

Attendance

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Rheinallt Thomas (RT)</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans (EE) Lindsey Harvey (LH) Alice Parry (AP) Sarah Humphries</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR)</p> <p>Ceredigion Rhianydd James (RJ) Colin Partridge (CP)</p> <p>Conwy Roger Boon (RB)</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Jennie Downes (JD)</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Dave Mackie (DM) Vicky Barlow (VB) Mared Eastwood (ME)</p> <p>Gwynedd</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Louise Brown (LB) Rachel Buckler (RBU)</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Rachel Samuel (RS)</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</p> <p>Powys Caroline Davies (CD) Mike Head (MH) John Mitson (JM)</p> <p>Other attendees: David Ashworth Andrew Bennett</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Mathew Maidment (MM)</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea</p> <p>Torfaen Emily Lloyd (EL)</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Kathy Riddick (KR)</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Tania ap Siôn (TS) Libby Jones (LJ)</p> <p>NAPfRE</p> <p>EFTRE Phil Lord (PL)</p> <p>Regional Consortia Donna Graves (DG) Hayley Jones (HJ) Phil Lord (PL)</p> <p>EAS</p>	<p>Associates:</p> <p>WJEC Chris Owens (CO) Tori Murphey (TM)</p> <p>ESTYN Gwawr Meirion</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>REC Libby Jones (LJ)</p> <p>Church in Wales Emily Lloyd (EL)</p> <p>Catholic Education Service</p> <p>Qualification Wales Oliver Stacey (OS)</p> <p>Interfaith Network</p> <p>ADEW University Of Wales</p> <p>USW Trinity St David</p> <p>Minutes (from recording) Jo Nicholls (JNI)</p> <p>Translator: Sioned Jones</p>
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Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction and welcome

EE welcomed members to the Spring meeting hosted by Bridgend, EE's local SAC. EE welcomed and introduced Bridgend County Borough Council's Corporate Director for Education, Early Years and Young People, Mr. Lindsey Harvey.

Mr. Lindsey Harvey gave the following introduction:

A warm welcome, we are absolutely delighted and honoured to hold this meeting with WASACRE especially as it is celebrating its 30th birthday. We hold WASACRE and its work in extremely high regard. On behalf of my fellow Directors of Education across Wales, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all of you who have been involved in this initiative, and the foresight to establish WASACRE 30 years ago, and to those who worked so hard to maintain its presence and standing in the RVE arena.

Bridgend's SAC Committee is a significant body for Bridgend local authorities. I would like to take this opportunity as well to express my thanks to all members of this group for their commitment, contributions, support they offer RVE practitioners within Bridgend and wider. We are privileged to have the expertise of EE our Chair, whose commitment and knowledge in this area has impacted so positively both our local SAC and the wider SAC agenda. Bridgend recognises and appreciates the value of all the work that goes on in WASACRE.

I am delighted, as a former teacher, to speak about the significant strides we have made in the field of RVE in Bridgend schools. RVE plays a crucial role in shaping the moral and ethical framework of all learners. It fosters a deeper understanding of worldviews and promotes respect and empathy amongst learners, and this is something I believe is important for us all to embrace. We are also proud to announce that our RVE curriculum has been successfully rolled out across all non-maintained nursery settings, primary schools and secondary schools up to and including year nine from September last year. This comprehensive implementation ensures that learners meet the mandatory requirements as set out in the Curriculum for Wales and most notably within the four purposes that ethically inform citizens.

We look ahead and recognise that strategic planning is obviously going to be required to ensure the continued success of this academic subject within the region and within Wales. The introduction of the new GCSE Religious Studies course will obviously have a significant impact on both practitioners and learners, and additionally, planning for the changes in mandatory RVE in years 10 and 11 as the curriculum rolls out for those schools who do not have a full cohort GCSE. It is imperative that we allocate sufficient curriculum time and provision for mandatory RVE in year 10 and 11 as the Curriculum for Wales continues its final roll out. Bridgend SAC has been actively involved in supporting and participates in the Central South Consortium and Education Achievement Service Forum for RVE, religious education, religious studies, and we continue to do so.

