

Joint Annual Report for the Academic Year 2023-2024

Wrexham Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education (SACRE) and
Wrexham Standing Advisory Council (SAC) Religion, Values and Ethics

This document is also available in Welsh



Contents

Introduction

1. Summary of Advice to the Local Authority on Religious Education (RE) and religion, values and ethics (RVE)

1.1	Context	4
1.2	The Agreed Syllabus	4
1.3	Standards in Religious Education	5
1.4	Examination Results at KS4 and KS5	6
1.5	Actions arising from examination results	6
1.6	Methods of teaching, the choice of teaching materials	7
1.7	Teacher training	7

2. Summary of advice to the Local Authority on Collective Worship

2.1	Collective Worship guidelines	9
2.2	Collective Worship support	9

3. Summary of advice to the Local Authority on Local and National Issues

3.1	Welsh Government issues	10
3.2	St Giles' Centre	10
3.3	Complaints	13
3.4	WASACRE	13

Appendix 1

Membership of Wrexham Joint SACRE/SAC 2023-2024	15
---	----

Appendix 2

Training and advice given to SACRE/SAC members	18
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Introduction

I am pleased to introduce you to the Wrexham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and Standing Advisory Council (SAC) on Religion Values and Ethics, Joint Annual Report of 2023/2024. The two Councils continue to work together to advise Wrexham Local Authority on religious education (RE) in the legacy curriculum, and on religion, values and ethics (RVE) in the Curriculum for Wales.

Members of Wrexham SACRE and SAC would like to express gratitude to everyone in the local education sector for the work they are doing to provide children and young people in Wrexham with a broad, balanced and purposeful education as schools continue their Curriculum for Wales journey.

We have a dedicated RE/RVE Adviser who, in collaboration with the St Giles' Centre in Wrexham, has continued to provide high quality support, guidance and training to our local primary and secondary schools during this academic year. I would like to offer my gratitude to the Wrexham Parochial Education Foundation for financially supporting the RE/RVE Adviser's post, and to the members of our joint SACRE and SAC committee for their dedication, expertise and enthusiasm during the 2023/2024 academic year.

Members would like to remind schools that SACRE and SAC are here to support and offer advice and guidance on teaching, learning, resources, and pedagogy in RE, RVE and Collective Worship. Schools are also reminded to refer to the Wrexham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for those year groups following the legacy curriculum and to the Wrexham Agreed syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics for those following the Curriculum for Wales. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Wrexham Local Authority in offering the very best support for RE, RVE and collective worship for all Wrexham schools and settings.

Chair of SACRE/SAC

Councillor Hugh Jones

1. Summary of Advice to the Local Authority on Religious Education (RE) and religion, values and ethics (RVE)

1.1 Context

It is the statutory duty of the local authority (LA) to constitute a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to advise on the provision of religious education (RE) and collective worship in its secondary schools and settings where the Curriculum for Wales has not yet been fully implemented. It is also the statutory duty of the LA to constitute a Standing Advisory Council (SAC) on religion, values and ethics (RVE) to advise on the mandatory provision of RVE and collective worship in its primary schools and settings where the Curriculum for Wales has been fully implemented, and secondary schools where the Curriculum for Wales has been partially implemented. A dedicated Adviser supports Wrexham LA, Wrexham SACRE, and Wrexham SAC. The role of Advisory Teacher for Religious Education 3-19 (4 days) is funded in partnership with the Wrexham Parochial Educational Foundation (WPEF) and the St Giles' Centre for Religious Education, Wrexham.

1.2 The Agreed Syllabus

Community and foundation secondary schools in Wrexham had two locally agreed syllabi to follow during the 2023-2024 academic year. The first was The National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 3 to 19 year olds in Wales which set out the detail for the national provision of RE in the legacy curriculum and was supported by an additional document for Wrexham schools dated 14 February 2019. The [Welsh](#) and [English](#) versions of this document were available on the St Giles' Centre website and both versions contained the details determined at a local level for learners in Year 9 - Year 13.

The second agreed syllabus, setting out the detail for the provision of RVE in the Curriculum for Wales was published in 2022 and was available on the St Giles' Centre website in [Welsh](#) and in [English](#). All learners in all maintained primary schools and settings in Wrexham, including learners in Yr 7 and Yr 8 in all secondary schools in Wrexham were provided with RVE that had regard to the Wrexham Agreed Syllabus for RVE.

