

To The Headteachers of all Secondary and Special schools

February 18th 2019

Dear Headteacher

Statutory Requirements for Religious Education

Newport Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) would like to bring to your attention the statutory requirements for Religious Education in state maintained schools.

As I am sure you are aware Religious Education is currently part of the basic curriculum and therefore sits outside the National Curriculum. The RE curriculum is locally determined by the LA and its SACRE. This means that there is a statutory requirement for LA's to provide Religious Education according to an agreed syllabus and monitor that statutory requirements are being adhered to by schools. The Newport Agreed Syllabus for RE - the current syllabus stays in place with an understanding that the syllabus will be reviewed once the New Curriculum for Wales is defined.

SACRE is aware that the draft New Curriculum will be published for consultation in April. Until such time as the New Curriculum is implemented and a review of the agreed syllabus takes place SACRE wish to ensure that schools understand that **coverage of the programmes of study of the locally agreed syllabus is the main statutory requirement.**

Please see the attached a copy of the current agreed syllabus for RE where you can see the programmes of study for all key stages in the secondary school on pages 22-31.

SACRE is particularly interested in the delivery of **Religious Education at KS4**. Some schools appear confused regarding statutory requirements at KS4 and we would like to draw your attention to the programme of study which can be found on pages 30-31. Many schools in Wales are providing statutory RE by following either a GCSE Short Course or a GCSE Full Course or a combination of the two courses. SACRE wish to inform you that this would fulfil statutory requirements as long as **all** pupils are receiving religious education whether or not they are entered for accreditation.

Some schools are delivering RE at KS4 within the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ). In 2016, the Wales Association of SACREs conducted a survey of the impact of the WBQ on religious education in schools across Wales. SACRE understands that some schools believe that coverage of the Global Citizenship element of WBQ is sufficient to cover the RE requirements. Newport SACRE would like to ensure that schools understand that the Global Citizenship unit alone would not be sufficient to cover all aspects of the agreed syllabus programmes of study as outlined on pages 30-31 of the agreed syllabus. The WASACRE survey (2016) showed that in some cases WBQ had some positive impact when schools increased the time allocation for RE within the WBQ so that all aspects of the agreed syllabus could be covered. That has to be measured against those schools who commented that the introduction of the WBQ was having a negative effect on RE such as loss of Short Course accreditation, over use of non-specialists in the teaching of RE and RE subject specific skills being sacrificed to cover the more generic skills of WBQ.

In recent times a minority of schools in Wales have sought to deliver a Level 2 course on Equality and Diversity as an alternative to delivering Religious Education. This qualification would **not** meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are some overlaps in themes, but this course is not Religious Education and was not written with the locally agreed syllabus in mind. If schools decide to deliver this course, then they would need to map it against the Newport Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in order to identify the shortfalls. Schools should then plan ways in which the missing requirements of the agreed syllabus would be met.

SACRE would like schools to confirm receipt of this information by completing the attached pro forma below and returning to the Clerk to SACRE. Schools providing this information enables the LA and its SACRE to fulfil its monitoring role of RE in the curriculum and be assured that statutory requirements according to the agreed syllabus for RE are being met.

SACRE hope that this information is useful to you. It is the role of SACRE to support Religious Education in state maintained schools. Should schools require the help of SACRE please contact the Clerk to Newport SACRE for assistance. Alternatively contact Paula Webber EAS Adviser Religious Education paula.webbers@sewaleseas.org.uk or on 07904 644728.

Yours sincerely

Neil Barnett
Clerk to SACRE

Name of School _____ Date _____

Name of Staff member completing pro forma _____

Position in school _____

I have read and understood the statutory requirements for RE at all key stages YES/ NO (please circle)

How is RE delivered at KS4? (please include method of delivery, if it is taught by specialists or non-specialists and are all agreed syllabus requirements being met)

Any further comments

Please return to:
Neil Barnett
Clerk to Newport SACRE
Neil.barnett@newport.gov.uk