We're very proud to have a Church in Wales Primary School representing our local authority on this forum. Their involvement highlights the commitment of fostering a collaborative environment for RVE and listening to learner voice. The local authority and Central South Consortium, our partners, have been a steadfast support of RVE and the daily active collective worship in Wales for schools. This includes the development of a generic policy supporting materials for the agreed syllabus for the new curriculum and the guidance for RVE. Bridgend SAC has received two new presentations for schools about the RVE provision delivery, and these presentations have provided valuable insights in its successes and challenges faced by practitioners. In response, we developed a suite of new resources to support the specific requests and needs identified by our schools. Together we're shaping

a brighter future for our learners grounded in the principles and values of respect, empathy and understanding. And on behalf, finally, of Bridgend local authority, I wish WASACRE a productive meeting today.

EE thanked LH for his introduction and supportive words.

EE introduced Rheinallt Thomas a founding member of WASACRE to say a few words on the early years of WASACRE.

Both RT and JM attended the inaugural meeting held on Feb 27th, 1995. RT congratulated JM on his role as Treasurer for the past 30 years.

RT shared the following detail of the background to WASACRE:

In March 1991 when I was Director of the Welsh National Centre a consultation was held and subsequently the curriculum bulletin was published by the Curriculum Council for Wales. This initiative provided a new focus, and this resulted in the Centre convening, chairing, minuting a consultation of all SACRES in Wales in January 1992.

The consultation made several recommendations, one of which was to establish a small working party to look at the agreed syllabi that had been published. 1988 was significant in terms of requirements etc. In June 1992 the Centre published a pamphlet under the title 'New Agreed Syllabuses in Wales', a report of the working party on the consultation. This bilingual report was presented to another consultation held in September 1992 and the Centre continued to coordinate consultations of Welsh SACREs during 1993 and 1994. The focus was on the '1094 Circular'. The value of what was achieved by collaboration under the Centre's leadership led to a suggestion that a Welsh Association of SACREs be formed. This was deemed necessary because of the upcoming reorganisation of local government, which resulted in 8 SACREs becoming 22 SACREs from 1996. The representatives of all the 8 SACREs in Wales met in Cardiff in November 1994 and were unanimous in their support in setting up an association.

At the first WASACRE meeting on the 27th February 1995, a constitution was approved. It was agreed that the Association would meet three times a year to discuss common concerns, share expertise and facilitate cooperation between LEAs in developing RE and collective worship.

The first chair was Archdeacon, John Alex Lewis from Mid Glamorgan, the Vice Chancellor, Wyndham Davis from West Glamorgan, the Secretary, Gavin Craigan from Clwyd and Treasurer John Mitson from Powys. The second meeting was held in Clwyd on June 8th, 1995. By 1996 the reorganisation had taken place, and the WASACRE AGM was held in Llangefni on July 11th. It was a great delight that 18 of the 22 new authorities were able to send representatives. These representatives were Directors / Assistant Directors of Education. This was a key to the success of this establishment of WASACRE, being supported at the highest level by the Directors of Education and their deputies. I think one of the strengths has been throughout, that the LEAs have been supported and that the advisors have been key.

I have found a copy of all the officers from 1995 through to the 2000. I suggest it could be interesting for this to be displayed on the WASACRE website.

I want to refer to a couple of names, Gavin Craigan who was key to the inauguration and to the success as the first Secretary of WASACRE. He was followed by Hywel Evans, who was an officer for over 10 years, as Secretary and then as Assistant Secretary. Hywel Evans was very important, because he was Chair of the Curriculum Council for Wales. At that key time, he was able to bridge that gap very effectively. He was followed by Canon Edward Evans,

as Assistant Secretary, and as we know, EE is back again as Chair and has made a fantastic contribution over the years.

Since its creation, WASACRE has built very good relationships with Curriculum Council for Wales, NAPfRE, ACAC and more recently with Welsh Government.

WASACRE has succeeded in achieving its aims in terms of cooperation and collaboration and the well-being of RE. RE would not be in such a healthy position in schools in Wales were it not for WASACRE.

