictions is now in place. The Local Authority continues to seek expressions of interest to fill remaining vacancies within this group.

2 co-opted places are also vacant, and work is ongoing to fill these places. There has been discussion of co-opting youth representation via this avenue.

1.4 Functions of SAC

- To advise the Local Authority on worship, religious education and Religion, Values and Ethics to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus including methods of teaching, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers
- To consider whether to recommend to the local authority that the current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- To consider whether the requirement that religious worship in a county school should be 'broadly Christian in nature' should be varied (determinations)
- To report to the Local Authority to Welsh Government on its activities on an annual basis.

1.5 Meetings

SAC met on two occasions during the academic year 2025-2025:

- **Wednesday, 11th September 2024** at 3:00 pm
- **Wednesday, 18th December 2024** at 3:00 pm
- **Wednesday, 19th March 2025** at 3:00 pm (Postponed)
- **Wednesday, 2nd July 2025** at 3:00 pm (Postponed)

All meetings have been hybrid during 2025-2025. However, it has been resolved that, where possible, meetings will be held at alternative venues such as schools or places of worship.

1.6 Circulation of Report

Copies of this report are circulated electronically to those organisations and establishments listed in Appendix 3. It is also available on the Local Authority and the WASACRE website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ADVICE GIVEN BY SAC (SACRE PRE 18-MAY 2025)

Summary of the advice given to the local authority by SAC

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Issue

To monitor provision and standards in RE/RVE

Action

1. SAC considers and analyses school inspection reports and extracts what information it can in relation to religious education, Religion Values and Ethics and collective worship. If there are any issues regarding RE/ RVE such as non-fulfilment of statutory requirements, then the LA follows this up.
2. SAC usually visits schools on an annual basis to receive a presentation on RE/ RVE at the school. However, SAC did not visit any schools during 2025-2025.

Issue

To fulfil the legal requirement to review the agreed syllabus for RE/RVE on a five yearly basis and ensure the agreed syllabus is being implemented in schools

Action

1. In 2008, the Agreed Syllabus Conference adopted a new agreed syllabus for Monmouthshire schools, implemented from September 2008. In June 2013, it was re-adopted pending future updates aligned with curriculum and assessment developments.
2. SACRE received regular updates on the Curriculum for Wales and the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience through email and termly meetings.
3. During 2020–2021, SACRE responded to the Welsh Government consultation on the RVE guidance for the Curriculum for Wales 2022.
4. Following the publication of the RVE guidance, SACRE recommended convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference to consider adopting or adapting the national framework.
5. The Local Authority adopted the updated Monmouthshire Agreed Syllabus in June 2022, which was circulated to schools in July 2022 ahead of the Curriculum for Wales implementation in September 2022.

TEACHING MATERIALS

Issue

To ensure that schools are informed of suitable resources for RE/ RVE.

Action

The following information and resources were shared with schools, and copies were also sent to SAC members:

1. Schools were notified about Interfaith Week 2024 (10th -17th November) and signposted to resources including lesson plans and collective worship materials on www.interfaithweek.org.
2. Schools were informed of the 2025 Holocaust Memorial Day theme, "For a Better Future," with access to age-appropriate resources on www.hmd.org.uk.

3. WASACRE continued to provide RE, RVE, and collective worship resources, which were distributed to schools via SAC.
4. Schools received updates on Welsh Government consultations and publications related to Humanities and RVE.
5. Curriculum lead network meetings and support offers were shared with all schools via the EAS Humanities Network.
6. Farmington Scholarship 2024–2025 information was circulated to schools and discussed at SAC meetings.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

Issue:

Ensure teachers have access to high-quality professional learning (PL) for RVE.

Action:

To support curriculum design under the Curriculum for Wales, the **Education Achievement Service** provided a range of PL opportunities across Monmouthshire. These included:

- Bespoke and universal training for secondary Religious Studies teachers.
- RVE-specific PL for primary and secondary practitioners via Partner Schools, Humanities networks, and the Curriculum Partner.
- Headteacher briefings covering the mandatory status of RVE and key planning considerations.
-

National & Regional Updates (2024–2025)

- **Interfaith Week (9–16 Nov 2025):** Schools were signposted to interfaithweek.org for resources and encouraged to share outcomes with SAC.
- **Holocaust Memorial Day (2025 Theme: *For a Better Future*):** Schools received age-appropriate resources from hmd.org.uk and were invited to share how they were used.
- **WASACRE Support:** Guidance and resources for RE, RVE, and collective worship were shared via SAC.
- **Welsh Government Updates:** Schools were kept informed of consultations and publications related to Humanities and RVE.
- **Curriculum Design Support:** EAS provided exemplars and guidance to help schools develop meaningful, locally relevant RVE curricula.
- **WASACRE PL Modules:** New modules, including content for school governors, were released to support effective RVE delivery and curriculum implementation.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Issue

To ensure that schools fulfil statutory requirements for collective worship and provide a worthwhile experience for pupils.

