

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
5th February 2020
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

Article by Reverend Preb M Metcalf plus background information

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of the SACRE with an article written by the Staffordshire SACRE chair – Reverend Preb M Metcalf plus some additional background information.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of the SACRE will receive a copy of the article that Think piece: 'What's in a name?' Our chairperson Michael Metcalf has written another thought-provoking piece providing a stimulus for SACREs:

'The Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills has put forward proposals for Religious Education which include renaming the subject "Religions and World Views". This name is almost identical to that of the Report of the Commission on RE: "Religion and World Views: The Way Forward". Almost identical, but not quite. The addition of the "s" is apparently quite minor, but in fact it opens up a multitude of avenues for discussion and reflection. In exploring these avenues, I will use, for brevity, the acronyms RRWV (the Welsh preference) and RWV (the CoRE Report).

In addition, a copy of the response of WASACRE (Wales) to their government's consultation is included, which makes for interesting reading. This response echoes very much the thoughts of Rudi Elliot-Lockhart, CEO of the REC who sits on the WASACRE Exec. He wasn't present when their response was agreed, but he had sent in a document to them beforehand, setting out the REC's position - basically defending the singular "religion" title.

Michael Metcalf didn't know all this when he wrote my article, but he did know that there had been an agitated tweet from the REC when the Welsh Government's proposals first came out. See below for the response.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of the SACRE receive and read the article

4 Background

4.1 The 1988 Education Act made it compulsory for each Local Authority (LA) to set up a Standing Advisory Council in Religious Education (SACRE).

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer **Mary Gale** **07816374873**

Wales-WASACRE response

Question 4 – What is an appropriate name for ‘religious education’, to accurately reflect the broader scope proposed in for the new curriculum?

No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion, values and ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religions and worldviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Other (please specify): **RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS**

Reasons for your choice:

The WASACRE Executive Committee is in agreement that, if there is a name change for Religious Education, then it should be to **RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS** as outlined in the Final Report of the Commission on Religious Education in England, where the name first appears. The commissioners of this document, made up of eminent scholars and experts in the field of Religious Education, thought long and hard about before recommending this name. WASACRE wholeheartedly appreciates the good intentions behind the WG proposal to change the name of the subject. However, WASACRE Executive members have major concerns about the preferred name proposed by Welsh Government. To add an ‘s’ significantly changes the nature of name and does not satisfactorily reflect the nature of the subject, especially as it is intended within the new curriculum. The term Religions suggests content and would lead to the question: Which religions should we study? This, therefore, has the potential to be divisive. It also fails to fit with an objective, critical and pluralistic approach to RE.

The term Religion is a high-level, overarching concept and would be more fitting with the concept driven Curriculum for Wales 2022. Learners need to understand the conceptual category of ‘religion’ as well as other concepts such as ‘secularity’, ‘secularism’ and ‘spirituality’. Understanding the origins and uses of the concept ‘religion’ will help to illuminate debates in the study of religion. It will enable learners to build a well-rounded understanding of religion as a force in shaping society. RE is a multidisciplinary field of study and it is vital that the new name reflects this. In our view only the name Religion and Worldviews does this. It continues to allow for a study of the concept of religion as it is currently explored in philosophy of religion, sociology of religion, religion and ethics, psychology of religion, religion and politics, religion and the state, and so on.

It is important to include the term Worldview in the name as a worldview is a person’s way of understanding, experiencing and engaging with the world. This includes how a person

understands the nature of reality and their own place in the world. A person's worldview is likely to influence and be influenced by their beliefs, values, behaviours, experiences, identities and commitments. When exploring worldviews learners would explore their the personal worldviews or themselves and other as well as institutional worldviews shared by groups, organisations or institutions. These include both religious and non-religious worldviews. The language of worldviews helps us move away from a divide between the religious and the non-religious. It recognises that non-religious worldviews draw on the heritage of religious ones, and vice versa. Understanding worldviews in this way will enable learners to engage with, and appreciate, the pluralistic society in which they live. WASACRE suggests that the name RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS best describes the nature of RE in the new curriculum.

It is the view of the WASACARE Executive Committee that the suggested name Religion, Values and Ethics is unsatisfactory as it does not allow for the study of personal and institutional worldviews. In addition, values and ethics are the responsibility of all subjects and all practitioners to enable learners to work toward the Four Purposes. Developing values and ethics is not the sole responsibility of the RE teacher.

23. Worldviews is one word rather than two, or a hyphenated word as is sometimes the case in the consultation documentation. It is vital that this is consistent in all WG documentation including the Humanities AoLE where it appears as two words.

The Welsh translation 'Crefyddau a Bydolygon' is problematic as the meaning does not reflect the meaning of the English 'Worldviews'. It refers more to a scenic view rather than views and opinions as intended within the English use of the term Worldviews. Also, the term 'bydolygon' is a term that has never been used within Religious Education in a Welsh medium setting. A more appropriate name would be 'Crefydd a safbwyntiau byd eang' which would better reflect the understanding of the English name.

WASACRE met on 21st November 2019 and The Welsh Government consultation was discussed at length. The views of representatives from SACREs present at the meeting were divided. Half preferred to retain the current name Religious Education and half would like to see a name change to RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS. Other names for the subject were mooted but didn't receive as much support. The meeting of the Association would like to point out the difficulties with translating the term Worldviews into Welsh as outlined above. They would also like to point out the difficulty in translating other subject specific terminology alongside words that affect the nature of RE including the term 'pluralistic'. It was suggested that a Welsh speaking specialist in Religious Education be involved in the editing of both the RE Framework and the Humanities AoLE.