

Neath Port Talbot County Borough
Council Standing Advisor Council for
Religious Education (SACRE) / Standing
Advisor Council for Religion Values and
Ethics (SAConRVE)

Annual Report 2023-2024



SACRE

Neath Port Talbot Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education/Religion, Values and Ethics ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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Forward by Chair of Neath Port Talbot SACRE/SAConRVE –

Councillor Nia Jenkins

Chair needs to write a new forward.

It is my great pleasure to present you with this Annual Report from Neath-Port Talbot SACRE, which outlines our work in the academic year, 2022 – 2023. It has been a busy and productive year and we owe a debt of gratitude to the work of the teachers in the Authority, Vice Chair, Council Officers and our members.

Meeting in person, after the restrictions faced during the pandemic, has enabled us to discuss and plan ongoing work and to address the developments within Religious Education – including the launching of the Curriculum for Wales Religion, values and ethics in our Secondary School, following the successful roll-out in our Primary Schools.

I would like to formally thank our recent Vice Chair and former Headteacher of St Joseph's Catholic School and Sixth Form Centre, Eugene Scourfield, for his steadfast dedication and hard work on behalf of NPT SACRE. His contribution to the group has been invaluable.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the committee for their dedication and enthusiasm as we look forward to our annual Holocaust Memorial Evening, which we are justly proud of.

Section 1: Information about SACRE/SAConRVE

1.1 Duty to establish a SACRE/SAConRVE

All local Education Authorities (LEAs) are required to constitute a Standing Advisory Council (SAC) with their local area.

1.2 Composition of SACRE/SAConRVE

The SACRE/SAConRVE shall comprise persons appointed by the local authority to represent respectively:

- Group A - a group of persons to represent: Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions; non-religious philosophical convictions. A local authority in Wales, in appointing such persons must take all reasonable steps to secure the outcome that the number of members appointed to the committee to represent a religion, denomination or non-religious philosophical conviction shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the committee's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that religion, denomination or non-religious philosophical conviction in the area.
- Group B - a group of persons to represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area.
- Group C - a group of persons to represent the authority.

The SACRE/SAConRVE may also include co-opted members.

1.3 Membership of SACRE/SAConRVE

The list of members of Neath Port Talbot SACRE/SAConRVE is set out in Appendix 1. Every effort has been made to seek representation from all noted religious and non-religious communities but SACRE/SAConRVE has experienced difficulties in finding such representation. The Advisor to SACRE/SAConRVE has extensively contacted the leading bodies of these organisations and continues to await responses. This work will continue in the next academic year to further develop the diversity within Neath Port Talbot SACRE/SAConRVE.

1.4 Functions of SACRE/SAConRVE

The function of the SACRE/SAConRVE is to advise the Local Authority (LA) on such matters connected with the provision of teaching and learning, under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, either in respect of the mandatory elements of RVE, or the post-compulsory education in maintained schools of optional RVE which includes:

- methods of teaching
- the choice of teaching materials
- the provision of teacher training.

In addition, the SAC may advise on any other matter the local authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit, such as:

- advise the LA on Collective Worship

- Develop and review the agreed syllabus on the request of the LA.

Under Education Acts, the LA must provide local arrangements for dealing with Complaints. The SAC on RVE will therefore consider complaints about the provision of or lack of provision of RVE.

1.5 Record of SACRE/SAConRVE Meetings

Three meetings of SACRE/SAConRVE were held at Baglan Education and Training centre, Elmwood Road, Baglan, Port Talbot during the academic year 2023-2024

- Tuesday 17th October 2023
- Tuesday 27th February 2024
- Tuesday 4th June 2024

A record of the main agenda items discussed during the meetings is to be found in Appendix 2.

1.6 Circulation of the Annual Report

Copies of this report have been circulated to the organisations/establishments listed in Appendix 3.

Section 2: Advice given by SACRE/SAConRVE

2.1 The Locally Agreed Syllabus

Neath Port Talbot Agreed Syllabus was adopted in January 2023 and continued to be current in the last academic year. Year 9 and above continued to follow the National Exemplar Framework as the Neath Port Talbot Agreed Syllabus, this will continue to be used until the full roll out of the Curriculum for Wales and the establishment of RVE within secondary schools.

Neath Port Talbot agreed syllabus aligns with the Curriculum for Wales and the RVE statutory guidance that can be seen on Hwb. The agreed syllabus was established in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. An Agreed Syllabus conference was convened between September and December 2022 to ensure accordance with all WG legislation.

