

## THE CITY OF NEWPORT

**REPORT TO:** STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION

**DATE:** 14 FEBRUARY 2018

**SUBJECT:** NATIONAL CURRICULUM REVIEW: UPDATE

**Update: Curriculum Review**

### **Background**

Professor Donaldson report *Successful Futures - Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales* made a recommendation that.

*Religious education should form part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience, and should remain a statutory curriculum requirement from reception.*

As part of the development work the 6 AoLE working groups prepared and produced reports to both the Curriculum and Assessment Group (CAG) and the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) for feedback. Both groups, along with Welsh Government expert groups, have provided feedback on the work so far as part of the quality enhancement process.

The reports have been approved and are available to view via the attached link below:

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/170707-new-curriculum-for-wales-story-so-far-en.pdf>

The Humanities working group recommendation is to follow the 'big ideas'/what matters approach as exemplified within Wynne Harlen et al's 'Working with Big Ideas in Science'. This would provide an organising construct whilst also allowing sufficient flexibility for each disciplinary area. It outlined a planning methodology to develop the AoLE – by identifying the key knowledge/concepts, skills and competencies for each discipline within the Humanities and then 'building' the AoLE by identifying overarching 'big ideas'/what matters key concepts that will be drawn across the disciplines.

**Manon Jones** (Curriculum Division of Welsh Government) is responsible for the pioneer schools and two areas of learning and experience (AOLE), Humanities and Language and Literacy. Manon gave an update at the WASACRE Meeting Nov 2018 (Bridgend)

Welsh Government is exploring how Humanities supports the new curriculum. What will Humanities look like in the new curriculum? What is the level of specificity and consistency between schools? There has been a concentration upon the disciplines and they will make links between them, however some aspects may have to be stand alone. (\* Colleagues from WG are aware of the importance of the right to withdraw from RE)

WG agreed to work closely with WASACRE/ NAPfRE colleagues during this process and has commissioned WASACRE to make a contribution regarding a suitable approach to the organising of RE within the Humanities discipline. A group of WASACRE members have drawn up a paper on *What Matters in RE* and this was presented at the Humanities Planning Workshops on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November in Swansea

Other groups have been commissioned by WG to submit ideas so that there is a range of ideas and approaches for consideration. These too were presented at the Humanities Planning Workshops on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November in Swansea

Welsh Government to feed back to SACRES by January 2018. (See Newsletter)

**Time scale**

- SACRE updates received Autumn 2017 and January 2018
- March /April 2018 there will be more in depth feedback on the Humanities model.
- By April 2018 there will be a draft of the new curriculum
- By January 2020 the final curriculum and assessment arrangements will be published, to be implemented in 2022. Initially it will be taught in Primary and Year 7.
- There will be an additional four year period of studying to new curriculum and new qualification.

**Recommendation**

SACRE to note and discuss the developments relating to the position of RE in the curriculum

Dear colleague,

Please find below an update in relation to Religious Education and the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience currently being developed as part of the new curriculum for Wales. I would be grateful if you would forward this message to the relevant officer at your SACRE.

Many thanks

Manon Jones

English version

Dear SACRE members,

Thank you for considering the content of the last update regarding Religious Education and the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) within the new curriculum for Wales, sent to you in July 2017. We are grateful for the responses received so far. We are still in the process of receiving comments and are currently collating the feedback to inform the development work.

### **Timelines**

In September 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Education published 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. This action plan includes revised timelines for the new curriculum. Please see below the relevant key dates:

- April 2019: Draft curriculum available for feedback
- January 2020: Final curriculum available
- September 2022: All maintained schools and settings using new curriculum and assessment arrangements (roll-out starting with primary and Year 7 and then year by year)

### **The What Matters approach**

In considering an approach to developing the new curriculum, pioneer school practitioners involved in the design process identified that teaching 'what matters' was the starting point from which to build the new curriculum. As a result, pioneer groups – including the Humanities – have begun the process of developing key concepts to organise their AoLE by identifying 'what matters' in their fields i.e. the key elements that all learners should experience within their areas during their journey along the continuum of learning.

Each AoLE will consist of What Matters key concepts. These concepts are being developed to avoid excessive variation from school to school while allowing for local flexibility. The What Matters key concepts across the AoLEs will support the development of the Four Purposes of the new curriculum and will also reflect current ideas about important disciplinary knowledge, skills and competencies for each domain.

### **The development process for Humanities**

In order to identify 'what matters' within the various subjects and disciplines that form the Humanities, we commissioned experts to prepare a series of papers to support the pioneer group's work. These included papers relating to history, geography, business, social studies and Religious Education. The focus of these papers was to outline for each discipline:

- the core of knowledge/concepts and associated skills and competencies deemed essential for all pupils to learn.
- progression for the above, and an indication of what pupils should learn/experience relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14, 16.
- building on the above, suggested What Matters key concepts.

WASACRE was commissioned to prepare a discussion paper relating to Religious Education. Representatives also attended a Humanities pioneer group workshop in November 2017 to present the paper and work with the group to develop proposals for the AoLE. Please find attached a copy of the commissioned paper.

Drawing on the expert input outlined above and identifying 'what matters' for each component discipline within the Humanities provided firm foundations for the pioneer group to develop overarching What Matters key concepts as a means of organising the AoLE.

### **The What Matters Proposals**

I attach initial proposals for the What Matters key concepts for the Humanities AoLE. The content of the report was developed in December 2017 and reflects the Humanities pioneer group's thinking at that time. The group continues to meet every three weeks and has begun developing progression frameworks to underpin each of these What Matters statements. In developing these frameworks as well as the detail of the AoLE during the spring term, the wording of the key concepts outlined in the attached document will naturally change and be refined.

We would like to invite you as a SACRE to consider these initial What Matters proposals and provide comments and/or suggestions for consideration during the next phase of the development work.

Further information, as well as the proposals for all six of the AoLEs, including the Humanities, will be published shortly on our website:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?lang=en>

We would appreciate if you would send your comments to me: [manon.jones@gov.wales](mailto:manon.jones@gov.wales)

### **Next steps**

Over the coming months, the Humanities pioneer group will focus on developing progression frameworks for the AoLE, supported by the CAMAU project (colleagues from University of Wales Trinity St David and Glasgow University). During this time, the content of the AoLE be developed in more detail.

**We will send the next update to you at the end of May**, and again invite your views on the proposals produced. We will also contact you in due course to outline further engagement opportunities for you to contribute to the curriculum development process during the summer term.

Best wishes

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