

Annual Report

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS

2024 - 2025



A Message from Torfaen Standing Advisory Council on Religion, Values, and Ethics

The members of the Torfaen Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values, and Ethics (SAC) would like to express their heartfelt appreciation to everyone working across the education sector for their continued dedication to supporting the learning and well-being of children and young people in Wales. Your commitment remains invaluable as schools navigate ongoing challenges and embrace the opportunities presented by the Curriculum for Wales.

As we move further into the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales 2022, SAC wishes to reaffirm its role in supporting practitioners with Religion, Values, and Ethics (RVE). We are here to provide guidance on effective teaching and learning approaches, share resources, and assist with embedding RVE within the curriculum framework in ways that reflect its unique purpose and contribution.

In addition, SAC continues to offer advice and resources for the Daily Act of Collective Worship, helping schools maintain these meaningful practices that contribute to the spiritual, moral, and cultural development of learners.

Please remember that SAC is your partner in this journey—committed to supporting you in delivering high-quality RVE and fostering inclusive, reflective learning experiences for all.

Torfaen SAC on RVE welcomes correspondence via the contacts below:

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The Annual Report of Torfaen Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics 2024-2025

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The Annual Report of Torfaen Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics 2024-2025

SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT SACRE/SAC

1.1 Duty to Establish SACRE/SAC

All Local Authorities are required to constitute a Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC) within their local area under section 390 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. Legacy functions of SACRE will be exercised by SAC pending the phase out of the pre-curriculum for Wales 2022 syllabus.

1.2 Composition of SACRE/SAC

Representation on SACRE/SAC is required as follows: -

- (i) Such Christian and other religious denominations and non-religious philosophical convictions as, in the opinion of the Local Authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area. Since 2018, on the Direction of the Welsh Government Cabinet Minister for Education, humanists can be full members of this Committee as well as other belief groups analogous to religious belief;
- (ii) Representatives of teachers' associations;
- (iii) Representatives of the local authority.

The Local Authority determined that the SACRE/SAC should consist of six elected members, seven bodies representative of religion and belief, and seven representatives of teachers' associations. In addition, the Authority allowed two other individuals to be co-opted onto the committee during June 2023.

1.3 Membership of SACRE/SAC

The membership list showing the position for September 2024 to August 2025 is attached in Appendix 1.

SACRE is continuing to make efforts to seek representation from religious organisations other than Christianity. The LA is currently seeking expressions of interest for vacancies within this group.

With regard to Committee B, SACRE/SAC is in the process of contacting schools to seek expressions of interest for the vacant places on the committee.

Torfaen SACRE/SAC have allocated two co-opted places to youth representatives and work is ongoing to fill these places. SACRE/SAC look forward to young people joining the Standing Advisory Council (SAC) in the future in order to incorporate learner voice.

1.4 Functions of SACRE/SAC

- To advise the Local Authority on worship, religious education and Religion, Values and Ethics to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus including methods of teaching, advice on materials, and the provision of training for teachers.
- To consider whether to recommend to the local authority that its current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

- To consider whether the requirement that religious worship in a county school should be 'broadly Christian in nature' should be varied (determinations).
- To report to the Local Authority to Welsh Government on its activities on an annual basis.

1.5 Meetings

SACRE/SAC met on three occasions during the academic year 2024-2025.

Autumn Term: 5 November 2024 at 10:00 am

Spring Term: 27 March 2025 at 10:00 am

Summer Term: 10 June 2025 at 10:00 am

All three meetings were hybrid during 2024-2025.

1.6 Circulation of Report

Copies of this report are circulated electronically to those organisations and establishments listed in Appendix 3. It is also available on the Local Authority and the WASACRE website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ADVICE GIVEN BY SACRE/ SAC

Summary of the advice given to the local authority by SACRE/SAC

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/ RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS

Issue

To monitor provision and standards in RE/ RVE

Action

1. SACRE/SAC considers and analyses school inspection reports. If there are any issues regarding RE/RVE, such as non-fulfilment of statutory requirements, then the LA follows this up.
2. SACRE /SAC visits schools on an annual basis to receive a presentation on RE/RVE. During 2024-2025 SACRE/SAC did not visit any schools, however, schools shared presentations at meetings.

Issue

To fulfil the legal requirement to review the agreed syllabus for RE/RVE on a five-year basis and ensure the agreed syllabus is implemented in schools.