EE thanked RT and expressed his gratitude that both RT and JM were attending today's meeting.

2. Quiet reflection

EE led a quiet reflection looking forward:

Those of us who have been involved in WASACRE in more recent years will be aware of how it is grown in stature and how it has come to be respected by many organisations connected with education in Wales. We are respected partners with Welsh Government, Estyn, Qualification Wales, WJEC, ADEW and others. These relationships mean that WASACRE is at the leading edge of advancing RVE in Wales. We are privileged to be involved in high level discussions with all these organisations which enable the voice of the practitioner, as well as the local SAC to be heard and have some influence. Today, 20 out of the 22 standing advisory councils in Wales subscribe to and support the work of WASACRE. When WASACRE speaks, it represents those SACs from across Wales, and in this regard, it has the authority to speak and through our dedicated SAC members, officers, advisors and Associates, we have created a family of like-minded individuals and groups working together to provide high quality support for the provision of RVE, RS and collective worship in Wales.

We thank those SACs for their continued support, and we look forward to the strengthening of relationships whilst remaining open to new ones.

There are many challenges ahead for RVE as a subject. The numbers of students opting to take Religious Studies at GCSE and A level is dropping year by year. We have the perfect opportunity with RVE to engage young people in a way that we haven't before.

With the expanded scope of the subject, schools can now provide in their bespoke curriculum RVE that explores both past and contemporary issues that really matter to young people in Wales. Helping them to develop the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to navigate our fast, changing and diverse world. It is clear from the recently released and highly acclaimed successful WASACRE film, that RVE really matters. It covers so many aspects of today's world. The film was designed to catch the attention of today's scholars.

Today's young people are deeply interested and involved in many aspects that affect our daily lives, politics, ethics and conservation. In my time working with local schools, I've had many interesting conversations with students on topics about, is it ever right to kill? Is war ever justifiable? What about capital punishment, assisted suicide, and other such topics that are in the public's minds today, young people are genuinely interested in such topics, and RVE gives them the opportunity to explore these important issues in more depth from both religious and non-religious perspectives. However, if that is to work effectively and in line with current legislation, we must ensure that the approach to RVE in school fulfils the needs and rights of our learners, and that is where SACs and WASACRE have a very key role to play. WASACRE recognises and respects that each local authority is required to establish its own agreed syllabus. The association worked hard to ensure that the voice of local SACs was heard and listened to within the Curriculum for Wales development process. WASACRE provided Executive Officers to help Welsh Government draft the statutory RVE guidance,

and continues to provide support and guidance nationally, when and where needed, whilst respecting the autonomy of each SAC. For example, officers have worked closely with Welsh Government to prepare a series of playlists, which are now on the Hwb platform. These are rather like interactive PowerPoint presentations, and they're available to everyone. Each one provides a baseline for essential information for a particular audience or on a particular topic, without undermining local determination, but offering basic support for SACs to build on if they wish. This is the sort of cooperation that we hope to see continuing. In an age where cooperation is ever more needed, the work of WASACRE is essential. The topics that are discussed at both its Executive meetings and in our termly meetings are wide ranging. Its context is increasingly important, and its work with NAPfRE strengthens the position of RVE in the classroom.

Last year WASACRE held a conference which has been much appreciated by so many. Based on the success of that conference more are planned, which will enable practitioners and those involved in RVE to come together to encourage and explore new and innovative methods of delivery. WASACRE is aware of the concern that there is among teachers of the subject. An academic research project entitled 'The Teacher Voice Project - RVE in the Curriculum for Wales', aims to try to establish what are the real areas of concern. We will hear more about this later at item 10. Please do all you can as a SAC to encourage practitioners in your local area to participate. The more responses that are received, the more valuable the project will be. I would recommend that you keep up to date with all WASACRE matters through the WASACRE website, which we try to continually keep up to date.

