

## **CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO: STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION**

**DATE: 13TH MARCH 2018**

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL CURRICULUM REVIEW: UPDATE**

### **A BACKGROUND**

Professor Donaldson's 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.*"

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.

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.

Welsh Government is exploring how Humanities supports the new curriculum. What will Humanities look like in the new curriculum? What is the level of specificity and consistency between schools? There has been a concentration upon the disciplines and they will make links between them, however some aspects may have to stand alone. (\* Colleagues from WG are aware of the importance of the right to withdraw from RE)

WG agreed to work closely with WASACRE/ 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. A group of WASACRE members have drawn up a paper on *What Matters in RE* (attached at Appendix 3) and this was presented at the Humanities Planning Workshops on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November in Swansea. WG have appreciated WASACRE & NAPfRE input as it has provided practical advice to Pioneer schools as to what this might look like in the classroom. Other subjects have received expertise mainly from academics rather than practitioners.

Other groups have been commissioned by WG to submit ideas so that there is a range of ideas and approaches for consideration. These too were presented at the Humanities Planning Workshops on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November in Swansea

### **Timescale**

- SACRE updates received Autumn 2017 and January 2018 (see *Newsletter – Appendix 1*)
- March /April 2018 there will be more in depth feedback on the Humanities model.
- April 2018 the Pioneer group will feedback to the Curriculum Assessment Group. Draft curriculum available for feedback. The next step is to develop progression frameworks.
- WG have asked all SACREs for their dates of meetings during the Summer term and are looking to set up meetings with SACREs possibly on a regional basis.
- January 2020 the final curriculum and assessment arrangements will be published, to be implemented in 2022.
- September 2022: All maintained schools and settings using new curriculum and assessment arrangements (roll-out starting with primary and Year 7 and then year by year.

## **B RECOMMENDATION**

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

## **C SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | SACRE Update Newsletter from Welsh Government - January 2018  |
| Appendix 2 | Humanities AoLE: Submission to Curriculum and Assessment Group  |
| Appendix 3 | WASACRE commissioned paper: RE supporting the early stages of the process of developing the Humanities AoLE |

### **Please Note:**

Currently each AoLE has drafted a set of statements (approximately half a dozen) in an effort to capture 'what matters' within each area. The statements are being adapted regularly therefore it would be premature to encourage teachers to start to work with these. The AoLE groups have not yet agreed on the 'progression steps' for each area.

**SACRE Update Newsletter from Welsh Government – January 2018**

Dear SACRE members,

Thank you for considering the content of the last update regarding Religious Education and the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) within the new curriculum for Wales, sent to you in July 2017. We are grateful for the responses received so far. We are still in the process of receiving comments and are currently collating the feedback to inform the development work.

**Timelines**

In September 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Education published 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. This action plan includes revised timelines for the new curriculum. Please see below the relevant key dates:

- April 2019: Draft curriculum available for feedback
- January 2020: Final curriculum available
- September 2022: All maintained schools and settings using new curriculum and assessment arrangements (roll-out starting with primary and Year 7 and then year by year)

**The What Matters approach**

In considering an approach to developing the new curriculum, pioneer school practitioners involved in the design process identified that teaching 'what matters' was the starting point from which to build the new curriculum. As a result, pioneer groups – including the Humanities – have begun the process of developing key concepts to organise their AoLE by identifying 'what matters' in their fields i.e. the key elements that all learners should experience within their areas during their journey along the continuum of learning.

Each AoLE will consist of What Matters key concepts. These concepts are being developed to avoid excessive variation from school to school while allowing for local flexibility. The What Matters key concepts across the AoLEs will support the development of the Four Purposes of the new curriculum and will also reflect current ideas about important disciplinary knowledge, skills and competencies for each domain.

**The development process for Humanities**

In order to identify 'what matters' within the various subjects and disciplines that form the Humanities, we commissioned experts to prepare a series of papers to support the pioneer group's work. These included papers relating to history, geography, business, social studies and Religious Education. The focus of these papers was to outline for each discipline:

- the core of knowledge/concepts and associated skills and competencies deemed essential for all pupils to learn.
- progression for the above, and an indication of what pupils should learn/experience relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14, 16.
- building on the above, suggested What Matters key concepts.

WASACRE was commissioned to prepare a discussion paper relating to Religious Education. Representatives also attended a Humanities pioneer group workshop in November 2017 to present the paper and work with the group to develop proposals for the AoLE. Please find attached a copy of the commissioned paper (*Appendix 3*).

Drawing on the expert input outlined above and identifying 'what matters' for each component discipline within the Humanities provided firm foundations for the pioneer group to develop overarching What Matters key concepts as a means of organising the AoLE.

### **The What Matters Proposals**

I attach initial proposals for the What Matters key concepts for the Humanities AoLE (*Appendix 2*). The content of the report was developed in December 2017 for submission to our Curriculum and Assessment Group, and reflects the Humanities pioneer group's thinking at that time. The group continues to meet every three weeks and has begun developing progression frameworks to underpin each of these What Matters statements. In developing these frameworks as well as the detail of the AoLE during the spring term, the wording of the key concepts outlined in the attached document will naturally change and be refined.

We would like to invite you as a SACRE to consider these initial What Matters proposals and provide comments and/or suggestions for consideration during the next phase of the development work.

Further information, as well as the proposals for all six of the AoLEs, including the Humanities, will be published shortly on our website:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?lang=en>

We would appreciate if you would send your comments to me: [manon.jones@gov.wales](mailto:manon.jones@gov.wales)

### **Next steps**

Over the coming months, the Humanities pioneer group will focus on developing progression frameworks for the AoLE, supported by the CAMAU project (colleagues from University of Wales Trinity St David and Glasgow University). During this time, the content of the AoLE be developed in more detail.

**We will send the next update to you at the end of May**, and again invite your views on the proposals produced. We will also contact you in due course to outline further engagement opportunities for you to contribute to the curriculum development process during the summer term.

