

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

DATE: 19 OCTOBER 2017

SUBJECT RE AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM (Update)

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.

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.

Recent developments

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.

WG has agreed to work closely with WASACRE and 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. They are also intending to commission other groups to have arranged ideas and approached for consideration.

See attached document - A new Curriculum for Wales ... the story so far...

Recommendation

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

SACRE Update from Welsh Government 17/7/17

Dear SACRE members,

Please find below an update in relation to the curriculum reform process so far and an invitation for you as a SACRE to comment on the work of the Humanities working group to date.

Curriculum Reform

Following the publication of [Successful Futures](#), Professor Donaldson's independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, and the acceptance of all 68 recommendations, the pioneer schools network was established in autumn 2015. Working with key partners and experts, these schools are playing a central role in developing the new curriculum for Wales.

Strand 1 – Strategic Design

During the first phase of the curriculum development process, four pioneer working groups were established to develop high-level strategic principles to inform the development of the new curriculum.

These groups focussed on:

- Assessment and Progression
- Cross-curriculum Responsibilities
- Enrichment and Experiences
- Welsh Dimension, International Perspectives and Wider Skills

Each group published an interim report in January 2017 and they can be found on our [blog](#).

Strand 2 – Area of Learning and Experience Design

In January 2017, 6 pioneer working groups were established to begin developing initial high level proposals for each of the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) outlined in *Successful Futures*:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science and Technology

Professor Donaldson recommends that Religious Education forms part of the Humanities AoLE. Therefore, you as a SACRE, and WASACRE as the national body, are key partners in developing this aspect of the new curriculum for Wales. To enable this work, a planning group of WASACRE, NAPfRE, Welsh Government as well as regional consortia and Estyn Humanities representatives has been established.

Since January, the AoLE groups have focused on the following tasks:

- A clear statement of how the AoLE promotes the four purposes of the curriculum.
- A description of the scope and boundaries of the AoLE, including its central concerns, how it is distinct from other areas and why it is important for the education of each child and young person.
- A decision about how best to present the various component subjects and/or strands with the AoLE.

- A commentary on the presumed levels of specificity throughout the AoLE and reasoning behind this.

As part of the development work for each of the above outlined tasks, the 6 AoLE working groups have prepared and produced reports outlining their thinking to date.

The executive summaries are available to view via the attached link below:

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/170707-new-curriculum-for-wales-story-so-far-en-v2.pdf>

Next steps

Work on developing the detail of the curriculum will begin in the autumn term and we will work closely with WASACRE and NAPfRE colleagues during this process. To inform our work going forward, we would also like to invite you as a SACRE to consider the executive summary in relation to the Humanities AoLE and provide comments and/or suggestions for consideration during the next phase of work.

We will send the next update at the end of the autumn term/beginning of the spring term and will again invite feedback and comments based on the proposals produced from September onwards.

Best wishes,

Manon Jones
Welsh Government