As we reflect on the last 30 years of WASACRE we too look forward to the future of WASACRE. The future is in our hands. There is much work to be done. We must try to ensure that WASACRE continues to speak on behalf of our SACs in Wales. That is where its strength lies, a united voice. A voice that is respected and listened to by those who legislate and to ensure that RVE as a subject continues to grow and thrive and does not disappear from today's education scene. Thank you to those who founded WASACRE. We hope that we continue their legacy.

3. Apologies

Apologies received from Tyler Saunders, Exec Committee, Ali Ahmed Cardiff SAC, Ellen Stock WGLA, and Paul Webber, NAPfRE.

4. Minutes of the last meeting, Zoom, 14th November 2024 (Monmouthshire)

Item 8, page 5, 7th bullet point change 'The non-examined assessments, something that is totally new to the teaching profession' to be changed to 'The non-examined assessments, something that is totally new to RS teachers.'

With this amendment the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 14th November 2024.

EE, the Chair, will sign the minutes to indicate that it is the final version and provide this signed copy to AP for filing

5. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

Just one matter arising, it was agreed that the list of LA advisors is to be displayed on WASACRE website.

All other matters to be addressed in today's agenda.

RT thanked EE and PW (NAPfRE) for the kind words on the dissolution of REMW. Apart from informing charity commission everything is now completed. RT has the link for the copy of the book.

6. WASACRE conference

Costing paper

The costing paper was shared with the members.

JM: Commented on the success of the conference. It was an excellent conference with positive feedback received both on the day and post conference. The speakers were inspiring, and the keynote presentations are available to view on the WASACRE website.

The total cost of the conference was £17,235.24. JM presented the breakdown that was detailed on the costing sheet.

RB: Is there a possibility of another conference? Is it going to be biannual?

JM: To do something on this scale may take a couple of years to build up funds.

LJ: The Executive are currently considering possible dates, perhaps even as early as the autumn term. It won't be on the same scale as June 2024 and it maybe online.

LB: What reserves have been left after these expenses?

JM: Accounts stand at approx. £40,000. Reserves have been building. Total income received last year was £9,900.

RT: Conferences have been held according to needs. Important to build up funds.

RJ: Agree a conference is required however, the pre and post conference training sessions were widely appreciated, and any further training to support the implementation of our RVE / RS GCSE would be gratefully appreciated.

LJ: Acknowledged RJ's comments

ACTION: Conference costing paper to be forwarded to all SACs.

7. RVE Film

LJ reported:

The film was sent to all SAC clerks, NAPfRE, advisors, Lynn Neagle and the Bishop of Llandaff. It was also uploaded promptly to the WASACRE website for all to view.

Various teachers, practitioners, colleagues in Welsh Government (WG) and other national organisations that WASACRE partner with, saw the film. WASACRE received positive feedback and was overwhelmed by the support for the film. Some teachers mentioned they have already used it in their classroom to prompt discussion and may use it for open days for the primary schools coming up.

Welsh Government (WG) colleagues were very appreciative of the film and were impressed by it. WG agreed to share the film via their internal and external groups. It has also been included twice in Dysc.

We are still waiting to hear officially from Lynn Neagle, and the Bishop of Llandaff with their comments.

Please do share and encourage others to share the film far and wide. If you have any ideas about how we can continue to share it, please let me know. Thank you very much for all the comments that we have received and thank you to all for your support.

EE: Some senior schools are using the film at option evenings.

DG: CSC and EAS Youth Voice for SACRE/SAC forum are producing their own versions of the film. It inspired them.

JM: The cost of the film was £10,341.50 which included a gift of £150.41 to the individual starring in the film.

TAS: Confirmed the film is on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdFxWoCvqzo&t=1s>

8. NAPfRE presentation

PL presented 'SACRE Annual reports' - a copy of the presentation is to be sent with these minutes.

The next steps:

- Document needs a rewrite with input from WG outlining requirements.
- Look at including forward planning as well as reflecting on past year.
- A review of annual reports periodically. Identify good practice which is then shared.
- WASACRE is meeting with WG to discuss the update of the document and the annual review.

RB: Encouraged the forward-looking plan. Helpful for targeting and allocating responsibility.