During the period of curriculum roll out, as a secondary school or setting 'adopts' the Curriculum for Wales Framework for a particular year group, the Neath Port Talbot Agreed syllabus will supersede the legacy Neath Port Talbot agreed syllabus.

The agreed syllabus sets out the details regarding teaching and learning in the mandatory element of Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) in line with the Curriculum for Wales, for all schools and settings maintained by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The document has been adopted as the agreed syllabus for RVE in Neath Port Talbot, in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council adopted the document as the agreed syllabus for RVE in January 2023, following a formal recommendation to the Local Authority by the Agreed Syllabus Conference in December 2022. Copies of the 2023 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council agreed syllabus have been distributed to all schools within the county and are available from the SACRE Clerk.

2.2 Standards in Religious Education/ Religion, Values, and Ethics

SACRE/SAConRVE provided advice to the LA on standards in Religious Education/Religious, Values and Ethics. Changes to Welsh Government guidance on school performance data and reporting of Key Stage three assessment data has changed the way that SACRE/SAConRVE has been able to monitor school performance in RE/RVE in the secondary sector.

SACRE/SAConRVE has continued to consult Estyn reports for evidence of standards of RE/RVE provision, and in the main there are no issues have been raised with regard to RE/RVE or Collective Worship. Reports have generally spoken positively about the spiritual and moral development of learners. There is a recognition that one report has noted that the schools is slow in responding to some of the mandatory areas within the Curriculum for Wales.

2.3 SACRE/SAConRVE Constitution

The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to establish a Standing Advisory Council (SAC) for Religion, Values and Ethics (SACforRVE). The legislation states that SACforRVE needs to clarify their roles and legal responsibilities with regards to RVE in the Curriculum for Wales.

Neath Port Talbot needed to constitute a SAC in line with the legislative requirements. A constitution is needed to ensure that the SAC functions in line with legislation and supports the LA. SACRE/SAConRVE has developed a constitution appropriate for Neath Port Talbot that also aligns with the legislative requirements. The RVE Support Officer completed the following steps to ensure the development of the constitution:

- Research on the legislation
- Research into existing SAC constitutions in Wales and beyond for assistance.
- Guidance from WASACRE on the writing of a constitution.
- Advice and support taken from Joanna Stevens (Principal Solicitor – Commercial and Governance, Legal Services Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council) to ensure correct legal requirements, consistency of language and compatibility with other relevant NPT documentation.

The content of the focused on:

- **Explanation of the function of the Council (SAC)** – to advise NPT County Borough Council on matters connected with the provision of the teaching and learning of Religion Values and Ethics (RVE) within the Curriculum for Wales and the Legacy Curriculum. Also, to advise the LEA on other matters that are within the scope of RVE including any complaints. Collective Worship also comes under the remit of SAC. There is a duty for SAC to produce an annual report in line with the guidance supplied by Welsh Government.
- **Terms of Reference** included to assist with the above which clarifies the remit of SAC which identifies the legislative requirements on the establishing and work of SAC.
- **Composition and Membership** is included which reflects the changes in the legislation. SAC consists of 3 groups as can be seen in the information. Details on the types of members are included but it states that the lists are not restricted. 6 members of group c are LA appointed members. Role and expectation of members are included. There is a code of conduct included within the Annex. Explanation on gaining membership, ending membership and removal from SAC is included. Any rights to claim expenses for SAC work is also included.
- A section on **procedures** has been included explaining how and when meetings will be called and held and the setting of the agenda. Additionally, there is explanation on the appointment of the chairperson and vice-chairperson as well as voting procedures. This section also included information on the role and duties of the RVE Support Officer within the SAC and the SAC Clerk.

The constitution was presented to the Education Committee prior to being presented to the full council and has been adopted by the council. It has now been adopted and put into practice by SACRE/SACONRVE.

2.4 Curriculum Developments

SACRE/SACONRVE has received termly updates from the county RVE Support Officer regarding curriculum developments as they relate to RE/RVE and Collective Worship. SACRE/SACONRVE have developed an understanding of their purpose and role as a council committee. A shared understanding of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and the Curriculum for Wales has been developed in relation to RE/RVE. Focusing on the name change, the changes in the statutory requirements and the status of the locally determined agreed syllabus. SACRE/SACONRVE has been advised on the curriculum changes to RVE and have been updated on any developments from Welsh Government as they have happened during the academic year.