The RE Adviser worked with primary and secondary schools on their RVE and RE provision during 2023 and 2024. This support was offered via email, phone, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and also in person.

Throughout the academic year 2023/2024, the RE Adviser and St Giles' Centre staff delivered bespoke professional learning to primary and secondary schools on RVE in the Curriculum for Wales, including sessions related to the new agreed syllabus for RVE.

1.3 Standards in Religious Education

1.3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE Adviser's contact with schools this academic year continued to focus on wellbeing and the individual needs of the schools requiring and requesting support with RE, religious studies at Key Stage 4, RVE and collective worship. Termly meetings with Secondary schools took place during 2023 and 2024.

1.3.2 Analysis of Inspection Reports

Autumn Term Meeting 2022

- Cylch Meithrin Min y Ddôl - Date of visit - May 2023
- Sparkles Day Nursery - Date of visit - June 2023
- Penygelli Primary - Date of visit - May 2023
- Ysgol Cae'r Gwenyn - Date of visit - June 2023
- Ysgol Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog - Date of visit - July 2023
- Ysgol Cynddelw - Date of visit - July 2023

Spring Term Meeting 2023

- Alexandra CP - Date of visit - October 2023
- Black Lane C.P. School - Date of visit - November 2023
- Ysgol Maes Y Mynydd - Date of visit - November 2023

Summer Term Meeting 2023

- Bradley Playgroup - Date of visit - January 2024
- Acton Wraparound Care - Date of visit - February 2024
- Homestead Day Nursery Ltd - Date of visit - March 2024
- Cefn Mawr Primary School - Date of visit - February 2024
- Hafod-y-Wern Community Primary School - Date of visit - February 2024
- Madras Primary School - Date of visit - March 2024
- Woodlands School (independent) - Date of visit - February 2024
- Gorwelion Newydd/New Horizons - date of visit - February 2024

These reports were available on the [Estyn Website](#).

The following sections of each report were presented in the meetings:

- School name
- The judgement awarded for each of the inspection areas
- Comments relating to Religious Education, Collective Worship and SMSC development where mentioned in the report

SACRE and SAC members noted the comments received by schools in relation to standards achieved in RE, RVE and collective worship where specified. Any comments highlighting the need for targeted support were followed up by the RE Adviser and raised with the relevant local authority Officer.

1.4 Examination Results at KS4 and KS5

Due to continued guidance from Welsh Government on the way data is presented and to avoid arbitrary comparison of schools, members were not presented with and were unable to discuss the comparative examination data for examinations awarded in 2023.

1.5 Actions arising from examination results

To support schools, teachers and learners with religious studies examinations, the St Giles' Centre offered schools and settings in Wrexham the following provision.

- [Religious Studies GCSE resources](#) on the St Giles' Centre website (11-16 - St Giles' Centre)
- [Religious Studies AS and A Level resources](#) on the St Giles' Centre website (16+ - St Giles' Centre)

The RE Adviser further supported schools by answering questions, offering advice, liaising with the WJEC, updating schools on the GCSE and A Level RS exam feedback and also by attending INSET and disseminating all relevant information to schools from WJEC during regular RS Forum meetings and by email.

1.6 Methods of teaching, the choice of teaching materials

Advice on methods of teaching and the choice of teaching materials was provided by the LA through the RE Adviser to individual schools on request. The [RE Resource Room at the St Giles' Centre](#) was available for schools to use throughout the 2023/2024 academic year. A variety of resources were loaned out to different schools to support curriculum planning and the provision of pluralistic RVE. SACRE and SAC members record once again, their thanks to the WPEF for their continued support for RE in Wrexham, through the funding of the resource room.

1.7 Teacher training

INSET needs were identified through information collected by the RE Adviser and as suggested by local and national initiatives. The RE Adviser, in partnership with the St Giles' Centre, delivered the following training for schools:

- Progression in RVE project: - 5 primary schools (16 October 2023)
- Online Governor training on RVE - Association of Chair of Governors meetings (various dates 2023/2024).
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - Ysgol Penrhyn (6/11/2023)
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - Ysgol Min y Ddol (13/11/2023)
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - Garth and Ffron (15/11/23)
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - Gwersyllt Primary (28/11/23)
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: Governor training - Gwersyllt Primary (28/11/23)

- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - Borrás Park cluster (10/1/24)
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - Maes Y Llan (15/1/24)
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - All Saints CinW VA (19/9/23)
- RVE in the Curriculum for Wales: planning - St Mary's CinW Primary school Overton (19/9/23)

1.7.1 Curriculum Design

In addition to the training delivered on the dates above, the RE Adviser worked with various practitioners on a one-to one basis to advise on and support curriculum design around RVE, including in the following schools.