ACTION: SACs to add to their agenda to discuss what they require on their annual reports and feedback to NAPfRE who will take to the discussion with WG.

9. Welsh Government [WG] matters

Usual termly meetings with WG colleagues

LJ reported:

The most recent meeting was on the 14th January 2025. Present from WASACRE were EE, TaS and LJ, and present from WG were Alison Tom (AT) and Pauline Smith (PS). We had previously met with Amy, who has now left. WG is looking for a replacement.

An update was provided on Adnodd which is the team responsible for commissioning resources for the Curriculum for Wales. Team headed up by Dr Ali Hanbury with Elliw Roberts and Dyddgu Morgan-Hywel. Currently assessing the need for new resources, specifically for the Curriculum for Wales in RVE. The team understands the importance of critical engagement with any resources that are chosen.

Both LJ and JHR, as RE experts, have met with this team to support their work.

WG made the decision that RE Hubs is not going to be put on Hwb.

WG has sent WASACRE a list of new resources that Sally Llewellyn has collated which will soon appear on Hwb.

The St Giles Centre is currently reviewing Welsh Government funded resources for 3 to 7-year-olds which will also appear on Hwb.

The Bangor report was discussed. WG felt that the sample size was too small and that there were long term issues with the research. The report was not comprehensive enough to influence Welsh Government policy.

It was sadly reported that Kevin Palmer is seriously ill. WASACRE passed on its best wishes to Kevin Palmer and his family.

This means WASACRE's project around initial teacher training and upskilling teachers is stalled. AT will contact Max White who was previously working with Kevin Palmer for an update.

AT was extremely positive about the WASACRE's RVE film and commented how it supported the expanded scope of RVE and provided a brilliant perspective on RVE in an accessible way. It has been included in Dysg. The final agenda item was the SAC Annual reports which PL has just presented.

NAPfRE and WASACRE met on 10th Feb to discuss the annual reports, and a proposal will be shared with WG.

Next meeting set for after Easter, date to be confirmed

Professional learning for RVE (Governor playlist)

LJ reported:

Since the last main meeting in November, the governor's playlist has finally been published. It is a baseline of information that governors will find useful. SACs have been sent the link to the playlist. From there needs to be shared with Governors. It is on the resources section of Hwb.

Link here:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/eef7e399-93bb-4d7c-ab68-145c93f4c6d3/overview>

RJ: Ceredigion have shared the link to the governor's playlist within their spring newsletter to governors.

ACTION: SACS to check that the governor playlist link has been shared with Governors.

10. WASACRE supported research - The Teacher Voice Project: RVE in the Curriculum for Wales

TaS presented: The Teacher Voice Project: RVE in the Curriculum for Wales. A copy of this presentation will be sent with these minutes.

TaS: There are five organisations collaborating on this project: St Gile's Centre Wrexham; Bishop Grosseteste University; Cardiff Metropolitan University, Neath Port Talbot Education Support and Llanishen High School, Cardiff.

The research survey has both quantitative and qualitative elements and involves teachers in Wales who work in a 3 to 16 year school or setting context. It is designed to access directly teachers' experiences of and engagement with curriculum change in Wales. The focus is specifically on RVE. The survey's research ethics were approved and highly commended by the research ethics panels of two universities, Bishop Grosseteste University and Cardiff Metropolitan University. The survey's aim is to inform professional dialogue and professional learning, both locally and nationally.

WASACRE's main role is to promote and distribute the survey and its findings.

The design and content of the survey was detailed in slides 11-19.

All SACs received the survey at the end of January and is to be shared more widely with practitioners.

The success of the survey is dependent on as many schools and teachers completing the survey as possible. The more responses the more valuable it would be and the more acceptable its results with the increased opportunity for analysis on a local and national level. Please can you help us and really promote this as SACs.

Survey deadline is as soon as possible by the close at the end of summer term.

Link to survey: <https://stgilescentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Survey-information-attachment.pdf>

ACTION: All WASACRE members to encourage RVE practitioners to complete the survey.

RB: What inspired the survey and has something like this be carried out previously?