SACRE/SACONRVE have been advised on and discussed the proposed changes to the GCSE qualification within Religious Studies. They have considered the approval criteria set out by Qualifications Wales and the Design Criteria that has been published by WJEC it now awaits the GCSE specification in order to understand the detail of the future GCSE qualification.

Neath Port Talbot SACRE/SACONRVE will continue to provide supporting materials, in addition to the agreed syllabus, to support practitioners in their curriculum planning and pedagogy, offering breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and experiences for learners across the local authority. The RVE Support Officer has presented to primary headteachers to support with agreed understanding of RVE within in the Curriculum for Wales and how it can be implemented within their settings. Collective Worship was also discussed during this session. Additionally, the RVE Support Officer has continued delivering ADDS sessions to schools and individuals within schools, that have requested specific RVE support alongside those who have required some guidance via telephone conversations or email.

The RVE Support Officer attends and contributes to the secondary subject network meetings for RVE. This is an opportunity for RE/RVE leads to share good practice, to familiarise themselves with new resources, develop their shared understanding of RVE within the Curriculum for Wales, respond to relevant Welsh Government and Qualifications for Wales consultations as well as support each other with the teaching and learning of RE/RVE.

Neath Port Talbot SACRE/SACONRVE have also viewed, considered, and shared with school settings the resource developed by WASACRE funded by Welsh Government on 'What is new in RVE' [Repository - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

SACRE/SACONRVE have invited a number of guest speakers to their meetings this year. This supports members in seeing what is available to schools but has also given members an opportunity to critically engage with providers:

- Jewish History Association for South Wales – we have also fed back on resources being developed at present.

- Educate against Islamophobia.
- Solutions and Sides – delivered by the RVE Support Officer following the WASACRE pre conference seminars.

2.5 Examinations

Through the RVE Support Officer SACRE/SACONRVE have discussed the summer 2024 Religious Studies examinations. Additionally, SACRE/SACONRVE have also discussed, as noted above, the proposed changes to future GCSE qualifications. This has been shared with Religious Studies leads across the County.

SACRE/SACONRVE do not feedback on individual school attainment in RE/RVE/RS since the changes in the requirements of schools to report on results.

2.6 School inspection Reports

SACRE/SACONRVE considers Estyn inspection reports and thematic reviews. During this academic year twelve reports, including primary, special school and an all through school, were published and one from a primary faith school. Positive comments were noted within the reports on learner's knowledge and understanding on different faith communities, diversity, and morality. It was recognised that collective worship requirements were appropriate and followed legislative requirements.

2.7 Pedagogy and Resources.

Neath Port Talbot Education Support Officers have offered a range of professional learning opportunities in line with the principle of subsidiarity in the Curriculum for Wales for all practitioners within the county. Additionally, the RVE support officer had given RVE specific support which included:

- Adds session on understanding the changes to the legislation and teaching of RE as it becomes RVE.
- Attendance and contribution to the heads of Secondary RE/RVE meetings lead by two of the counties ESO's.
- Support and guidance for Secondary RE/RVE leads on RS GCSE summer examinations.
- Delivery of session understanding of the legislative and curriculum changes for RE/RVE for secondary RE/RVE teachers during a county inset.
- Sharing of contact information and guidance for external visitors to schools.
- Holocaust Memorial Day 2024. Resources were shared and an opportunity given to take part in the county Holocaust Memorial Evening and competition that was run alongside this.
- Sharing of the Estyn, WASACRE and Welsh Government documentation on Collective Worship.
- Details were shared on the resources developed by WASACRE funded by Welsh Government.

- Shared details of organisations that could support pupils' experiences within the classroom.
- Shared details and resources from the WASACRE conference and pre and post conference seminars.

Section 3: Advice on Collective Worship

3.1 School Inspection

Details on Estyn inspection Reports can be seen in section 2.6. As a SACRE/SACONRVE we have ensured that schools are supported to fulfil their statutory requirements for collective worship and to provide worthwhile experiences for learners. Through SACREs/SACONRVE monitoring of Estyn's inspection reports we can identify and support any schools where any issues have arisen during the inspection. There have been no issues of concern raised in Estyn inspections in the academic year 2023-24 SACRE/SACONRVE shared any suitable information and resources relating to collective worship.

