

Workshop Meeting North Wales SACRE representatives re New Curriculum for Wales

Focus of meeting and presentations was on the place of Religious Education in new Curriculum

The workshop held at WAG building in Llandudno Junction from 1.30 until approximately 4.45pm.

Attendees for Ynys Mon: Cr Dylan Rees (SACRE Chair) Anest Gray Frazer and Chris Thomas

#### Agenda

- Presentation by Manon Jones, Head of Area of Learning and Experience, (AoLE) Welsh Government
- Video of interview with Prof. Donaldson about the place of RE in the New Curriculum
- Wider presentation regarding RE Manon Jones including proposals regarding locally Agreed Syllabus and the Humanities
- A presentation by Paula Webber (RE Consultant) about the specifics of the Humanities AoLE's and RE
- A presentation by Libby Jones RE Adviser Wrexham about proposals for a Supporting Framework for RE –What these may look like.

Between each presentation there were significant blocks of time for Reflection, questions and immediate reaction to what was heard and observations from workshop attendees

Four particular questions were open for consideration during the whole afternoon.

1. What are your views on the proposed relationship between the agreed syllabus and Humanities AoLE?
2. Would the supporting framework be a good way of supporting the Agreed Syllabus Conferences to fulfil their statutory role?
3. Is there anything we (Welsh Government) should consider when developing the supporting framework?
4. What are the implications of these proposals for you?

The film clip showed Prof Donaldson answering questions about the place of RE in New Curriculum. He emphasised that RE would play a significant role, how important an area of study it is, and that it was being involved 'within' the curriculum at the outset for the first time. This was deemed significant because the last time education was re-structured RE was considered as being 'outside' an addendum to the curriculum. The Agreed Syllabus came out a year later than the rest of the curriculum reinforcing the feeling that perhaps it was less important – the 'Cinderella' subject.

Manon Jones, Head of Area of Learning and Experience, (AoLE) Welsh Government

Talked about the background to curriculum reform, the Great Debate, Successful Futures and acceptance of the 68 recommendations in June 2015,

The evolution of the four purposes, AoLE and the 'What Matters' approach, the timeline for implementation in September 2022.

AoLE Design Model

The diagram is an attempt to explain the relationships between the various parts of the curriculum remembering that each part looks to the four purposes; the heart of all development.

**The four purposes are that all children and young people will be:**

- Ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives.
- Enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work.
- Ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.
- Healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

The Six Areas of Learning Experience

Expressive Arts	Health and Wellbeing	<b>Humanities</b>	Language, Literacy and Communication	Mathematics and Numeracy	Science and Technology
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**The Humanities Area** will seek to give pupils an understanding of historical, geographical, political, economic and societal factors, providing opportunities to engage in informed discussions about ethics, beliefs, religion and spirituality. It will draw on existing subjects, history, geography, business and social studies, as well as religious education, which Professor Donaldson recommends should remain a statutory curriculum requirement from Reception year onwards.

**The next stage considers ‘What matters’.**

**The ‘what matters’ statements set out the most important knowledge and skills to be gained and aim to make what children and young people learn relevant to the world we live in today and help them adapt to a changing society and world**

1. Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by physical processes and human actions. Studying the humanities helps learners to identify, understand and analyse the dynamic nature of Wales and the world. Human responsibility for our natural world, can be influenced by diverse beliefs, practices, ethics and philosophies. Innovation, economic and technological developments have shaped and continue to shape our natural world. It is also important to understand how human actions can be influenced by, and affect, the natural environment. Physical processes have major impacts on places, environments, landscapes and the lives of people. Appreciating these complex patterns and connections between the past, present and future is important for the understanding of the cause and consequences of change.

2. Society has been shaped and influenced by human behaviour and beliefs in the past, societies have been formed and influenced by individuals, communities, political, economic factors, cultural values, religious beliefs and practices. Societies have experienced continuity and change that affected people's lives, in Wales and the wider world. The causes and consequences of human interactions in the past have shaped society and how it has developed in different times and places. Exploring past human interactions has intrinsic value.

3. Humanity faces many challenges and opportunities, that require informed and considered responses. Understanding current local, national and global challenges and opportunities is

essential to be an ethical and informed citizen. Learners should develop informed views about political, economic, technological, social, religious, cultural and environmental challenges and opportunities that people in Wales and the wider world face. Learners understand that beliefs, experiences and circumstances can influence the varied responses of themselves and others. By engaging with fundamental and philosophical questions about the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, learners will develop the knowledge and skills to form opinions, and understand values, beliefs and viewpoints.

4. People view the experiences of humanity through a range of lenses. Humanities provides learners with a variety of lenses through which they develop an understanding of the human experience. These lenses are drawn from a growing understanding of the disciplines that make up the Humanities, and the way in which they interconnect. They give learners an understanding of how others construct narratives to record and represent the human experience and how to understand, interpret, and represent the experience of humanity themselves. Learners appreciate how and why interpretations and representations are constructed in order to critically question and evaluate their validity.

5. The process of enquiry allows people to make sense of and engage with the world. Studying the humanities develops the skills of disciplinary enquiry. Learners pose questions and develop hypothesis across the humanities. By gathering, evaluating and analysing evidence from a range sources, learners can interpret layers of meaning and connect information to attain relevant knowledge to inform their understanding. Through thinking critically and reflectively about the evidence they've analysed, they learn to make coherent, substantiated judgements. Learners critically evaluate the effectiveness of the enquiry process and how well it has helped them to make sense of and engage with the world.