TaS: This particular survey is new as it focuses on RVE and has not been carried out previously. Now is the right time to carry out this survey as secondary schools can now contribute as well as primary schools. We hope to conduct the survey on a regular basis to track progress.

JHR: Is there a cost to this research?

TaS: The cost is being carried by the Universities and the St Giles Centre. There is no cost for WASACRE.

RJ: What is the response so far?

TaS: I haven't looked in detail as it is too early but the responses that have been received have provided in depth feedback.

RB: An excellent in depth and supportive survey.

11. Qualifications

RS: Fed back on the wider offer consultation. WASACRE had previously raised concerns over one of the unit titles in the skills suite. On the latest documentation the title has been changed to 'Faith and Belief in the Community'.

LJ: WASACRE raised a question with Qual Wales as to whether the Agored Cymru Exploring World Views Qualification would run alongside the skills suite for its final year and be available for schools to enter learners up to October 2027 with the skills suite being implemented in September 2027. This is still in discussion with Qual Wales as they consider this and other non GCSE qualifications.

OS: It is quite complicated as there are many other qualifications to consider. We need to be robust in the process we use, so it is taking time. There will be a decision at the end of the school year.

LJ: Confirmed that if the Agored Cymru Exploring World Views Qualification was to be accepted alongside the skills suite in 2027, it would only be for the two years of running through that qualification with those particular learners. It is not being requested as an ongoing qualification requirement.

• Religious Studies GCSE

LB: There are some concerns about the new religious studies GCSE, and whether the implementation of this can be postponed. I understand that history, for example, has been postponed.

OS: The history decision was jointly taken between Qualifications Wales, the Welsh Government and WJEC, and partly as some of the unions and the Association of Directors of Education (ADEW) wrote to QW. There is the quantum of change in the content within history.

We are aware that there are changes in the RE GCSE, particularly the non-examination assessment, which is a big change from the current GCSE, but we feel it is important that this GCSE goes ahead in September, it won't be delayed.

RB: I'm disappointed QW are going ahead without reviewing this. I would like to see a much more adventurous position from the GCSE board in developing something like the pilot which was developed 30 years ago which was exciting and enthused the students.

MM: On speaking with colleagues as a teacher, there are many concerns about the new GCSE. Teachers are not ready for it. We haven't received our training yet in RCT, everything seems to have been delayed. I think our training is due for the 7th April, which would leave us 11 school weeks left to prepare for GCSE. We are really concerned and would like QW to reconsider the option of delaying, even if it is a case of allowing the legacy paper to still go ahead and introduce the new GCSE in September. In previous years when a new GCSE has been rolled out, we have been allowed to have the option of having the legacy paper in addition. Some teachers may feel more ready than others to deliver the new GCSE.

OS: I'll take that back in terms of parallel running. That was considered for history, but it wasn't deemed viable, unfortunately. Some people have been very disappointed when GCSEs are delayed saying that they are ready to teach it. Will take the concerns expressed today back to QW.

RB: Would the Executive Committee consider writing to the Minister with regards to provision at KS4?

LJ: Confirmed a letter will be written. This will take time to produce and will be shared with SACs.

12. Estyn: New Inspection framework

GM reported:

It is a little early at the moment for us to be able to collate information about the emerging practice that we're identifying from September 2024 onwards. Hopefully by the next meeting, there will be an update.

The new inspection arrangements for September 2024 have three inspection areas:

- Teaching and learning, which is allowing Estyn to talk much more in depth about the impact that teaching is having on pupils, progress and learning in classrooms, and making that link explicit.
- Well-being care, support and guidance.
- Leading and improving.

One of the key things that should be emphasised is that Estyn doesn't have any preferred approaches to teaching and learning. Estyn is interested in seeing whether the pupils are engaged and making progress in their learning, focus on the impact that teaching is having on that pupil's learning and progress in classrooms.

A sample of middle leaders are invited to come and meet with the Estyn representative and discuss pupils work with them and look at a sample of books. Estyn will discuss the work that the middle leader is doing in the leadership of their department and how they contribute to those quality assurance processes to identify strengths and areas for improvement within RVE from the point of view of curriculum, which comes within inspection area one 'Teaching and Learning'.