Best wishes,

Manon Jones  
Curriculum, Assessment and Pedagogy Division  
Education  
Welsh Government  
Tel: 03000 252240

# Humanities AoLE:

## Submission to Curriculum & Assessment Group: 4 December 2017

*(Revised following CAG feedback during AoLE workshop 11 December 2017)*

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Response from CAG (December 2017)	3
2. A statement defining 'what matters' in the context of the AoLE.....	4
3. Initial titles for strands of 'what matters'.....	4
6 Statements.....	6
4. Appropriateness of What Matters statements to be taught across the Continuum of Learning .....	9

## Introduction

### Introduction – Outline of approaches taken during the Autumn term 2017

During the Summer term the Humanities AoLE group commissioned a number of papers from identified experts across the Humanities domain areas. The brief provided to these experts was to provide clarity on ‘what matters’ within the constituent humanities disciplines: - Geography, History, RE, Business and Social Studies.

A list of these papers is provided below: -

- Eleanor Rawling - *Commissioned Work on the Geography Curriculum*
- Geographical Association – *Geographical Association and the Big Ideas*
- Dr Barbara Wintersgill (Exeter University) – *Big Ideas for RE Education*
- Dr Elin Jones – *The Essentials of History*
- Professor Calvin Jones (Cardiff University Business School) - *Business and the Economy in the Donaldson Curriculum*
- Dr Claire Sinnema (University of Auckland)
- i) *Social Studies within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience*
- ii) *Designing a National Curriculum with enactment in mind*
- WASACRE (Wales Association of SACREs) *Religious Education: supporting the early stages of the process of developing the Humanities’ AoLE*

The group also considered: -

- Dr Joseph Smith:- *What remains of history? Historical epistemology and historical understanding in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence*
- A presentation from Professor Mark Priestley provided to AoLE Leads – *Developing the Curriculum, Concepts and Practices.*
- Selected sections from: - Wiggins, G and McTighe, J (2005) *Understanding by Design*; Alexandria VA: ASCD (to provide theoretical underpinning and help group to understand the origin of ‘big ideas’ in the curriculum.)

During the Autumn term the Humanities AoLE group invited many of the contributors above to present to the group, in order to contextualise the papers. The following individuals presented to the group.

- Gill Miller (Geographical Association)
- Eleanor Rawling (Independent Curriculum Consultant)
- Dr Elin Jones
- Professor Calvin Jones (Cardiff University)
- WASACRE

The group also received feedback on task 1, statement of how the AoLE supports the 4 purposes from Dr. Claire Sinnema and the initial drafting of 'what matters' concepts for History from Dr. Joseph Smith.

During the workshop sessions the groups work on the following tasks:-

Dates	Key Activities
September 27/28	What do we mean by 'Big Ideas' and how does this related to 'What matters' in the curriculum? Consideration of 'What Matters' in History and Geography A summary of the research on learning progression in Humanities from the Camau Project
October 17/18	Consideration of 'What Matters' in Business and Social Studies
November 13/14	Consideration of 'What Matters' in RE Consolidation of learning to develop 'What Matters' in the Humanities, with development of supporting narratives.
December 13/14	Consideration of 'What Matters' following comments received from Curriculum and Assessment Group (CAG) and instigating the CAMAU process.

As outlined in the table above the group started by asking the question 'what matters?' within the constituent Humanities subjects (as defined within Successful Futures). At each 2-day workshop session, the days were split to allow the presentation of new material to the group e.g. the commissioned papers and presentation, but also the opportunity for sense-making. This was essential as



practitioners needed to develop a common understanding of the constituent disciplines with a view to deducing 'what matters' from the point of view of the Humanities as a more integrated entity.

### **Response from CAG (December 2017)**

The group has revisited the original statements following the views expressed by the Curriculum and Assessment Group in December who provided the following comments

- The supporting narratives clearly reflect the four purposes
- There is a need to revisit and review the statements to ensure that more of the narrative comments/messages are evident (messages have been lost between the two)
- The degree to which the What Matters statements reflect specificity, whilst allowing teacher autonomy continues to be a challenge.
- There is a need to consider the guiding principles including pedagogy and topic guides

As a result these are now the current draft revised statements. As you can see the group were not able to complete all their work in the time allocated so they will revisit this work in early January 18.

## 1. A statement defining 'what matters' in the context of the AoLE

*The group refined task 1 from the initial report developed in the Summer term, on the basis of the feedback provided by Dr Claire Sinnema, University of Auckland).*

Through exploring 'what matters' about the Humanities, pupils will study the past and present, and imagine possible futures, and will learn about people, place, time and beliefs.

Pupils will build, communicate and apply effectively, a solid base of knowledge and understanding of different times, places and beliefs, in order to become **ambitious, capable learners**.

They will develop a range of skills and dispositions, to become **enterprising, creative contributors**, in order to improve the everyday lives of people in their local community, Wales and in the wider world.

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

By developing 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.