Action

1. In 2008 the Agreed Syllabus Conference endorsed and adopted a new agreed syllabus for the authority's schools which was implemented from September 2008. In June 2013 the Agreed Syllabus Conference, endorsed the re-adoption of the Torfaen agreed syllabus for Religious Education with an understanding that the syllabus would be reviewed once further information was received concerning the assessment and national curriculum review.
2. SACRE (as it then was) subsequently received updates via email and during termly meetings of developments with the Curriculum and the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience leads.

3. During 2020-2021 SACRE responded to the Welsh Government consultation on the Guidance for Religion Values and Ethics in the Curriculum for Wales 2022.
4. Following the publication of the RVE guidance SACRE advised the local authority to convene an Agreed Syllabus conference where the adoption or adaption of the framework as the Torfaen Agreed Syllabus was discussed.
5. The local authority subsequently adopted the new Agreed Syllabus in June 2022, and the document was circulated to all schools in July 2022 ahead of the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales in September 2022.

TEACHING MATERIALS

Issue

To ensure that schools are informed of suitable resources for RE/ RVE.

Action

Schools were sent the following information and resources, with SACRE/SAC Members also sent a copy of the information:

The following information and resources were shared with schools, and copies were also sent to SACRE/SAC members:

1. Schools were notified about Interfaith Week 2024 (10–17th November) and signposted to resources including lesson plans and collective worship materials on www.interfaithweek.org.
2. Schools were informed of the 2025 Holocaust Memorial Day theme, "For a Better Future," with access to age-appropriate resources on www.hmd.org.uk.
3. WASACRE continued to provide RE, RVE, and collective worship resources, which were distributed to schools via SACRE.
4. Schools received updates on Welsh Government consultations and publications related to Humanities and RVE.
5. Curriculum lead network meetings and support offers were shared with all schools via the EAS Humanities Network.
6. Farmington Scholarship 2024–2025 information was circulated to schools and discussed at SACRE/SAC meetings.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

Issue

To ensure that teachers can access appropriate professional learning (PL).

Action

The Curriculum for Wales is built on the principle of subsidiarity, giving schools the flexibility to design their own curriculum. To support this, the Education Achievement Service (EAS) has offered a wide range of professional learning opportunities for teachers across the region, focusing on sharing effective practice and empowering practitioners.

The EAS Curriculum Partner for RVE and SACRE/SACs provided both bespoke and universal subject-specific training in Religious Studies for secondary school teachers.

During 2024–2025, RVE-specific professional learning was delivered to both primary and secondary practitioners. This was provided through Partner Schools, Humanities network meetings, and support from the Curriculum Partner for RVE. The training focused on:

- Implementing the Curriculum for Wales 2022
- Curriculum design and pedagogy
- Legislative changes relating to RVE
- Headteacher briefings were also held, helping schools to understand:
 - The mandatory status of RVE
 - How RVE has evolved within the Curriculum for Wales
 - Key planning and implementation considerations linked to the new RVE framework

National and Regional Updates (2024–2025)

Interfaith Week 2025

Schools were informed of Interfaith Week 2025 (Sunday 9-16th November) and signposted to resources via www.interfaithweek.org, including lesson plans, case studies, and collective worship materials suitable for learners from primary through to post-16. Schools were encouraged to engage with the resources and share their participation and pupil outcomes with SACRE/SAC.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

Schools were notified of the 2024 theme, 'For a Better Future', and provided with a range of age-appropriate resources from www.hmd.org.uk, including lesson plans, film clips, assemblies, and worksheets. SACRE/SAC encouraged schools to share how these materials were used and what learners gained from the experience.

WASACRE Support

WASACRE continued to provide guidance and resources for RE, RVE, and collective worship. These were disseminated to schools via SACRE/SAC.

Welsh Government Updates

Schools were kept informed of relevant Welsh Government consultations, guidance, and publications related to Humanities and RVE.

Curriculum Design Support

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) continued to support curriculum design across the region, with a particular focus on Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE). As part of this, schools were provided with resources, exemplars, and guidance to support the development of meaningful and locally relevant RVE curricula. Materials were shared via regional networks.