Action

1. SAC monitors the sections of inspection reports concerned with collective worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) and the LA follows up on any non-fulfilment of statutory requirements.
2. During 2024-2025. Estyn did not identify any instances of non-compliance. In nearly all schools, it is reported that spiritual, moral, and social skills are developing well. Pupils have benefited from opportunities to develop a good understanding of spiritual and ethical beliefs through assemblies, reflection time, and comparing different faiths and beliefs.
3. Schools have been informed by SAC of appropriate resources and websites that support collective worship in schools.

Going forward, SAC has committed to holding meetings at schools in Monmouth to observe collective worship practices. This initiative aims to ensure that statutory requirements and provisions are met while also assessing the quality of collective worship offered.

OTHER ISSUES:

Aim: To ensure a more informed SAC through providing regular updates on local and national issues.

1. SAC has maintained its membership of WASACRE and receives termly feedback from the meetings of the association.
2. The RVE Curriculum Partner is a member of NAPfRE and regularly attends meetings on SAC's behalf.
3. SAC members receive regular training to keep up to date with legislative and educational changes and to understand the role and function of SACs.
4. SAC takes seriously Holocaust Education and advises the LA and its schools on this.
5. SAC has continued to receive updates on the development and implementation of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 and the implications for religious education. It has responded to Welsh Government consultations on Curriculum for Wales.
6. SAC has received updates on the development of the Qualifications Wales Full 14-16 qualifications offer and the implications for religious education.

SECTION 2: ADVICE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

Monmouthshire convened an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to adopt the Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) Guidance as the foundation for its Local Agreed Syllabus. The syllabus was adapted to reflect Monmouthshire's context. Pupils in Year 9 and above continue to follow the pre-2022 curriculum during their secondary education.

2.2 Standards in RE/RVE

Monitoring Standards:

SAC reviews Estyn inspection reports to monitor RVE and collective worship. While Estyn no longer provides subject-specific judgments, SAC focuses on comments related to Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development.

Examinations:

Due to changes in data reporting, SAC now works closely with schools and the EAS to identify support needs. Updates on GCSE and A-Level Religious Studies are shared via practitioner meetings, with feedback passed to SAC, WASACRE, NAPfRE, and WJEC.

SAC continues to explore ways to gather meaningful insights into the quality of RE and RS at Key Stage 4 and has discussed national concerns about declining exam entries.

2.3 Teaching, Materials & Training

Professional Learning:

The EAS provided tailored support for RVE in 2024–2025, helping schools design progression-based curricula from ages 3–16. Training focused on curriculum design, pedagogy, and legislative updates. Schools accessed resources via the Supporting Our Schools site.

Partner Schools:

Monmouthshire schools collaborated through the Partner School model to share effective RVE practice and resources, strengthening pedagogy and curriculum alignment.

Teaching Materials Shared:

- **Farmington Scholarships:** Free RE training for teachers (farmington.ac.uk)
- **Holocaust Memorial Day 2025:** Resources themed *For a Better Future* (hmd.org.uk)
- **Jewish History Association of South Wales:** Free bilingual Holocaust resources (jhasw.com)
- **EAS Humanities Newsletter:** Termly updates on RVE and SAC activity

3.1 School Inspection Reports

SAC regularly reviews Estyn inspection reports for schools in Monmouthshire. SAC has decided to keep using these reports to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and to consider relevant comments.

3.2 Applications for Determinations

No applications were received from schools for determinations to be made on the lifting of the requirements for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

3.3 School Visits

SAC appreciates the opportunities accorded to members to observe acts of collective worship in schools. Members did not have the opportunity to host a SAC meeting at a school or observe an act of collective worship during 2024-2025.

SECTION 4: OTHER ISSUES

4.1 WASACRE

Monmouthshire SAC continues its active membership with WASACRE, with representatives attending meetings and reporting back key updates. SAC values WASACRE's role in supporting RVE and keeping councils informed. Regular feedback has been provided by Mrs. Hayley Jones and other attendees.

4.2 Holocaust Education

Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 was marked in Monmouthshire with local commemorations and participation in Wales' national digital ceremony. For 2026, SAC will encourage schools to take part and will share themed resources and guidance.

4.3 Curriculum for Wales

SAC continues to receive regular updates on developments in Religion, Values and Ethics within the Curriculum for Wales.

4.4 Member Training

SAC members receive ongoing training on their roles and responsibilities. This will continue into 2025–2026 to ensure members remain informed and effective.

4.5 MEMBERSHIP OF SAC

The current membership list showing the position as of August 2025, is attached in Appendix 1.

The following positions are currently vacant:

Co-opted places – SAC has discussed co-opting two youth representatives onto the Committee. Work and discussions around membership in this area ongoing.

Committee A – Work is ongoing to fill the vacancies for the five non-Christian faith and two Christian faith representatives.

Committee B – Five positions remain vacant for Trade Union Representatives. SACRE has written to schools and is in the process of writing again to seek further expressions of interest to fill these places.