6. Citizens should be ethical, informed and engaged in life and work. The Humanities encourages learners to think critically about ethical, economic, entrepreneurial or social engagement in their communities. Learners will understand their rights and responsibilities as ethical citizens, and the importance of ensuring that they respect the rights of others. Learners understand individuals' legal and moral responsibilities and the consequences of failing to act accordingly. Learners will develop an understanding of identity and are conscious of their own role in society and of the religious, moral and ethical influences on people's lives.

### **Next come the Areas of Learning Experience (AoLE)**

### **Humanities**

Through exploring 'what matters' about the humanities, learners will study the past and present, imagine possible futures and learn about people, place, time and beliefs in order to become ambitious, capable learners. They will build, communicate and apply effectively a solid base of knowledge and understanding of historical, geographical, political, economic, religious and societal concepts.

Learners will develop a range of skills and dispositions to become enterprising, creative contributors and responsible citizens, improving the lives of people in their local community, Wales and the wider world. They will contribute positively to these and engage critically with local, national and global issues.

Through understanding and respecting different beliefs and understanding how to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities, learners will become ethical, informed citizens. They will

consider, explore and make informed choices about sustainability and the impact of their actions. They will learn about rights, values, ethics, beliefs and philosophy.

By developing their personal stances on matters of faith, spirituality, sustainability and social inclusion, they will become healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society. Exploring their environment will help them to develop their well-being and their sense of place.

**If we now refer to the AoLE Design Model (separate sheet)**

We can see at the top that AoLE’s support the Four Purposes

The What Matters statements come next. So far each of the statements above are agreed although may change slightly as they are ‘tweaked’ the rest of this diagram deals with what will come next.

Knowledge Skills and Experiences are currently being formulated together with progression steps and Achievement Outcomes

**Achievement Outcomes**

Four principles will underpin the new approach:

- It will be based on a nationally described continuum of learning for learners aged 3 to 16.
- Learning should be an expedition, not a straight line. Progression is a ‘road map’ for each individual, and each may progress at a different rate or take a different path to get to the next stage in their learning journey.
- Progression Steps will be at 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16 and take the form of Achievement Outcomes relating broadly to expectations at those ages. These will help learners, teachers, parents and carers to understand if appropriate progress is being made.
- Achievement outcomes will be in the form of ‘I can’ and ‘I have’ statements. Literacy, numeracy, digital competence, wider skills and elements of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig will be included

**Progression Steps**

**Progression Steps and achievement outcomes**

Progression steps (CAMAU) will be described at five points 5, 8, 11,14 and 16 Steps will take form of a range of achievement outcomes and by signalling an emphasis on achievement, in a broad sense, these outcomes broaden the scope of what we value in children and young people’s learning. Outcomes will be described from learner’s point of view; terms like ‘I have for experiences...’ ‘I can for .....’ for outcomes will be used. Achievement outcomes will include Knowledge, Skills and Experiences together Cross Curricular Responsibilities, wider skills, the Welsh dimension and international perspective when appropriate The Achievement Outcomes will contribute to achieving the ‘What Matters and Four Purposes and are to be used as ‘reference points’ for individuals and **not** as universal expectations of all children at these fixed points

5 years	8 years	11 years	14 years	16 years
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**Knowledge, Skills and Experiences**

The KSE’s identify the key ideas and ‘enablers’ to achieving each What Matters They give an indication of ‘content’ that is essential to be covered at some point on the continuum to reach each What Matters and are an outline of progression articulating the general nature of change across the continuum of learning.

When considering RE policy making the WG is mindful of:

- The description of an agreed syllabus
- Sixth form RE
- School nursery classes
- Withdrawal from RE

Because there also legal requirements and issues currently with WG legal department.

### **Things to consider**

Is RE identifiable in this Humanities Area – each person can judge for themselves the obvious and discrete areas but it is important to remember that it is envisaged that:

Schools will have opportunity and freedom to plan the **content** of own curriculum.

Be able to identify the opportunities for rich learning in RE within the existing framework

RE remains locally determined (subsidiarity supports this).

The supporting framework and hopefully case studies will be available to support schools in their planning.

Are there opportunities you can see?

This supporting Framework is still in planning stage but writing group hope it will include

- Introduction
- RE Learner entitlement
- What is Good RE?
- Progression
- The place of RE In the Humanities
- The right to withdraw

Together with background on Successful Futures, What Matters approach, cross-curricular elements, the Welsh dimension etc.

If colleagues have comments or observations send them to [pauline.smith@gov.wales](mailto:pauline.smith@gov.wales).

Other comments:

It was made plain to the WG representatives the need for each SACRE to have a professional adviser available to support its work, even more so at this important time. The decision by GWe to withdraw the services of Bethan James from her supporting role for Ynys Mon and Gwynedd SACRES needs to be challenged otherwise the SACRE will be 'blind' at the very time it needs to be clear sighted.

Future decisions and ability of SACRE's to play their part in the evolution of the New Curriculum is at stake because children, teachers, parents and Governors of Ynys Mon will be the biggest losers. The RE community needs to voice its concerns as a matter of urgency. Decisions will be made; a White paper comes out in January with a three month window of opportunity for comment. These are

important times; complex and far reaching decisions are to be made and in due course implemented and we need the appropriate advice and clear, unbiased interpretation of what is proposed.

Another area of concern was much would depend on the expertise of teachers as to how these plans unfold in the classroom. Are there/ will there be enough good RE teachers available to ensure that the right choices are made and the children are well taught?

**Questions to be considered:**

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

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

Is there anything WG should consider when developing framework?

What are the implications of these proposals for you?

Should RE be compulsory at sixth form?

Should nursery children be included in the provisions being outlined?

Do we agree with definitions, statements and views stated?