WASACRE Professional Learning Modules

With funding from Welsh Government, WASACRE commissioned a suite of professional learning modules to support the delivery of RVE within the Curriculum for Wales. In 2025, a new module was introduced specifically for school governors, providing guidance on their responsibilities in relation to RVE. These resources aim to build practitioner confidence, promote high-quality provision, and ensure RVE is meaningful and locally relevant for all learners in Wales.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Issue

To ensure that schools fulfil statutory requirements for collective worship and provide a worthwhile experience for pupils.

Action

1. SACRE/SAC monitors the sections of inspection reports that are concerned with collective worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC).
2. The LA will follow up on any non-fulfilment of statutory requirements by requesting their action plan.
3. During 2024-2025 Estyn did not identify any instances of non-compliance with statutory requirements.
4. Where inspections have taken place, it is reported that spiritual, moral and social skills are developing well, and pupils have beneficial opportunities to develop good understanding of spiritual and ethical beliefs through assemblies, reflection time, comparing different faiths and beliefs.
5. Schools have been informed by SACRE/SAC of appropriate resources and websites that support collective worship in schools e.g., HMD 2025.
SACRE/SAC will continue to visit schools in the LA to observe acts of collective worship, and monitor fulfilment of statutory requirements, provision, and quality during 2025-2026

OTHER ISSUES:

Aim: To ensure a more informed SACRE/SAC through providing regular updates on local and national issues.

SACRE/SAC continues its membership of WASACRE, receiving termly feedback from association meetings. The RVE Curriculum Partner represents SACRE/SAC on the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE), ensuring national perspectives are shared locally. Members receive regular training to stay up to date with legislative and educational changes and to understand their role. SACRE/SAC also provides advice on Holocaust education to the local authority and its schools.

Throughout 2024–2025, SACRE/SAC received updates on Curriculum for Wales and the implications for RVE, responding to Welsh Government consultations, as well as updates on the Qualifications Wales 14–16 qualifications offer.

SECTION 2: ADVICE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/ RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS

2.1 The Locally Agreed Syllabus

Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics (Curriculum for Wales 2022)

Torfaen Local Authority convened an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC), which advised adopting the Religion, Values and Ethics Guidance as the basis for the Local Agreed Syllabus for RVE. The document was revised to reflect Torfaen's specific syllabus. However, learners in Year 10 and above will continue to follow the legacy Curriculum for Wales 2008 for Religious Education throughout the remainder of their secondary education, until the full implementation of the new curriculum is complete.

2.2 Standards In RE/ RVE

SACRE/SAC uses several strategies to monitor standards in Religious Education (RE) and Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) across Torfaen schools:

- **Estyn Reports:** SACRE/SAC reviews Estyn inspection reports, focusing on comments related to Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development. If statutory requirements are not met, the local authority requests a development plan.
- **Exam Performance:** Due to changes in data reporting, the LA, EAS Curriculum Partner, and schools now collaborate closely to identify support needs.
- **Curriculum and Exam Updates:** Schools are kept informed about changes to GCSE and A-Level Religious Studies through EAS practitioner meetings. Feedback and concerns are shared with SACRE/SAC, WASACRE, NAPfRE, and WJEC.
- **Future Monitoring:** In 2025–2026, SACRE/SAC will continue to explore effective ways for the LA to provide meaningful insights into the quality of RE, RS and RVE.
- **National Context:** SACRE/SAC has been briefed on national challenges, including declining exam entries in RE/RS. These concerns, along with updates from the RE Council of England and Wales, have been shared with WASACRE and NAPfRE.

2.3 Methods of Teaching, Teaching Materials and Teacher Training

Professional Learning

SACRE/SAC has continued to provide advice and guidance to schools on pedagogy and resources. The EAS has provided a range of professional learning programs, materials, and approaches that have been shared with schools in the region. All courses are advertised through the [Supporting Our Schools website](#).

Partner Schools for Religious Education and Religion, Values and Ethics

In 2024–2025, the Curriculum Partner provided tailored support for Religious Education and Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) across Torfaen. Schools received guidance to deepen their understanding of the Curriculum for Wales and to plan RVE in line with the Humanities Area.

The EAS invested in targeted professional learning and in-school support, including collaborative curriculum design from ages 3 to 16. This helped schools co-create progression-based RVE models that reflect local contexts and learner needs, strengthening ownership of curriculum, pedagogy, and leadership.