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

No school visits took place during the academic year 2023-24. SACRE/SACONRVE would like to develop this practice during the coming academic year. The Education Support Officer visits schools as and when required to support teachers with the teaching of RVE within the curriculum for Wales. These visits have included:

- Through co-working with county Education Support Officers, she is able to recognise those schools that require support, and her details are shared with schools as and when required.
- Continued attendance when relevant in LLAN meetings – the county headteacher termly meetings.
- ADDS sessions for Primary schools on incorporating RVE within the concepts as clusters and individual schools.
- Self-evaluation listening to the learner session, through pupil voice and book scrutinises, on the request of the school, to recognise learner's understanding of work completed within Christianity and their RVE sessions within their mission books. Particular consideration was given to non-religious philosophical convictions and its link to the requirements within the Curriculum for Wales.
- Sharing of Artefacts with individual schools.
- Bespoke individual school/teacher support where a session is held with every individual teacher within a school supporting their planning for the teaching of an individual concepts.
- Governor training has taken place: Face to face with chairs of governors. Through Teams for governors.

- Meeting with secondary Heads of RVE where the focus will be on the delivery of RVE within the Curriculum for Wales, recognising any specific support required and qualifications (present and future).

Section 4: Other Issues

4.1 Holocaust Memorial Evening 2024

SACRE/SAConRVE once again held a very successful Holocaust Memorial Evening at the Princess Royal Theatre on the 6th of February. It was pleasing once again to have in attendance members of the local Jewish community alongside other dignitaries. This year's theme was 'Fragility of Freedom', schools fully engaged with the theme, and it was pleasing to see their contributions in the artwork presented for the competition and on the evening. Particular praise should be given to learners from Ysgol Tairgwaith who participated in all primary categories and to Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera who focused their artwork on a memorial with the winner producing an exceptional and thought-provoking piece.

Senior Prefects from Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera led and compared the evening in a professional manner which ensured that the evening flowed seamlessly from performances to the sharing of information always keeping in focus the theme. Ten schools contribute with individual performances, including song and dance; on the evening, including learners for St. Joseph's Catholic School & sixth form who read the 7 commitments in a range of languages.

4.2 WASACRE

SACRE/SAConRVE continues to support the work of WASACRE and values the work it carries out promoting RE/RVE and Collective Worship nationally; and on its development of Welsh Government funded resources. SACRE/SAConRVE also values the termly meetings that WASACRE has with Welsh Government and other stakeholders as a way of ensuring that RE/RVE remains central to educational discussions within Wales.

SACRE/SAConRVE supports the RVE Support Officer to attend each termly WASACRE meeting and supports additional members, up to three, to attend if they so choose.

SACRE/SAConRVE is pleased to support the RVE Support Officer as a member of the WASACRE Executive Committee as Immediate past Chair. All WASACRE meetings have been held through Teams and Zoom in the academic year 2023-2024. With the exception of the annual general meeting which took place at the end of the WASACRE conference in Wrexham in June 2024. During which the Neath Port Talbot Support Officer for RVE was appointed as Vice Chair for the next two years.

Feedback and discussion on WASACRE meetings take place in SACRE/SAConRVE meetings. Any issues raised by WASACRE that are pertinent to teachers are also shared via email and in RE/RVE leaders' meetings.

The WASACRE conference held in Wrexham was an excellent opportunity for professional development and networking. Within her role at WASACRE the RVE Support Officer for

Neath Port Talbot was heavily involved in the organisation of a presenting an area on the day. The conference day included:

- Keynote speakers – Professor Graham Donaldson, Rev. Mary Stallard and Cabinet Member for Education Lynne Neagle
- A variety of workshops
- Panel discussion
- The introduction of the development of a promotional film.

Recording of much of the above is available through the WASACRE website and has been shared with all Neath Port Talbot Schools. Additionally, WASACRE have run a range of online seminars pre and post the conference. These include:

- An introduction to SAC/SACRE. What do you need to know?
- What does RVE look like in the early years setting?
- Developing empathy through story in the nursery setting.
- Approaching RVE planning: Having regard to the RVE Guidance

Seminars that could be recorded have been and the pre-conference seminars are now available for use. All details have been shared with Neath Port Talbot Schools. Post conference seminars will be completed early in the next academic year with recordings available later in the year.

4.3 National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE/NAPfRVE)

SACRE/SACONRVE is represented on NAPfRE/NAPfRVE by the RE/RVE Support Officer. These meetings have been held virtually in the academic year 2023-2024 through TEAMS, with the exception of the summer meeting which took place in Wrexham to coincide with the WASACRE conference. Through these meeting SACRE/SACONRVE has been kept abreast of RE/RVE developments across Wales. NAPfRE/NAPfRVE has worked closely with WASACRE on the development of RE/RVE, the WASACRE Conference and has been part of the discussions with Welsh Government and other stakeholders. The focus has been on the developments within the Curriculum for Wales and the RVE guidance, progression and the developments of the new GCSE Religious Studies course. NAPfRE/NAPfRVE have begun considering the present guidelines for the writing of annual reports and possible changes that will be needed due to the Assessment and Curriculum (Wales) Act 2021.

