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23rd January 2013

Dear Head Teacher,

Examination Performance in Religious Education/ Religious Studies Summer 2012

At its Autumn term meeting the Caerphilly Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE) received an analysis of examination performance in Religious Education and Religious Studies. This analysis is part of the statutory duties a SACRE undertakes. As clerk to SACRE, I have been asked to write to you to inform you of the outcomes and where appropriate to congratulate schools and their teachers of RE for the very good results achieved and draw attention to any areas that need some attention. SACRE would appreciate it if you could complete the attached pro forma.

The data is as follows.

GCSE Full Course 2012 (Year 11) – SACRE were encouraged to note an increase in entry figures in 2012 to 697 candidates (in 2011 there were 615 candidates). The results this year, once again are very good at A*-A and A*-G. Schools are to be commended at maintaining such good examination results. At A*-C, performance it below previous performance though results are still good at 69% and SACRE is aware that some schools are fast tracking pupils by entering them for Specification B - two short courses to make a full course and often pupils only receive half the examination board's recommended time of 70 hours per short course which will impact on standards.

GCSE Short Course 2012 (Year 11) – SACRE were again encouraged to see entry figures were up this year. Performance at the top grades A*-A and A*-C are comparable to 2011 but there is a downward trend from 2010. It should be noted that in some schools more able pupils are entered for two short courses and their results are shown in the full course results which does have implications for Short Course results, particularly at A*-A and A*-C, where the results can

A greener place Man gwyrddach

Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat



be depressed in those schools. SACRE is mindful though that for many pupils this examination course is used as a fulfilment of statutory requirements and it is very pleasing to see 92% of pupils receiving some kind of accreditation for their studies at KS4. To help address the issues concerning short course SACRE would encourage schools to give serious consideration to the following factors that may be impacting upon standards.

- **Time**

The examination boards require **70 hours** of study to fulfil the requirements of Short Course specifications. Schools need to consider whether they provide sufficient time for the course to be taught effectively.

- **Staffing**

Those schools offering short course for their pupils should ensure that, as far as possible, pupils are taught by specialist teachers. However, if this is not possible it is desirable to use staff who are experienced practitioners and committed to the subject to the extent that they can build up expertise over a number of years and receive appropriate training.

- **Resources**

The short course in religious education should be funded and resourced in the same way as any other GCSE subject on the curriculum.

Religious Studies A level 2011 (Year 13) – Although there was a disappointing reduction in the entry numbers for A level RS this year results at the highest grade A*-A is similar to previous performance and the 100% pass rate is excellent. However, the A*-C pass rate at 67% is down by 7.4% this year and this is also below the All Wales performance of 81%.

AS Level 2011 (Year 13) – Entry numbers (22) are significantly below 2011 (92) and 2010 figures (122). At grade A-C performance is showing a downward trend since 2010 and grade A-E is comparable to 2011. SACRE is interested to know whether the reduction in numbers at AS level is symptomatic of a general demise of the subject at AS (which runs counter to the national trend) and **would be grateful if schools could indicate on the attached pro-forma the take up of Religious Studies at AS level and whether this shows an upward or downward trend.**

SACRE does not have comparative data to discover whether pupils are performing to ability or under-performing but schools will have this data to make their own analyses of examination performance and whether pupils are performing to ability. However, we would like to urge schools to ensure that strategies are in place to help to raise standards in religious education

Each year schools receive a copy of the SACRE Annual Report, which outlines the work of SACRE and also includes a detailed statistical analysis of examination performance. We hope that your school and the RE department find this helpful.

I am sure that you will wish to pass on these comments to your RE department at your school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'D Perkins'.

**DANIEL PERKINS LLB
HEAD OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE**

Religious Studies at AS Level

Name

School

Signed

How many pupils will sit AS in Summer 2013. Please complete grid

	Summer 2013
Boys	
Girls	
All	

What is the trend for uptake of RS at AS level in recent years- rising, falling or consistent numbers?

Please return to

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