This approach is now a key driver of curriculum realisation, supporting schools in meeting national expectations around accountability, self-evaluation, and professional learning. Practitioners were also signposted to EAS resources and training to build confidence and consistency in delivering high-quality RVE.

Partner Schools for Religious Education and Religion, Values and Ethics

The Partner School for RVE has continued their efforts throughout 2024-2025. Their guidance and support, along with collaboration among SACRE/SACs and NAPfRE, has been shared with teachers of Religious Education/Religious and Values Education (RE/RVE).

Teaching Materials

SACRE/SAC has shared a variety of RVE teaching resources with Torfaen schools:

- **Farmington Scholarships:** Information was provided on the latest Farmington Scholarships, which offer free professional development for RE/RVE teachers across the UK.
- **Holocaust Memorial Day 2025:** SACRE/SAC encouraged schools to mark the occasion and shared details of the theme and free educational resources available on the Holocaust Memorial Day website.
- **Jewish History Association of South Wales (JHASW):** SACRE/SAC shared links to bilingual Holocaust education resources developed by JHASW/CHIDC, including classroom materials and guidance notes. Teachers were introduced to these resources through a dedicated training session.
- **EAS Humanities Newsletter:** Distributed termly to all schools, the newsletter includes updates on RVE, teaching strategies, and SACRE/SAC activities.

SECTION 3: ADVICE ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

3.1 School Inspection Reports

SACRE/SAC regularly reviews Torfaen's Estyn inspection reports. SACRE/SAC has decided to keep using these reports to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and to consider relevant comments.

3.2 Applications for Determinations

No applications were received from schools for determinations to be made on the lifting of the requirements for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

3.3 School Visits

SACRE/SAC appreciates the opportunities accorded to members to observe acts of collective worship in schools. Members did not have the opportunity to host a SACRE/SAC meeting at a school or observe an act of collective worship during 2024-2025.

Although in-person visits were not possible this year, SACRE/SAC was pleased to receive presentations from various contributors, highlighting work and commemorations for Holocaust Memorial Day, as well as assemblies held to mark this significant occasion. These presentations also showcased thoughtful planning and activities related to Religion, Values, and Ethics (RVE), demonstrating engaging approaches to embedding these themes within learning experiences.

SECTION 4: OTHER ISSUES

4.1 Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religion, Values and Ethics (WASACRE)

Torfaen SACRE/SAC continues to maintain its affiliation with WASACRE. Representatives have actively participated in WASACRE meetings throughout the 2024–2025 academic year. Key issues

discussed at these meetings have been reported back to SACRE/SAC, with follow-up discussions held to consider their implications. SACRE/SAC values the proactive role WASACRE plays in supporting RE/RVE and ensuring member SACREs/SAC are well-informed. Regular updates have been provided by Mrs Jones and other attending representatives.

4.2 Holocaust Education

Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 Theme: 'For a Better Future'

Torfaen Council marked Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 through a series of impactful activities designed to promote remembrance and education. These included a live webinar with Holocaust survivor Eva Clarke, hosted in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust, which enabled pupils across Torfaen and neighbouring authorities to hear her powerful testimony. The Council also organised an art and poetry competition on the theme "For a Better Future," encouraging creative reflection among learners, and illuminated Pontypool Civic Centre in purple as a symbolic act of remembrance. Additionally, Torfaen promoted the Valleys Voices podcast featuring survivor Harry Spiro and his daughter, further reinforcing the importance of resilience and learning from history. These initiatives demonstrate Torfaen's commitment to fostering understanding, tolerance, and respect through meaningful engagement with Holocaust education.

For Holocaust Memorial Day 2026, SACRE/SAC will contact all schools to encourage participation in commemorative activities. Schools will be provided with information on the theme and access to free educational resources.

4.3 Curriculum for Wales 2022

SACRE/SAC continues to receive regular updates on Religion, Values and Ethics within the Curriculum for Wales. These updates inform ongoing discussions and support SACRE/SAC's advisory role.

4.4 Training of SACRE Members

Training for SACRE/SAC members on their roles and responsibilities remains a priority. This programme will continue into the 2025–2026 academic year to ensure members are well-equipped to fulfil their duties.

4.5 MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE

The current membership list showing the position as of July 2025 is attached at Appendix 1.

The following positions are currently vacant:

Co-opted places – SACRE/SAC have two co-opted representatives on the Committee and one vacancy.

