

Education Matters

1. Revising the Curriculum. (from a paper by Manon Jones, Welsh Government)

The curriculum is being developed between now and 2021. At the end of the summer term, some sketches were published of the shape of the six areas of learning and experience proposed for pupils. These are:

- Expressive Arts;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Humanities;
- Literacy, Languages and Communication;
- Mathematics and Numeracy;
- Science and Technology.

Religious Education will be part of the Humanities area. In answer to queries from Cytûn, Welsh Government have told us:

I can confirm, in line with recommendation 9 of Successful Futures, that Religious Education will form part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience and will remain a statutory curriculum requirement from reception. At the moment, we do not intend to change the legislation concerning the right to withdraw learners from Religious Education lessons. Religious Education will be identifiable within the Humanities, and subjects in general will continue to be important within the new framework.

As a member of the Stakeholder Group, Cytûn will continue to participate fully in the development of the curriculum.

Professor Donaldson also recommends that Religious Education forms part of the Humanities AoLE. SACREs 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 SACREs will work closely with WASACRE and NAPFRE colleagues during this process. SACREs are also invited 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.

Collective worship in schools (from a paper by Gethin Rhys) is not covered by the curriculum review, but came into the news when two pupils at a secondary school in Cardiff launched a petition to abolish it. A counter-petition to retain collective worship was soon launched by another teenager, and managed to get almost twice as many signatures as the first petition. The Petitions Committee has considered these two petitions together, and is in correspondence with the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, about them – and has written again to ask whether there are any implications for human rights. Ms Williams has not suggested that the Welsh Government is planning any changes in the current arrangements.

The Committee could recommend the petitions for debate on the floor of the Assembly, but it is important to realise that anything agreed would not be binding on the Government, and any change to legislation will take several years, and much public consultation. So while Cytûn is following the debates with interest, and will brief Assembly Members as appropriate, no one should expect major changes any time soon.

Education Sunday 10th September: resources were available online - www.educationsunday.org.uk
Highlights include introductory notes on the Bible passage by David Cornick, an outline for all-age worship and collective worship ideas for schools. See also the freechurches.org.uk website for education themed resources. Welsh medium resources are also available at http://ysgolsul.com/?page_id=359

2. **A reformed post-compulsory education and training system:** Legislation to implement Hazelkorn Review of post-compulsory education in Wales. Consultation until 23/10/17.
3. **Recent Estyn publications** have focused on a) reducing workload for teachers and headteachers, b) Peer Inspector Training, c) Annual Reports and Accounts 2016-17, d) Facebook communication, e) Develop new inspection arrangements, f) Primary – Using assessment for Learning to close the gaps in pupils' learning, g) Secondary - Developing a strategic vision for improving education; Careers framework; Science at KS3 and 4; School-to-school support and collaboration, and h) Thematic - Good practice in the humanities.

4. **Free Church Education Committee**

Due to a family wedding I was unable to attend a meeting in London on Tuesday, 17th October, 2017.

At a previous meeting it was noted that The Selly Oak Foundation intends to produce online key stages 2, 3 and 4 resources for schools entitled 'Reforming Christianity'. I enquired whether these resources might be made available in Welsh for Welsh medium secondary schools. Julie Grove (Chair of FCEC for England and Wales) was to enquire whether monies may be available from the Foundation to undertake this translation work.

'The Free Church Voice in Higher Education'. The content of this report as currently drafted is focused on England and I enquired in the last meeting whether a HE Wales input would be desirable. It was agreed that I take this matter to the next meeting of the FCHCW and then report back to the FCEC noting what might be possible.

5. It is also important to note the bilingual publication this year of the history of the **Christian Education Movement Wales/Religious Education Movement Wales**. Copies of the English language book *Encouraging Religion: a history of the Christian/Religious Education Movement Wales, 1965-2015* by Aled D Jones are available from bookshops, the Gwales.com website or from Sali Roberts, Secretary: salipatshyn@hotmail.com. Price: £7.99; ISBN 9781859948675.

6. I have regularly sent **Welsh Government Dysg eNewsletters and Estyn reports** to the Rev. Hywel Richards and more recently to his successor, the Rev. Jeff Williams.

Vaughan Salisbury