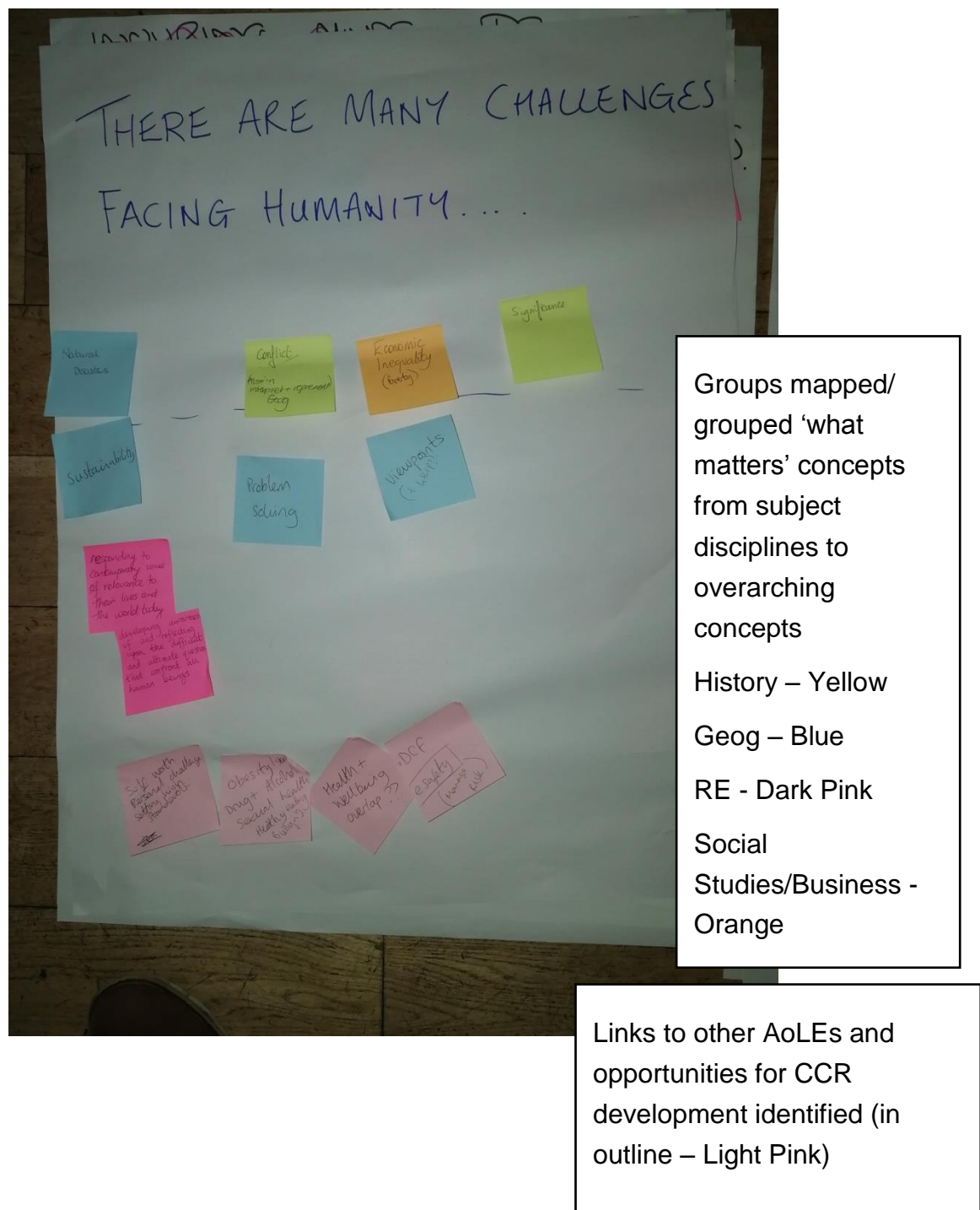
Pupils will:

- understand historical, geographical, political, economic, religious and societal concepts.
- explore their environment to further develop their sense of place and well-being.
- engage in learning experiences about rights, values, ethics, beliefs, religion, philosophy and spirituality.
- consider, explore and make informed choices regarding sustainability and the impact of their actions.
- positively contribute to their community and critically engage with local, national and global issues to become a responsible citizen of Wales and the wider world.

## 2. Initial titles for strands of 'what matters'

The group has developed six 'What Matters' concepts, that attempt to fully integrate and give meaning to the humanities as a coherent entity. These were developed through a process of abstraction from the starting point of 'what matters' from the vantage point of the constituent disciplines.

This process is best illustrated through consideration of the annotated photograph below:-



It was accepted that some of the 'concepts' identified would be evident across more than one of the groups 'What Matters' concepts e.g. sustainability and conflict.

## **6 Revised statement following CAG comments**

- 1) Continuity, change and diversity impact on our world
- 2) Society is influenced by community, culture and power
- 3) Humanity faces many challenges that require informed and considered responses
- 4) People interpret and represent the world in different ways
- 5) Developing inquiring minds allows people to make sense of and engage with the world around them
- 6) Responsible citizens are ethically informed, critical thinkers and play an active part in society

### **1. Continuity, change and diversity impact on our world**

Rationale:

Understanding the complexities and connections of the past, present and future of our world are important to the Humanities AoLE. It is necessary to consider this in the context of the physical and human environment. Understanding the processes that shape the physical landscape and awareness of how human actions can be influenced by diverse beliefs, values and philosophies is essential. The consideration of the Humanities disciplines allows identification, understanding and analysis of causes, continuity and effects of change. Innovation and technological developments have and will continue to shape our diverse world. The appreciation of future challenges and opportunities on a local, national and global scale support a sound empathetic understanding of the lives of others, now and in the future.

### **2. Society is influenced by community, culture and power**

Rationale:

Pupils will become aware that interactions involving individuals, groups, communities, organisations, and nations have shaped, and continue to influence the

nature of the world in which we live. They will understand and appreciate the nature of interactions and their positive and negative effects on the local, national and global environment. They will ask questions, research, critically evaluate, and develop informed and considered opinions on the causes, nature and significance of people's interactions with each other and with their environment, on individual, local, national and global scales.

Pupils will identify, understand and explore interactions in the past to appreciate the significance of individuals, groups, communities, organisations and nations in shaping the world and its development. They will explore the impact of religious and spiritual interactions on the lives of individuals, communities, nations and the world. They will gain an empathetic appreciation for diversity within our communities and across the world and for the significance of spirituality.

*(The group wants to undertake further work on this statement)*

### **3. Humanity faces many challenges that require informed and considered responses**

Rationale: -

It is important within the Humanities AoLE to be aware of the difficult and ultimate questions that challenge all human beings. Studying Humanities will allow identification, understanding and engagement with relevant contemporary issues that impact on pupils' lives, the lives of others and the wider world. It is important to ask questions, to research, critically evaluate, and develop informed and considered responses to the challenges facing humanity. To be able to respond empathetically, to the beliefs, actions and values of others is important in the Humanities AoLE in order to solve problems and resolve conflict. Humanities students will develop resilience and an attitude of open-mindedness and appropriate respect where appropriate when engaging with their own viewpoints and lifestyles of others. Pupils will develop the ability to form and support their own viewpoints. Commitment to our local, national and global societies and to the sustainability of the planet is an essential part of a Humanities education.