Primary:

- Penygelli CP
- Ysgol Penrhyn
- Ysgol Maes Y Llan
- Ysgol Brynteg
- St Marys Catholic Primary School
- Ysgol Llan Y Pwll
- Wats Dyke CP
- Gwersyllt CP
- Victoria CP

Secondary:

- Ysgol Y Grango
- Ysgol Rhosnesni
- Ysgol Morgan Llwyd
- Ysgol Rhiwabon
- Ysgol Bryn Alyn
- Darland High School
- St Christophers Special School
- The Maelor School

2. Summary of advice to the Local Authority on Collective Worship

2.1 Collective Worship guidelines

2.1.1 Monitoring and Guidance

From the Estyn inspection reports presented at joint SACRE and SAC meetings during the 2023/2024 academic year, there was no evidence found of non-compliance with regard to collective worship in any of the schools in Wrexham. Therefore, SACRE/SAC can only conclude that schools in Wrexham continued to provide daily acts of collective worship during 2023/2024.

Bilingual guidance materials on [collective worship](#) are available to schools from the RE Adviser and from the St Giles' Centre website. The materials include: the WASACRE guidance on Collective Worship (2012); the WASACRE guidance published in 2020 on Collective worship during the Covid-19 pandemic; WASACRE Guidance on the Withdrawal of Pupils from Collective Worship (October 2021); Supplementary guidance: collective worship in non-denominational schools (Estyn 2017); and, a St Giles' centre training resource for teachers called Improving collective worship in the primary school.

2.1.2 Determinations

No applications were received from schools for determinations to be made in respect of Collective Worship during 2023/2024.

2.2 Collective Worship support

Advice on Collective worship was provided for the following schools:

- St Peter's Church in Wales Primary School
- Rhosddu Primary School

3. Summary of advice to the Local Authority on Local and National Issues

3.1 Welsh Government issues

The RE Adviser continued to be at the forefront of discussions relating to RE and RVE in the Curriculum for Wales and was involved in various meetings with Welsh Government colleagues, mainly through her role as an Executive Officer of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE). Issues discussed at the meetings included RE and RVE teacher recruitment, the fall in numbers entered for GCSE and A Level Religious Studies, Qualifications for mandatory subjects including RS and RVE, professional learning, and the WASACRE Conference 2024.

3.2 St Giles' Centre

During 2023/2024, the aim of the St Giles' Centre was to continue working in partnership with Wrexham LA to promote and support the development of high quality RE and RVE in all schools in the Wrexham County Borough and beyond. The Centre's partnership working also continued to include Bishop Grosseteste University, which involved a senior academic in Wales working in the St Giles' Centre three days a week. This enabled the St Giles Centre to continue to provide:

- online bilingual curriculum training and support
- online bilingual resources
- a bilingual website
- initiating and facilitating relevant online research projects

[The Centre](#) has continued to support the effective delivery of RE in the current curriculum in Wrexham and has also informed and encouraged implementation of high quality RVE in the Curriculum for Wales.

3.2.1 The Website

[The blog](#) section of the website concerned: new resources; developments connected with the new Curriculum for Wales; professional learning sessions for teachers; consultations; and European developments. Blog posts continued to be simultaneously made available through the Centre's Twitter account. This activity helped to ensure that Wrexham schools were up to date with the most recent significant developments impacting RE and RVE related areas.

3.2.2 Professional Learning

The Centre supported various training opportunities in Wrexham including bespoke sessions for a number of primary schools in partnership with the local authority, on RVE planning. As a result, the Centre has increased its engagement with primary schools and has developed strengthened relationships across the primary sector in Wrexham.

3.2.3 National Work

St Giles' Centre staff continued to work alongside colleagues from WASACRE and Welsh Government on the suite of [national professional learning resources](#) for RVE in the Curriculum for Wales.

St Giles' Centre staff also made significant contributions to the [WASACRE Conference 2024](#), including the online seminars, which were all hosted and facilitated by Centre staff.

The participation of St Giles' Centre staff in these two activities was central for ensuring that the professional learning needs of Wrexham teachers were addressed as well as those across Wales, and enabled them to identify the most relevant bespoke professional learning initiatives for the St Giles Centre to pursue with Wrexham schools, specifically.