Estyn will soon publish guidance to outline its approach to the inspection of the curriculum. We look at how well a school is providing a broad and balanced curriculum covering all areas of learning and experience until year nine. Looking to see that pupils are having that opportunity to access all areas of learning experience. As we move on now to new qualifications looking at how schools provide the breadth of experience for year 10 pupils. We are realistic, we would not expect pupils to engage with every 'What Matters' statement, but we would expect to see that pupils are having purposeful opportunities to engage with relevant and engaging learning experiences.

We do take account of the statutory guidance, and we do take account of whether providers are meeting mandatory requirements, especially as we move forward now into what will happen with qualifications.

We look at the quality of the experience. We look at whether qualifications are being accessed and that are relevant and meaningful to learners in years 10 and 11. Hopefully that information is then included within our evidence base, which sits behind the report. We report by exception; we will report on particular strengths and particular areas for improvement although it might not be explicitly referred to in a report.

The interim visits mainly focus on the recommendations from the previous inspection and how the school is addressing those recommendations. Activities will be tailored to the recommendations that we are looking at, so they might include things like learning walks, observations, scrutiny of work, meetings with middle leaders, meetings with senior leaders. We have had some positive feedback from senior leaders about the opportunities for them to jointly observe or come on joint learning walks with an HMI. This allows for a professional dialogue to take place with regards to the strengths and areas for improvement, in teaching and learning, in particular. The result of those interim visits is a letter. They are published on our website, so they'll outline the activities that we have undertaken. They will outline some of the things that we have heard about from leaders, but then we will have a few questions just to help the school maybe consider the next steps as they go about addressing that recommendation.

RT: Can we expect better provision from Estyn as far as RVE and collective worship are concerned?

GM: From inspection 24 the reports are much shorter, particularly in the primary sector, and are reported by exception. Although our evidence base may include the information in the background, not all aspects within the inspection framework will be remarked upon. It is a decision that has been made centrally to make the reports as concise and as clearly focused on strengths and particular areas for improvement. We do have some spotlights that we will highlight, particularly strong practice within curriculum areas. There isn't necessarily going to be a particular remark about the work being done for RVE in all schools. It might come up as a spotlight, or it might come up as an example, but it is not likely to be there, nor reports moving forwards.

RT: So, you would not take on board the fact legislatively, RE stands differently to all other subjects in the curriculum, which is the only one that is required to produce an agreed syllabus?

GM: We do look at those mandatory elements that are expected, including relationships and sex education, for example, and RVE will sit within our evidence base, which sits behind the reports. Estyn won't necessarily refer to it unless there is a clear strength or it is an area for improvement that the school needs to address. Estyn's reports look at an evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement. Estyn does not use a checklist approach whereby we just tick off if schools are complying with things.

RT: The individual SACs should be contacting every school to check that they are compliant.

GM: That is the responsibility of an LA SAC to make sure that schools are complying with the local curriculum.

VB: In the new guidance that you mentioned on the inspections approach to the curriculum, might there be reference about RVE within that specifically?

GM: The guidance is being developed at the moment. It is in response to the fact that the curriculum is now moving beyond into secondary, in particular 7 to 9 and going into 10 to 11, as well. I'll certainly take that comment back to check to see if there is a specific reference to RVE within that guidance.

VB: That might be a good place to cite some of the conversation we have had here today around the approach to RVE when inspecting.

RB: I would like Estyn to reconsider the whole framework of reporting exceptions, as opposed to all the positive and good things that are going on in a school.

GM: I disagree, the reports do outline the strengths and areas for improvement within schools. It is a balanced report in all cases. Estyn also produces summary documents for parents and guardians, which are more concise to allow schools to communicate those key messages with their local communities.

13. Report by the Executive Committee held on 5 February 2025

EE: Any matters arising from this last Exec. Committee meeting have been addressed in this meeting. Just one item to be mentioned that is the draft code of conduct which the Executive Committee has prepared. This was sent out previously for the members' observations.