#### **4. People interpret and represent the world in different ways**

Rationale: -

In order to become critical, well-informed citizens and understand the way in which society has functioned, functions now and is likely to function in the future it is essential that pupils understand a variety of viewpoints and how these are shaped by different influences. In understanding this it is also important that pupils develop an understanding of the range of factors that have shaped their identities.

Studying Humanities will allow for the exploration of the complexities of real world issues and an appreciation of how these issues can be interpreted in different ways. Knowledge will be gained and an understanding developed of beliefs, teachings and practices enabling them to become conscious of themselves and of the views of others. The recognition and understanding of how identities are established and evolve over space and time can be developed through the study of Humanities AoLE.

Through the critical thinking and exploration of different perspectives and events, the Humanities AoLE will allow the ability to challenge and support these perspectives, as well as developing a critical understanding of the 'big picture'.

(The group expressed the view that this statement and rationale needs to be further reviewed.)

#### **5. Developing inquiring minds allows people to make sense of and engage with the world around them**

Rationale:

Pupils will ask fundamental and challenging questions. They will explore issues in an open, reflective, analytical and balanced manner. They will gather evidence from a range of sources, recognise bias, interpret layers of meaning and synthesise (make connections) information. Through critical thinking and analysis pupils will develop informed, considered and justified responses and be able to express their responses in a variety of ways. They will develop a conscious awareness of self, other people, the world and the Universe.

(Further work to be undertaken by the group to as they changed the statement but did not discuss the rationale – need further time to discuss and produce.)

## **6. Responsible citizens are ethically informed, critical thinkers and play an active part in society**

Rationale: -

It is important that the study of Humanities develops active and responsible citizens who are able to identify with, and contribute to their community and the wider world now and in their future lives. To fully engage with their learning, pupils should identify ways in which they can actively address 'what matters' to them (and society) in the world in which they live. Ethically informed citizens are able to be critical thinkers, can respond to issues that they have explored across the humanities and need to be actively engaged in communities. Humanities allows the development of an understanding of their rights and to respect the rights of others. Understanding of their own and others legal and moral responsibilities and the consequences of failing to act responsibly is a part of studying Humanities.

Humanities promotes peaceful and effective engagement with, and within society.

Lessons will be learnt from the past and present; critically reflecting upon own and others beliefs, values and actions, in order to make ethical and informed choices. This will allow for responses through expressing and justifying their own feelings and opinions on the lessons learnt. Through studying Humanities AoLE, opportunities will arise to identify problems, create and develop potential solutions, and take appropriate action in respect of issues within their local community and beyond.

### ***Links to other AoLEs***

There are clear links with Science and Technology, in respect of the ways in which physical environments are shaped and changed e.g. Geology and Earth Sciences;

There are clear links to Health and Wellbeing.

**21 December 2017**



**A Welsh Government commission**

**Religious Education:  
supporting the early stages of the process of developing  
the Humanities' AoLE**

**produced by a WASACRE and NAPfRE  
working group**

**September 2017**

**A discussion document for the Humanities' Group**



## **Members of the Working Group**

Contributions have been made by the following members of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) and the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE):

Dr Tania ap Sion  
University of Warwick

Professor Leslie J Francis  
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Bethan James  
GwE

Libby Jones  
The St Giles' Centre for Religious Education and Wrexham County Council

Phil Lord  
GwE

Mary Parry  
Carmarthenshire and ERW

Gill Vaisey  
Religious Education Consultant

Paula Webber  
Religious Education Consultant and Secretary to WASACRE

## **CONTENTS**

- 1 Aims and objectives
- 2 What matters in Religious Education
- 3 Core Knowledge, Skills and Competencies in Religious Education
- 4 What matters in Religious Education- Spiritual Development
- 5 Religious Education and the Four Purposes
- 6 An example outline of progression in Religious Education
- 7 An indication of what pupils will learn/experience in Religious Education
- 8 Consideration of cross-curriculum responsibilities, wider skills, Welsh dimension and international perspectives within Religious Education

### **References**

- Appendix 1 Suggestions for learning experiences in Religious Education at ages 5, 8, 11, 14, and 16

## **1 Aims and objectives**

The aims and objectives of this paper are to provide, as requested by the Welsh Government, a brief paper for Religious Education outlining:

- the core knowledge/concepts and associated skills and competencies deemed essential for all pupils to learn in the discipline;
- progression for the above, and an indication of what pupils should learn/experience relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14, 16;
- suggested ‘what matters’/‘big ideas’ key concepts for Religious Education presented in the form of questions (building on the above);
- how the cross-curriculum responsibilities, wider skills, and Welsh dimension/international perspectives can be embedded in relation to Religious Education.

Throughout, links to the ‘four purposes’ have been considered.

The purpose of this paper is to ‘stimulate discussions within the Humanities’ pioneer group rather than present definitive proposals for the group to consider’.

## **2 What matters in Religious Education?**

The three areas outlined below provide an overview of 'What Matters In RE'. The three areas are naturally interrelated and in teaching and learning this will be evident at all times.

In Religious Education, it is important to ensure that the reality of expression of belief in contemporary society is acknowledged and this will include both the positive and negative impact of religion in today's world. It is also important that Religious Education reflects and explores the extent of diversity apparent in religious beliefs and practices as illustrated by individuals, families and communities. Change over time in terms of interpretation of teachings must also be reflected as well as the differences of interpretation and practices evident in different countries and cultures.