3.2.4 International Work

Through collaborations with colleagues from four other EU countries on the, "[What Covid reveals to RE specialists](#)" research project, St Giles' Centre staff worked extremely hard towards the publication of an article based on this project in the Journal of Religious Education.

They have also been leading the development of a second article, '[How does social unrest of 2020/21 affect the teaching of religious education?](#)' which was published during the autumn of 2024 in the Journal of Beliefs and Values.

3.2.5 Curriculum Resources

The St Giles' Centre continued to be closely involved in the publication and development of [Challenging Religious Issues](#), a bilingual journal for A/AS-level students and teachers, which connects scholarship in universities with schools. Issues of the journal were available via the St Giles' Centre website.

The Centre also promoted other select online curriculum resources relevant to schools in Wrexham and 'open access' during 2023/2024. For example, the bilingual [Foundation Phase series](#), 'Exploring why' and 'Exploring How', and the 8-12 'Randolph the Wise' series.

3.2.6 Courses and Events Attended

St Giles' Centre staff attended the following courses or events:

- North Wales Interfaith events - online (various dates)
- North Wales Interfaith meeting - Acton community Hub (17 November 2023)
- WJEC INSET (face to face - Llandudno, 7 December 2023)
- St Mary's Overton Christmas celebration service - 13 December 2023
- St Christopher's Special School Holi Celebrations - 18 March 2024
- St Peter's Primary Celebration Service - 21 March 2024

3.2.7 Research

St Giles' Centre staff continued to work with four other EU countries on publications stemming from the "What Covid reveals to RE specialists" research project. This project focussed on what really matters in religious education.

3.2.8 Xplore! Wrexham

[Xplore! Science Discovery Centre](#) continued to offer schools in Wrexham workshops to explore links between RVE and science. St Giles' Centre staff continued to collaborate with Xplore! colleagues on the development of resources for these workshops to ensure that they are all relevant to the Curriculum for Wales and have regard for the new agreed syllabus.

3.2.9 Agored Cymru

The St Giles' Centre initiated and was involved in the writing of the [Agored Cymru, Exploring Worldviews](#) qualification relevant to statutory RE in Wales, in partnership with Wrexham Local Authority. During the academic year 2023/2024 the RE Adviser supported Wrexham schools entering learners for the qualification by liaising with Agored Cymru, arranging meetings, offering advice and providing support with the development of resources. Entries for the Exploring Worldviews suite of qualifications is the fastest growing within Agored Cymru.

School visits to St Giles' Parish Church supported by the RE Adviser -

- Darland 2 October 2023
- Watts Dyke 29 January/5 February 2024
- St Mary's Catholic Primary school 12 March 2024

3.3 Complaints

The Authority's Complaints Procedure provides a role for SACRE/SAC in resolving complaints in relation to RE, RVE and Collective Worship. During 2023/2024, no complaints were received in relation to RE, RVE, or Collective Worship and, therefore, SACRE/SAC had no involvement in complaints during the year.

3.4 WASACRE

Wrexham SACRE/SAC continued with its membership of WASACRE during the year and was represented at each meeting. Wrexham SACRE/SAC also continued to provide Libby Jones as the Assistant Secretary to [WASACRE](#) for the year and provided Tania ap Sion as Chair.

Correspondence, minutes and matters arising from WASACRE meetings were presented and discussed in joint SACRE and SAC meetings during 2023/2024. Members noted again their appreciation of the role of WASACRE and the work of its Executive Officers on behalf of SACREs and SACs in Wales. As such, Wrexham SACRE/SAC would like to thank the Association for its work throughout the year in continuing to raise the profile of RE and RVE in Wales; for supporting the development of professional learning resources for RVE in the Curriculum for Wales; for responding to various consultations; for offering expert advice

and support to its member SACREs/SACs; and ensuring that the views of those SACREs and SACs were put forward at a range of meetings, including with the Welsh Government, Estyn, Qualifications Wales and WJEC.

The autumn and spring WASACRE meetings took place virtually during 2023/2024. However, the AGM, which took place on the 13 June 2024, was face to face at Wrexham University and was hosted by Wrexham LA and Wrexham SACRE/SAC.