WASACRE has received one comment back regarding the following text:

'It is also important to note, outside WASACRE meetings you should never express an opinion, or a view, about any matter which you deem to be the view of WASACRE, unless you have been especially asked to do by the Chair. You should never express your own view or opinion in such a manner as to lead others to believe that you are expressing the view of WASACRE.'

This wording was deemed ambiguous, and the proposed amendment is 'Outside of WASACRE meetings never speak on behalf of WASACRE without the permission of the Chair.'

Also, a typo on page 2 to be corrected to RVE.

JHR and RJ: Have not had SAC meetings yet and have not been able to discuss this matter.

JHR: Should the Nolan principles be included in the code of conduct?

EE: Will look to see if we need to refer to the Nolan principles before re sending the amended code to SACs. Decided to refer the sign off the code of conduct to the AGM.

ACTION: EE to review whether the Nolan principles are to be included in the code of conduct. AP and LJ will resend the code of conduct with the amendments outlined above and the item will be referred to at the AGM.

14. Up-dates:

WJEC (Chris Owens)

We are in the middle of rolling out 12 national PL events across Wales. From the one that I attended, there is very little desire by the RS teachers to delay the introduction of the new qualification. Colleagues will have more material to launch the new specification in September.

EE left the meeting and vice chair RS chaired the remainder of the meeting.

REC (Kathy Ruddick)

KR: There are not many agenda items that impact on Wales at the moment. The focus is on England with the Children Wellbeing Schools Bill which will lead into the full curriculum review. Big discussion with RE whether they should include it in the national curriculum or whether it remains being assessed at local authority level.

REC have developed a National Content Standard which is similar to the Wales Statutory Guidance for RVE, link: <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resource/national-content-standard-1st-edition-2023/#:~:text=The%20RE%20Council's%20National%20Content%20Standard%20provides%20a,not%20determine%20precisely%20what%20content%20schools%20should%20teach>

LJ and KR have fed back from the Wales experience of curriculum review. There is a will to try and align with Wales.

England also struggling with the concepts regarding the 'Right to Withdraw'.

LJ: Some items that could be relevant to Wales:

- Relooking at the 'Resilience Project' which Wales worked on a long time ago
- A Dharmic traditions project
- Quality Mark – redeveloping for RVE

These items will be taken to the Executive Committee.

EFTRE (Phil Lord)

LJ shared PL's two questions.

- 1) Will WASACRE sponsor a teacher at the EFTRE conference in Budapest on 21-24th August 2025?
- 2) Has the Executive discussed the idea of a 'Cynefin around Europe' project with regards to possible funding?

Items to be considered by the Exec Committee.

ACTION: Executive Committee to discuss these two items: 1) Sponsoring a teacher at the EFTRE conference and 2) Idea of a Cynefin around Europe project with regards to possible funding.

NAPfRE (Paula Webber)

RS reported that NAPfRE has not met in this term. Due to meet on 18th March.

Local matters / enquiries

None received.

15. Correspondence

- AP: Question from Wrexham SAC what happens with annual reports/ is there a penalty if an annual report hasn't been submitted?

ACTION: AP to follow up with WG.

- LJ: DG asked whether Exec Committee would consider a presentation on Sentientism as a non-religious philosophical worldview. DG sent links with further information. The Exec. Committee will discuss this at the next meeting in May.
- In December WASACRE wrote to QW in response to the QW communication on the delays to the GSCE RS specification. Philip Blaker from QW formally responded.
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ACTION: Send the response from QW to all SACs.

- LJ: Correspondence from Adnodd about research they are conducting into how educators and learners use Hwb and other platforms to search for educational resources. Request for participation.
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ACTION: LJ to send out the survey to SACs who can then forward onto teachers.

RS confirmed that all conference speakers have been formally thanked.

16. Any other business (to be agreed in advance of the meeting with the Chair)

None reported.

RS thanked the members for their time at this productive meeting.

17. Date for next meeting (AGM) – via zoom, hosted by Anglesey date TBA

Meeting ended at 1.44pm.