### ***Awareness of life experience and questions raised***

It is important that children and young people make sense of their experience of the natural world and human relationships, recognise that for some there is a spiritual side to life, and be sensitive to the issues and questions that these experiences raise. In the process they should become aware of the difficult and ultimate (philosophical and ethical) questions that confront all human beings, for example about right and wrong, suffering and death and the meaning and purpose of life. They should consider various religious and non-religious responses to such questions and issues.

### ***Beliefs, teachings and practices***

It is important that children and young people develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and the other principal world religions represented in Wales. They should develop a conceptual framework which helps them to understand religion in general and the specific religions they are studying. They should know about: the key beliefs of specific religions; sources of authority, especially sacred writings, stories, key historical figures and contemporary religious leaders; ways in which people worship, their rituals and how they celebrate their faith; lifestyles that derive from religious belief and the nature of the local and broader religious communities. They should become increasingly aware of the use of symbolism in religion and of non-literal ways in which religious faith is expressed. They should identify similarities and differences across and within religions and be knowledgeable about shared values and diversity. They should make and understand links between beliefs, teachings and practices and understand how these impact on the lives of individuals, the local community and wider society.

### ***Exploration and personal response***

It is important that children and young people develop skills that will enable them to explore religion and human experience and be able to respond to contemporary issues of relevance to their lives and the world today. They should ask questions, research and critically evaluate religious and non-religious sources and learn to develop informed and considered responses. They should explore and reflect on the spiritual side of life that is recognised by some people. They should be able to reflect on their own beliefs, values and actions in the light of their

studies and express and justify their own feelings and opinions. In addition, they should be able to respond critically, yet empathetically, to the beliefs, values and actions of others. They should express their responses in a variety of creative ways, using a range of media and positive action. Pupils should develop attitudes of open-mindedness, empathy, and respect where appropriate, when engaging with the viewpoints and lifestyles of others.

### **3 Core Knowledge, Skills and Competencies in Religious Education**

The knowledge, skills and competencies for Religious Education set out below reflect in broad terms the three areas which encompass ‘What Matters In RE’. The first and second areas, *Awareness of life experience and questions raised*, and *Beliefs, teachings and practices*, include the core knowledge and related competencies that children and young people in Wales need to have. The third area, *Exploration and personal response* includes the specific skills that all young people in Wales will develop whilst studying Religious Education and which will support them in gaining the core knowledge and related competencies deemed essential in RE. Together these areas will support children and young people in Wales in achieving some of the characteristics of the Four Purposes

#### ***Awareness of life experience and questions raised***

Children and young people will gain knowledge of

- the natural world
- human relationships
- the non-material/spiritual

and competency in:

- drawing on their own experiences and on a variety of religious and non-religious responses to make sense of the world and human relationships
- asking, discussing and considering difficult and ultimate questions
- recognising and appreciating the non-material/spiritual side of life

#### ***Beliefs, teachings and practices***

Children and young people will gain knowledge of

- key beliefs
- sources of authority
- ways in which people live and worship
- symbolism and non-literal forms of expression
- similarities and differences across and within religions
- impact of religion

and competency in:

- recalling, describing and explaining religious beliefs, teachings and practices
- describing and explaining the similarities and differences across and within religions
- analysing and interpreting layers of meaning/symbolism
- explaining how religion impacts on the lives of individuals, local communities and wider society
- making and understanding links between beliefs, teachings and practices

### ***Exploration and personal response***

Children and young people will develop skills in:

- carrying out investigation
- interrogating evidence
- discerning relevance and value of sources
- recognising, exploring and reflecting on the spiritual side of life
- expressing and justifying their own feelings and opinions
- demonstrating how what they have learned has impacted on their own beliefs, values and actions
- appreciating, empathising with, and evaluating the viewpoints of others
- expressing responses in a variety of ways

#### **4 What Matters in RE - Spiritual Development**

Religious Education lends itself to providing opportunities for the spiritual development of children and young people, thus leading to higher self-esteem, aspiration and critical awareness. It is impossible to measure spiritual development in terms of progression; however, good Religious Education should be rich in opportunities for spiritual development. This occurs when we pay attention to the detail of the world around us, developing a conscious awareness of self, other people, the world or universe. Spirituality can, but does not necessarily, involve religion. It is about engaging the heart in everyday life within the local and global community. Spiritual development is accompanied by moral development as a result of a growth of awareness of self in relation to others.

Whilst engaging with the three areas as outlined in ‘What Matters In RE’, children and young people will have opportunity for spiritual development by:

- making sense of their experience of the natural world and human relationships;
- recognising that, for some, there is a spiritual side to life, and becoming sensitive to the issues and questions that these experiences raise;
- developing awareness of and reflecting upon the difficult and ultimate questions that confront all human beings;
- gaining knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, teachings and practices of others and becoming conscious of self, other and the world;
- exploring how religion impacts on the lives of individuals, the local community and wider society;
- responding to contemporary issues of relevance to their lives and the world today;
- reflecting upon their own beliefs, values and actions and expressing and justifying their own feelings and opinions;
- responding critically, yet empathetically, to the beliefs, values and actions of others; and
- developing attitudes of open-mindedness, empathy, and respect where appropriate, when engaging with the viewpoints and lifestyles of others.

Spiritual development occurs when pupils are given the opportunity to:

- engage their hearts and live fully;
- develop creativity and use their imagination;
- ask, consider and discuss the big ultimate questions;
- stop, think and reflect;



- develop aspirations;
- create a sense of belonging in the wider local and global community;
- develop self-awareness and awareness of the needs of others;
- experience compassion and help others e.g. through charity work;
- show empathy and consideration for others;
- develop a voice and listen with respect to the voices of others;
- talk about themselves in relation to others, the world and/or God;
- form good relationships;
- look after the environment and show concern for the world around them;
- listen to stories past and present, including the stories of those around them;
- experience awe and wonder or be amazed by things;
- experience the natural world;
- create meaning and purpose; and
- experience that which is beyond the mundane and material and in the arts.

