

Correspondence from Curriculum, Assessment and Pedagogy Division, Welsh Government

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.

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. 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

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 Divison, Education, Welsh Government