Feedback and discussion on NAPfRE/ NAPfRVE meetings take place in SACRE/SACONRVE meetings. Any relevant information and resources are shared with teachers via email and in RE/RVE leaders' meetings.

4.4 Training for SACRE/SACONRVE Members

As part of training of members SACRE/SACONRVE:

- have received a session on the role of SACRE/SACONRVE and its members during the first termly meeting of the academic year

- have received the WASACRE document 'So you're joining your local SACRE' with all members
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fblfp8Wk5NZFUZD1BFcBpxy0r5pBkavK/view>
- members have been updated on developments within RE/RVE and collective worship through discussion points and presentations in the termly meetings
- members have been invited to attend the termly WASACRE meetings
- received feedback on the termly WASACRE and NAPfRE/NAPfRVE meetings.

Appendix 1: SACRE Membership 2022-2023

LA Officers

Mrs. Rachel Samuel – NPT RVE Support Officer
Emily Sweeney – Clerk to SACRE/SACONRVE
Andrew Thomas - Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Religious and non-religious traditions and denominations– Committee A

Rev. Canon Timothy Hewitt (Church in Wales)
Rev. Canon Lynda Newman (Church in Wales)
Dr. Maripaz Felton (Roman Catholic Community)
Norma Glass (Jewish Community)
Imam A Lorgat (Muslim Community)
Member representing the free Churches Vacant
Member for the Hindu Community Vacant
Member of the Sikh Community Vacant
Member of the Humanist Community Vacant

Teacher Associations Representatives – Committee B

Lee Workman (Chair of LLAN)
Miss. Cerys Phillips (Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera) NEU member
Sarah Powell (Dwr-y-felin) NEU member
Fiona Shaw (Cwmtawe) NASUWT member
Kate Evans (Llangatwg) NASUWT member
NHTU member Vacant
ASCL member Vacant
UCAC Member Vacant (Rachel Samuel temporarily)

Local Authority – Committee C

Cllr. Nia Jenkins (Chair of SACRE/SACONRVE)
Cllr. Wayne Carpenter (Vice chair of SACRE/SACONRVE)
Cllr. Jeff Jones
Cllr. Rhidian Mizen
Cllr. Rebecca Phillips
Cllr. Peter Rees
Cllr. Dave Whitelock

Co-opted members

Ailee Sotero (Cwm Brombil) NEU
Jen Hamilton-Jones

Appendix 2: Record of Meetings and Agenda Items

All meetings were held in person at Baglan Education and Training Centre, Baglan.

17th October 2023

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Presentation by Bismha Afzal (Schools Coordinator Educate Against Islamaphobia)
3. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair
4. Minutes from SACRE meeting 13.06.23
5. Matters arising
6. SACRE Annual Report 2022-23
7. External examination results and next steps
8. Support for Schools
9. Correspondence
10. AOB

27th February 2024

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Presentation by Klavdija Erzen (Programme and project Manager, Jewish History Association of South Wales).
3. Minutes for SACRE/SACONRVE meeting 17.10.23
4. Matters arising
5. SACRE/SACONRVE Annual Report 2022-23
6. SAC Constitution Update
7. Feedback from Holocaust Memorial Evening
8. Estyn Reports
9. WASACE and NAPfRVE updates
10. Support for Schools
11. Correspondence
12. AOB

4th June 2024

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minutes from SACRE/SACONRVE meeting 22.03.23
3. Matters arising
4. Jewish History Association Resources
5. Place for SACONRVE on the council website
6. GCSE updates – present and post 2025
7. Estyn reports
8. WASACRE and NAPfRVE updates
9. Support For Schools
10. Correspondence
11. AOB

APPENDIX 3: CIRCULATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

COPIES WILL BE SENT ELECTRONICALLY TO THE RELEVANT BODIES.

- Members of Neath Port Talbot SACRE/SAConRVE
- Neath Port Talbot Council Education and Lifelong Learning Department
- Neath Port Talbot Education Support Officers
- All Neath Port Talbot Schools
- WASACRE
- Welsh Government
- The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- Wales National Centre for Religious Education Wales.