## **5 Religious Education and the Four Purposes**

### ***Ambitious, capable learners***

In Religious Education children and young people will have the opportunity to build up a sound body of knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal world religions and beliefs through enquiry, exploration and evaluation. They will be provided with opportunities which focus on the intellectual challenge of carrying out research, critically evaluating evidence, critical and intuitive thinking, justifying opinions and theories, and developing and interpreting alternative explanations. Children and young people will also develop their communication skills effectively when expressing their own opinions and ideas, alongside those of others in different forms and settings.

### ***Enterprising, creative contributors***

In Religious Education children and young people will be encouraged to think creatively to reframe and solve problems especially in relation to difficult questions such as, *Is world peace achievable?*, *Is it ever right to take a life?*, and *Can poverty ever be eradicated?*. They will be encouraged to express their ideas and emotions in a variety of ways and using different technologies, and will be expected to give of their energy and skills within and outside the classroom so that other people will benefit. Children and young people will be motivated to grasp opportunities to learn about the cultural and religious diversity of those around them and the importance of this for productive relationships and preparation for life outside and beyond school.

### ***Ethical, informed citizens***

In Religious Education children and young people will have the opportunity to develop the ability to discern, to challenge bias and to make value judgements when faced with complex and conflicting information. They will engage with a wide variety of contemporary issues such as wealth, equality, human dignity, peace and conflict. Through the study of religious and non-religious attitudes to these issues they will be able to form their own views and understand those of others. They will also, through the study of the principal world religions and worldviews, become knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world, now and in the past. Exploration of shared values and attitudes will encourage children and young people to respect the needs and rights of others, as members of a diverse society.

### ***Healthy confident individuals***

In Religious Education children and young people will be given the opportunity to consider a possible spiritual side of life and respond to moral issues. This will help them to develop personal integrity, conscience and responsibility, and will contribute to them establishing possible spiritual and ethical beliefs. Through the study of religious beliefs, teachings and practices they will be able to develop a resilience and empathy in relation to religious standpoints, which can be applied to different contexts. Children and young people will experience challenge in Religious Education when exposed to the beliefs, teachings and

practices of others and will learn to develop reasoned and considered responses, appropriate for school and wider society contexts.

## 6 An example outline of progression in Religious Education

Progression steps	
<b>Age 5</b>	<p><i>Awareness of life experience and questions raised</i></p> <p>Pupils talk about aspects of their own and others' everyday life e.g. family, homes, rules, right and wrong, happy and sad times, celebrations, communities and groups to which they belong. Pupils explore and experience the natural world, display curiosity and show care and concern for living things and the environment.</p> <p><i>Beliefs, teachings and practices</i></p> <p>Pupils experience first-hand, aspects of religion and belief through engagement with stories, artefacts, people and places. They enjoy new experiences, language and vocabulary. They recognise that some things are special to themselves and others and these may be the same or different e.g. times, people, places.</p> <p><i>Exploration and personal responses</i></p> <p>Pupils talk about and communicate their thoughts and feelings about their own and others' experiences.</p>
<b>Age 8</b>	<p><i>Awareness of life experiences and questions raised</i></p> <p>Pupils ask questions and listen to the views of others in order to develop their understanding of their own and others' everyday life experiences, e.g. Why do we have to do this? How should we treat other people? Pupils ask questions about the universe and the beauty and cruelty of nature, e.g. How and why did the world come to be? Why do bad things happen? Should we look after living things and the natural world?</p> <p><i>Beliefs, teachings and practices</i></p> <p>Pupils will engage with aspects of religion and belief, consider what they have learnt and how this might relate to their own lives and experiences. They will understand the importance of some stories, times, people and places within different religions and how these influence some people's lives. They recognise the similarities and differences between aspects of different religions and are also aware of diversity within religions. They can recognise some religious symbols and offer simple explanations of what they mean.</p> <p><i>Exploration and personal responses</i></p> <p>Pupils describe their thoughts and feelings about their own and others' experiences. They carry out simple investigations and use evidence from different sources in order to consider the questions raised.</p>
<b>Age 11</b>	<p><i>Awareness of life experience and questions raised</i></p> <p>Pupils ask and consider moral questions relating to human relationships (e.g. relating to right and wrong, fairness, forgiveness), and know of religious and non-religious moral codes of behaviour. Pupils ask and consider difficult questions to which there are no universally agreed answers, e.g. questions about God/Ultimate Reality, the universe, the natural world, meaning and purpose of life. They have knowledge of different religious and non-religious responses to these questions and are aware of different interpretations within religions, e.g. pupils are familiar with some religious and non-religious narratives about the origins of the universe and recognise that there are different interpretations of these stories.</p>

	<p><i>Beliefs, teachings and practices</i></p> <p>Pupils describe and explain aspects of religion and belief. They are able to make links between beliefs and practice and understand the impact religion has on people's lives. Pupils are able to make connections with their own life experiences and those of others. They identify and describe similarities and differences across and within religions. They also know that within a religion there is much diversity which can be evident through different interpretations of teachings, practices and different levels of commitment.</p> <p>Pupils understand and explain the meaning and significance of a range of religious symbolism, e.g. artefacts, actions, stories and language.</p> <p><i>Exploration and personal responses</i></p> <p>Pupils carry out investigation in an open-minded way. They critically use evidence and discern relevance of religious and non-religious sources. They express and begin to justify their feelings and opinions, and explain in simple terms how they differ from those of others. Pupils begin to show an appreciation of and empathy with the viewpoints of others.</p>
<b>Age 14</b>	<p><i>Awareness of life experience and questions raised</i></p> <p>Pupils ask and debate moral and ethical questions relating to human relationships and experience e.g. questions relating to prejudice and discrimination, justice and equality, freedom, rights and responsibilities. They understand how different interpretations of religious and non-religious teachings/guidance can influence people's decision making on ethical issues within contemporary society. Pupils ask and debate ultimate questions, e.g. questions about suffering, life after death, existence of God, existence of a soul, what makes us human. They know and understand a range of different religious and non-religious responses to these questions.</p> <p><i>Beliefs, teachings and practices</i></p> <p>Pupils describe and explain in depth, their knowledge of a variety of religions and beliefs. They understand the impact of people's religion and belief, now and in the past, upon themselves, other individuals, local and global society. Pupils have knowledge and understanding of the diversity within and across religions and appreciate the challenges of commitment and expression of faith in contemporary society. Pupils analyse and interpret layers of meaning in religious expression, e.g. literature, art, dance, rituals.</p> <p><i>Exploration and personal responses</i></p> <p>Pupils carry out investigation and interrogate evidence in order to formulate their own reasoned viewpoint. Pupils discern relevance and detect bias within religious and non-religious sources. They express and justify their feelings and opinions and reflect on how what they have learned has impacted on their own beliefs, values and actions. Pupils appreciate, empathise with and evaluate the viewpoints of others, and express their own considered responses in different ways.</p>
<b>Age 16</b>	<p><i>Awareness of life experience and questions raised</i></p> <p>Pupils investigate ultimate philosophical and ethical questions from a variety of religious and non-religious perspectives, including some philosophical schools of thought. They understand that such questions are complex and answers are often</p>