In addition to the AGM, WASACRE held an RVE Conference on the same day and at the same venue, which included keynote speeches from Professor Graham Donaldson, The Rt Revd Mary Stallard and Lynne Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education. Delegates were offered a variety of RVE professional learning workshops on the day and opportunities to raise and discuss issues that really matter for RVE in Wales. Delegates were also treated to a generous buffet lunch. The event was a huge success, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the RE Adviser and St Giles Centre Staff, who were responsible for the organisation, administration and operation of the event.

A large number of Wrexham practitioners, with a number of local schools represented at the day event attended the WASACRE conference. A number of practitioners from schools and settings in Wrexham also attended the online seminars (pre-and post-Conference Day) which were offered as part of the WASACRE Conference 2024 programme.

[Conference Day](#) and [online seminar](#) recordings are available on the WASACRE website. These recordings are all free to Wrexham SAC members and practitioners in Wrexham schools. Please contact the RE Adviser for the passwords to access the online seminar recordings.

Appendix 1

Membership of Wrexham Joint SACRE/SAC 2023-2024

Committee A

Church in Wales x 2

- Hannah Daniels
- Lisa Mullen

Roman Catholic Church x 2

- Liz Davies
- Vacant

Presbyterian Church of Wales - English x 1

- Vacant

Presbyterian Church of Wales - Welsh x 1

- Vaughan Salisbury

Methodist Church x 1 (NW district)

- Tim Guy (Chairperson)

Union of Welsh Independents x 1

- Vacant

Salvation Army x 1

- Captain Claire Durrant

Wrexham Islamic Cultural Centre x 1

- Ahmed Elgattani

Wrexham Humanists x 1

- Gareth Hall

Hindu traditions

- Neera Vyas

Committee B

Secondary Headteacher x 1

- Vacant

Primary Headteacher x 1

- Louise Whitgreave,
Teaching Union - NASUWT

Secondary RE Specialist x 2

- Clare Peers,
Teaching Union - NASUWT
- Aimie Williams,
Teaching Union - UCAC

Primary Classroom Teacher x 2

- Jayne Edmonds,
Teaching Union - NASUWT
- Vacant

Special School Representative x 1

- Buphinda Lace,
Teaching Union - NEU

FE College Representative x 1

- Tim Feak

Committee C

Wrexham Council x 3

- Cllr Gary Brown
- Cllr Phil Wynn
- Cllr Hugh Jones

Local Authority

- Karen Evans (Chief Officer for Education and Early Intervention)
- Rachel Southwell (Education and Effectiveness Manager)
- Libby Jones (School Improvement Officer/RVE Adviser)

Co-Opted (Up to 5)

- Dr Tania ap Sion
- St Mary's centre
- Simon Ellis - Foundation Schools
- Vacant
- Vacant

Clerk

- Governor support - Jane Williams

The main matters considered in each meeting

Thursday 26 October 2023

- Position of Chair and Vice Chair of SACRE
- Minutes of last meeting
- Support for Wrexham Primary schools (SAC)
- Support for Wrexham Secondary schools (SAC/SACRE)
- Estyn Inspection reports
- Progression and sharing effective practice
- Professional learning for SAC/SACRE members
- SACRE/SAC Annual Report
- Updates

Tuesday 20 February 2024:

- Minutes of last meeting
- Support for Wrexham Primary schools (SAC)
- Support for Wrexham Secondary schools (SAC/SACRE)
- Estyn Inspection reports
- Progression and sharing effective practice -
- Professional learning for SAC/SACRE members
- WASACRE Conference 2024
- Updates

Tuesday 11 June 2024:

- Minutes of last meeting
- Support for Wrexham Primary schools (SAC)
- Support for Wrexham Secondary schools (SAC/SACRE)
- Estyn Inspection reports
- Professional learning for SAC/SACRE members
- WASACRE Conference 2024
- Progression and sharing effective practice
- Updates

Appendix 2

Training and advice given to SACRE/SAC members

Training for SACRE/SAC Members

SACRE and SAC members discussed their training needs during the three termly meetings held in 2023/2024, and the most effective way of addressing those needs in order to promote the most efficient use of meeting time. It was agreed that going forward, bespoke professional learning sessions for Wrexham SAC/SACRE members would be arranged from autumn 2024 in the form of online twilight sessions.

It was also brought to the attention of Wrexham SAC/SACRE members during their meetings that WASACRE offered [free professional learning sessions](#) both online and in person as part of the WASACRE Conference 2024 for members of Wrexham SAC/SACRE to consider. A full list of these is available on the WASACRE website.