Monmouthshire SAC is supported by:

- **Sharon Randall-Smith** – Head of Achievement and Attainment

- **Hayley Jones** – EAS Curriculum Partner for SACs and RVE
- **Geraint Edwards** – Legal Advisor
- **Wendy Barnard** – Clerk, whose work is highly valued by members

Appendix 1: MONMOUTHSHIRE SAC MEMBERSHIP AUTUMN 2025-SUMMER 2025

CHRISTIAN AND OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS, AND NON-RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS - COMMITTEE A

Mr. A. Szwagrzak (Roman Catholic Archdiocese)
 Mrs. S. Gooding (Free Church Representative - Presbyterian Church)
 Ms. R. Morteo (Church in Wales)
 Revd. J. Greaves (Free Church Representative - Baptist)
 Mrs S. Cave (Bahá'í Faith)
 Ms. Maddie Saraireh (Muslim Faith)
 Chris Francis (Humanism) until October 2025

Vacancies:

The Methodist Church (1)
 The Salvation Army (1)
 Hindu Faith (1)
 Jewish Faith (1)
 Sikh Faith (1)
 Buddhist Faith (1)
 Non-religious Philosophical Conviction (1)

TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS - COMMITTEE B

Mrs S. Hamer
 Mrs. Charlotte Rhodes

Five vacancies

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY - COMMITTEE C

Cllr. Martyn Groucutt (Chair)

Cllr. Angela Sandles from Cllr. Louise Brown
 Cllr. Paul Pavia
 Cllr Rachael Buckler from January 2025
 Cllr John Crook from March 2025

Two vacancies

CO OPTED MEMBERS

Two vacancies

OFFICERS

Sharon Randal Smith (Head of Achievement and Attainment)
 Mrs Hayley Jones (EAS Partner for RVE and SAC)
 Geraint Edwards (Solicitor, Legal Advisor)

CLERK TO SACRE
Wendy Barnard (Democratic Services Officer)
Email: wendybarnard3@monmouthshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE AND AGENDA OF MEETINGS

Monmouthshire SAC on RVE Meeting 1
Wednesday, 11th September 2024 at 3.00 pm, Hybrid.

AGENDA

- Welcome and Apologies
- Declarations of Interest
- Approval of previous minutes
- EAS Consortia Training Slide
- WASACRE
 - Summer Conference Report
 - Other WASACRE Business
 - Autumn WASACRE meeting
- Membership Update
- SAC (RVE) Annual Report
- Any Other Business
- Date of Next Meeting: 18th December 2024

Monmouthshire SAC on RVE Meeting 2
Tuesday, 19th March, 2025 at 3.00 pm

- Welcome and Apologies
- Declarations of Interest
- To note the record of the previous meeting held on 11th September 2024
- Membership Update
- To receive an update from the EAS RE Adviser including:
 - EAS Professional Learning
 - WJEC Qualifications
 - GCSE Religious Studies | Made for Wales
 - Discussion around Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)
 - Bangor University: Report on the teaching provision of Religion, Values and Ethics in Schools in Wales (April 2024)
 - The Teacher Voice Project: RVE in the Curriculum for Wales
 - Feedback to schools on Census (faith and belief)
- WASACRE Business
 - To receive and note draft minutes from the WASACRE virtual meeting November 2024.
 - To note dates of future WASACRE meetings and confirm representation:
 - Spring Meeting – Virtual on 6th March 2025 , 10.30am
 - Nominations for new members of the WASACRE Executive Committee - Monmouthshire SAC's representative's term of office ending.
 - Important information from WASACRE:
 - E mail from A.Parry/L.Jones.

- Letter to Chair of WASACRE.
- Expenditure: WASACRE Conference – June 2024.
- Adnodd and Miller Research Correspondence.
- SACRE Annual Reports
- Revised draft Code of Conduct for WASACRE.
- To consider creating an Action Plan/Target – setting and priorities
- How to monitor and provide feedback on Collective Worship
- Resources for schools for Non-Religious Philosophical Conviction (NRPC)
- beliefs.
- Dates and venues of future meetings:
 - 11th June 2025 at 3.00pm
 - 10th September 2025 at 3.00pm
 - 3rd December 2025 at 3.00pm
 - 4th March 2026 at 3.00pm

Monmouthshire SAC Meeting 3

- Wednesday, 19th March 2025/ Wednesday, 2nd July 2025 at 3.00 pm, Hybrid Meetings postponed.

APPENDIX 3: CIRCULATION OF REPORT

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies. This report will be available on the Local Authority website and the WASACRE website for interested parties to download.

Members of Monmouthshire County Council

Chair of Education Scrutiny

Regional Director of South East Wales Education Advisory Service (EAS)

Welsh Government Education Officer responsible for Religious Education

Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all County Borough Schools

All members of SAC on RVE

Principals and Governing Bodies of all Colleges within the County Borough

Wales Association of SACRE's (WASACRE)

Cabinet Secretary for Education, Welsh Assembly Government

The National Library of Wales

ESTYN