	<p>partial and inconclusive. For example, are ethical rules absolute for all time, or should they be relative to circumstance, context and development in society over time?</p> <p><i>Beliefs, teachings and practices</i>  Pupils describe and explain their detailed knowledge and clear understanding of religion and beliefs. Pupils critically evaluate specific aspects of religion and beliefs and consider the different interpretations of religious teachings and the impact of these upon themselves, other individuals, local and global society. They have knowledge and a clear understanding of the vast expression of diverse views across and within religions. Pupils give examples of this in a variety of contexts. Pupils analyse, interpret and evaluate layers of meaning in religious expression, e.g. literature, art, rituals, dance and music.</p> <p><i>Exploration and personal responses</i>  Pupils carry out in-depth investigation, interrogate a wide range of evidence and will detect bias accurately, including in social media. They will select reliable and valuable evidence in order to formulate their own reasoned viewpoint. They express and justify their feelings with maturity, demonstrating clearly how what they have learned has impacted on their own beliefs, values and actions. Pupils appreciate, empathise with and evaluate the viewpoints of others in order to draw their own reasoned conclusions and develop positive attitudes. They express these responses in a variety of ways.</p>
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#### **NB. Concerns**

Whilst this paper follows the format requested by the Welsh Government, and therefore refers to specific ages in relation to progression, the view of the authors is that progression should be based on developmental phases rather than age.

## **7 An indication of what pupils will learn/experience in religious education**

What should pupils experience at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16?

### *Enrichment and Experiences – A Definition*

*A style of teaching and learning that actively engages children and young people, and encourages independent and individual thinking and responses. Pupil voice, fun, relevant and real-world learning resources lie at the heart of creating an environment where the desire to learn comes from individuals themselves. The underpinning principle is that learning becomes more valued and enjoyable when content and process are learned in the context of real and present problems to be solved and questions to be answered. An enriched education is created by any activity that makes learning more meaningful, substantial, or rewarding and thus improves the educational experience of the individual.*

Enrichment and Experiences Working Group

Strand 1, Interim Report, January 2017

Religious Education should be a multi-sensory experience. Children and young people should experience the wonder and mystery of the natural world. As they explore how people choose to express their religion and belief, they will encounter the sights, smells, and sounds, tastes and textures of worship, festivals and celebration. Meaningful engagement with religious communities can be enjoyable and memorable.

Good Religious Education uses places of worship within the local community and/or further afield as a starting point to teach concepts such as worship, commitment, rites of passage and celebration. Speaking to faith representatives, observing acts of worship, religious festivals and celebrations, and participating in cultural activities help all children and young people to learn about the impact of religion and belief on individuals and society. Working in partnership with local faith communities may contribute to community understanding and cohesion.

Experiential learning gives young children opportunities to engage in role-play activities or to participate in activities concerning celebrations and worship. Simulation-based learning gives children and young people opportunities to consider how religion and belief influence people as they respond to ethical dilemmas, solve real and present problems or deal with meaningful tasks. Using stilling exercises and providing opportunities for children of all ages to experience meditation techniques relevant to learning in Religious Education can contribute to developing healthy confident individuals and support positive mental and emotional well-being.

Creative learning gives children and young people the opportunity to consider how musicians, writers, artists and dancers express their religion and belief in art. By working with artists in residence or participating in creative projects, they will learn to express their personal responses to religion and belief and spirituality through the arts.

Good Religious Education ensures that all children and young people feel engaged in and have ownership of their learning. By responding to religion in the news and media, their Religious Education will be relevant to their lives. They will learn to make choices as they develop lines of enquiry, select resources and explore ways of sharing their knowledge and understanding of the impact of religion and beliefs with other audiences. Their Religious Education will help them engage with contemporary issues and may/should inspire them to be ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.

Suggestions for learning experiences in Religious Education at ages 5, 8, 11, 14, and 16 can be seen in Appendix 1



## **8      Consideration of cross-curriculum responsibilities, wider skills, Welsh dimension and international perspectives within Religious Education**

Within Religious Education there are numerous opportunities for embedding cross-curricular responsibilities, wider skills, Welsh dimension and international perspectives.

### ***Cross-curricular responsibilities***

#### **Literacy**

In Religious Education children and young people will develop their speaking and listening skills as they explore ultimate questions, reflect on ethical and moral issues and clarify their own thinking. They will learn to pose a range of questions as they talk to members of faith communities and work with others to follow lines of enquiry. They will learn to explain their own conclusions, opinions and beliefs, by following a logical line of argument, drawing on evidence and presenting sound reasons. They will show that they can listen to others and take account of their points of view, their culture and their faith.

In Religious Education children and young people will learn to read accurately as they retrieve and interpret information from a wide range of sources in order to learn about religion and the impact of beliefs, teachings and practices on people's lives. They will develop the ability to decode and interpret the symbolic and metaphorical language of religious texts and visual art. Consequently, they will learn how language is used within a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.