Committee A – Work is ongoing to fill the remaining vacancies.

Committee B – Two positions remain vacant for a NASUWT and NEU Representative. SACRE/SAC are in the process of writing to schools to seek expressions of interest to fill these places.

4.6 PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TO TORFAEN SACRE/SAC

Mrs Hayley Jones, the EAS Curriculum Partner for SACs and RVE, provides professional support to Torfaen SACRE/SAC and Professional Learning for schools across Torfaen.

Lisa Hamer acts as Clerk to SACRE/SAC, and Members are very grateful to Mrs Lloyds work which is vital to the effective and efficient functioning of Torfaen SACRE/SAC.

APPENDIX 1: Torfaen SACRE/SAC MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AS OF July 2024

CHRISTIAN AND OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS - COMMITTEE A

Isaac Harrison (Roman Catholic)
Elizabeth Thomas (Church in Wales)
Phillip Middleton (Wales Humanists)

Vacancy - The Methodist Church
Vacancy - non-Christian faith group/religion
Vacancy – The Salvation Army
Vacancy – Baptist

TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS - COMMITTEE B

Primary Schools

Anna Britten (NAHT)

Secondary Schools

Laura de Cruz (NASUWT) (Chair)
Sam McDermott (NEU) (Vice Chair)
Hannah Howells (UCAC)
Anthony Ager (ASCL)

Vacancy - NASUWT Representative
Vacancy – NAHT Representative
Vacancy - NUT Representative x 2

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY - COMMITTEE C

Councillor A. Best
Councillor L. Williams
Councillor J. Jones

CO OPTED MEMBERS

Rhiannon Bennett – Participation and Research Officer
Vacancy – Youth representation

OFFICERS

Mr Andy Rothwell (Assistant Head of Education (Learning))
Alison Dally (Healthy Schools & PSE Officer)
Mrs Hayley Jones (EAS - Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE))

CLERK TO SACRE

Lisa Hamer (Business Support Officer)
Email: lisa.hamer@torfaen.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE AND AGENDA OF MEETINGS

Torfaen SACRE/SAC on RVE Meeting

Autumn Term: 7th November 2024 at 10:00 am, Hybrid

- Welcome & Apologies
- Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
- Membership Update
- Annual Report
- HMD
- EAS RVE Partner update
- EAS Professional Learning
- Farmington Scholarship
- WJEC Updates
- Schedule of Meetings 2024/2025.
- WASACRE
 - Feedback from the virtual WASACRE Summer Term Meeting
 - Feedback from the virtual WASACRE Autumn Term Meeting

Torfaen SACRE/SAC on RVE Meeting

Spring Term: 27th March 2025 at 10:00 am, Hybrid

- Welcome and apologies for absence.
- Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
- To Share HMD Commemorations
- To receive an update from the EAS RE Adviser including:
 - SAC Members Training (Playlist Video)
 - EAS Professional Learning
 - Youth Forum Update
 - WASACRE RVE Playlists
 - Qualifications
 - Estyn Inspection Updates
- Schedule of Meetings.
- WASACRE
 - Feedback from the virtual WASACRE Autumn Term Meeting
 - Feedback from the virtual WASACRE Spring Term Meeting
 - Executive Voting 2025 - WASACRE Executive Committee Elections

Torfaen SACRE/SAC on RVE Meeting

Summer Term: 10 June 2025 at 10:00 am, Hybrid

- Welcome and apologies for absence.
- Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
- To share 'Golden Rule Project' Update
- Youth SACRE Update
- To receive an update from the EAS RVE/RE Adviser
- Schedule of Meetings 2025/26.
- WASACRE
 - Feedback from the virtual WASACRE Spring Term Meeting

APPENDIX 3: CIRCULATION OF REPORT

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies. This report will be available on the Local Authority website and the WASACRE website for interested parties to download.

Members of Torfaen County Borough Council

Chair of Torfaen Council Education Scrutiny Committee

All members of Torfaen SACRE/SAC

Regional Director of South-East Wales Education Advisory Service (EAS)

Welsh Government Education Officer responsible for Religious Education

Cabinet Secretary for Education, Welsh Government

Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all County Borough Schools

Principals and Governing Bodies of all Tertiary Colleges within the County Borough

All SACRE/ SACs in Wales

Wales Association of SACRE (WASACRE)

The National Library of Wales

ESTYN