In Religious Education children and young people will learn to use a range of non-fiction forms of writing for a variety of purposes. They will acquire a vocabulary of religious terms and will communicate their knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs competently and with increasing complexity and accuracy. They will learn to express their own possible spirituality and personal sense of meaning in a variety of creative forms of writing.

#### **Numeracy**

In Religious Education children and young people will develop an understanding of shape, pattern, distance, time and money as they learn how beliefs, teachings and practices impact on people's lives. They will learn how to interpret and critically evaluate data in texts, diagrams and graphs, and develop their own data-handling skills as they explore people's attitudes and opinions about ethical and moral issues.

#### **Digital competency**

In Religious Education children and young people will learn to be responsible and safe when searching for information online and will be able to evaluate the validity and reliability of their search findings. They will use a variety of online sources and will learn to recognise language that could be deemed to be offensive. They will be astute and sensitive while using email, social media and video links collaboratively to learn about people's religious beliefs

and practices. They will learn how to collect and interpret data, in order to identify patterns and trends relating to religious practices or people's opinions on ethical and moral issues. They will show an understanding of purpose and audience as they use a range of software and media to communicate their own knowledge, understanding and personal responses.

### ***Wider skills***

In Religious Education children and young people will **work with others** as they plan investigations involving gathering and utilising a range of religious and non-religious sources in order to explore different responses to ultimate questions and aspects of religion and belief. They will develop their own **personal effectiveness** as important members of a team who are relied upon to contribute by organising and carrying out investigation. They will also develop this skill as individual learners who are required to evaluate, justify and express their own considered responses in a variety of ways, developing positive attitudes and using positive action.

In Religious Education children and young people will hone their **problem solving** skills when responding to contemporary issues. They will learn to discern the relevance and value of sources when exploring these issues and investigating ultimate questions. They will critically evaluate sources and the viewpoints of others in order to draw their own reasoned conclusions.

### ***Welsh dimension and international perspectives***

Religious Education is a subject that has always incorporated and responded to local and national issues and perspectives. SACREs (Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) in each local authority are locally determined and able to support important aspects of the Welsh dimension in relation to Religious Education.

Religious Education offers children and young people the opportunity to appreciate the shape and significance of the rich Christian heritage and diverse range of religions and beliefs evident in Wales, both past and present, and how these impact on life in Wales today. This may contribute to social cohesion, cultural and religious awareness, cooperation and understanding within society and individual communities.

Religious Education is concerned with investigating challenging questions and issues of global significance, which are explored from religious and non-religious perspectives. For example, natural areas relevant for Religious Education include: political decision making, exploitation and justice, social freedom and responsibility, human rights, economic ethics, and relationship responsibilities and dynamics between Wales and other parts of the world.

## References

ACCAC (2008) *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3-19-year-olds in Wales* Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government

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Enrichment and experiences working group (2017) *Strand 1, interim report*

At 5 years old	At 8 years old	At 11 years old	At 14 years old	At 16 years old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Persona dolls</li> <li>• Natural world</li> <li>• Storyteller</li> <li>• Visits to special places within the school or local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Persona dolls</li> <li>• Natural world</li> <li>• Storyteller</li> <li>• Theatre in Education, e.g. <i>“In Character”</i></li> <li>• Artist in Residence</li> <li>• Speaking to and working with faith representatives</li> <li>• Visit to a place of worship</li> <li>• Observing or recreating* a celebration or festival</li> <li>• Religious artefacts</li> <li>• Circle time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Natural world</li> <li>• Storyteller</li> <li>• Theatre in Education, e.g. <i>“In Character”</i></li> <li>• Artist in Residence, e.g. <i>Spirited Arts, Into Film</i></li> <li>• Speaking to and working with faith representatives</li> <li>• Using a digital/virtual learning platform, e.g. <i>virtual tour of a place of worship</i></li> <li>• Visit to a place of worship</li> <li>• Visit to a gallery library or museum, e.g. <i>religious art and artefacts, sacred books</i></li> <li>• Observing or recreating* a celebration, festival or pilgrimage</li> <li>• Religious artefacts</li> <li>• Solving a mystery</li> <li>• P4C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural world</li> <li>• Storyteller</li> <li>• Theatre in Education</li> <li>• Artist in Residence, e.g. <i>Spirited Arts, Into Film</i></li> <li>• Speaking to and working with faith representative</li> <li>• Debating ethical and moral issues with a panel of visitors</li> <li>• Using a digital/virtual learning platform, e.g. <i>Face to Faith, True Tube</i></li> <li>• Visit to a place of worship</li> <li>• Visit to a gallery, library or museum, e.g. <i>religious art and artefacts, sacred books</i>,</li> <li>• Observing worship, a religious celebration, festival or pilgrimage, e.g. <i>Labyrinth Adventure</i></li> <li>• Religious artefacts</li> <li>• Solving a mystery</li> <li>• Dilemma based, problem solving activities or simulations, e.g. <i>Mock trials, conferences, parliaments, truth and reconciliation commissions</i></li> <li>• P4C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural world</li> <li>• Storyteller</li> <li>• Theatre in Education</li> <li>• Artist in Residence, e.g. <i>Spirited Arts, Into Film</i></li> <li>• Speaking to and working with faith representatives</li> <li>• Debating ethical and moral issues with a panel of visitors</li> <li>• Using a digital/virtual learning platform, e.g. <i>Face to Faith, True Tube</i></li> <li>• Visit to a place of worship</li> <li>• Visit to a gallery, library or museum, e.g. <i>religious art and artefacts, sacred books</i></li> <li>• Observing worship, a religious celebration or festival</li> <li>• Religious artefacts</li> <li>• Solving a mystery</li> <li>• Dilemma based, problem solving activities or simulations, e.g. <i>Mock trials, parliaments, conferences truth and reconciliation commissions</i></li> <li>• P4C</li> </ul>