

Gwynedd : Summer 2013

2.5 Standards in Religious Education in secondary schools

2.5.1 KS3 Teacher Assessments in Religious Education

Religious Education departments judge pupils' attainment on the basis of the year's work, specific assessment tasks and tests. The pupils do not sit the same tests or respond to the same assessment tasks. Many training meetings have been held since 2007 to support teachers as they analysed the characteristics of the level descriptions and planned appropriate learning activities. Schools were invited to submit portfolios of pupils' work to WJEC external moderators in 2010/11 and 2011/2012 in order to moderate teachers' understanding of the level descriptions. This process was completed during the Summer of 2012 and departments have received reports outlining whether the moderators agreed with the teachers' understanding of the level characteristics. These reports offered further guidance to teachers if the moderators had failed to agree with the departments' interpretation.

13 (out of 14) secondary schools in Gwynedd submitted portfolios to the attention of the WJEC external moderators. The Chief Moderator's reports note that the majority of departments have a good understanding of the characteristics of Level 5. Around half of the departments showed a good understanding of the characteristics of Level 5. Half of the departments were able to display a good understanding of Levels 6 and 7.

A training event for the religious education teachers of North Wales, 'Understanding Standards at KS3' was organised at Llandudno Junction in January 2013. The three RE advisers in the North Wales region worked together in order to organise the training course sponsored by WASACRE, the six local authorities of North Wales and the secondary schools. The providers reinforced previous guidance and reference was made to 'Religious Education: Guidance for KS2 and KS3' (Welsh Government, 2011) as teachers planned and assessed rich learning activities in religious education. Representatives from 11 RE departments in Gwynedd attended the training course.

The Welsh Government does not collect KS3 Religious Education assessments therefore we are unable to compare the performance of secondary departments in Gwynedd with other local authorities across Wales. CYNNAL collects KS3 data on behalf of Anglesey (A), Gwynedd (G) and Conwy (C)*.

Year	Schools	Pupils		%L5+		%L6+		%L7+	
		Gwynedd	M+G+C	Gwynedd	M+G+C	Gwynedd	M+G+C	Gwynedd	M+G+C
2013	5 schools	380		93.4		69.5		24.5	
2012	5(5)+13(14)+4(7)	1260	2,568	87.2		51.4		16.4	
2011	3(5)+11(14)+2(7)	1145	1,767	82.0		40.9		12.6	

KS3 data has been received from five schools: Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle, Ysgol y Moelwyn, Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Ysgol Glan y Môr.

CYNNAL has not received KS3 data from: Ysgol Botwnnog, Ysgol Brynrefail, Ysgol Eifionydd, Ysgol y Gader, Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn, Ysgol y Berwyn, Ysgol Ardudwy, Ysgol Friars, Ysgol Tryfan.

What are SACRE's recommendations to Gwynedd Council?

2.5.2 GCSE Results: Religious Studies (full course)

The data represents the candidates who were 15 years old or older in January 2011.

	No. of schools	No. of candidates			% Excellence			% L2			% L1			Average subject score		
		B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ
2013	12	126	262	388	38.9	46.6	44.1	79.4	84.7	83.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	45	47	46
2012	10	113	190	303	37.2	44.7	41.9	76.1	83.2	80.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	44	46	45
2011	12	128	266	394	24.2	41.7	36.0	62.5	75.9	71.6	99.2	96.2	97.2	40	43	42
2010		42	97	139	14.3	36.1	29.5	61.9	90.7	82.0	92.9	99.0	97.1	36	42	40

The average score achieved by the pupils in all subjects is not available to the humanities adviser. Consequently it is inappropriate to compare performances of schools. However, RE departments will be able to access data to show how their candidates performed in other subjects and are advised to use this information in their self-evaluation.

Very good results

- 388 candidates from 12 schools in Gwynedd. The average subject score is 46. There are no candidates from Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn. Candidates from Ysgol Ardudwy travel to Ysgol Eifionydd in order to follow a GCSE course.
- Class sizes vary from 11 pupils in one school to 167 in another.
- 44.1% of the candidates have gained A*/A (Excellence). The percentage has shown a steady increase since 2010.
- 83% of candidates have gained Level 2 (A*- C) and all candidates have attained a Level 1 qualification in RS. These results suggest that standards have improved during the last three years.
- More girls than boys choose Religious Studies as a GCSE option, (B 126 : G 262).
- The results achieved by the girls are better than those achieved by the boys. The average score achieved by the girls is 47 in comparison with the average score of 45 achieved by the boys. +8 represents a GCSE grade. However this year's L2 results suggest that the gap between boys and girls has closed for the fourth consecutive year. The gap between the percentage of boys and girls attaining A*/A is 7.7% which is similar to the gap observed in 2012 (7.5%).
- The percentage of boys and girls who have achieved a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification in Religious Studies has increased steadily in 2011.

GCSE Results: Religious Studies (short course)

This data represents the pupils who were 15 years old or older on January 2010. These pupils have chosen to claim their points on the completion of their GCSE short course instead of continuing their studies for a second year. Very few schools offer the GCSE Religious Studies short course as an accreditation for the statutory KS4 Religious Education course.

	No. of schools	No. of candidates			% Excellence			% L2			% L1			Average subject score		
		B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ	B	G	Σ
2013	9	145	253	398	0.0	0.0	0.0	71.0	79.1	76.1	97.2	97.6	97.5	21	23	22
2012	3	17	38	55	0.0	0.0	0.0	58.8	84.2	76.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	18	22	20
2011	6	121	134	255	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.3	67.2	57.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	18	21	19
2010		223	323	546	0.9	3.7	2.6	62.8	82.4	74.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	22	25	23

What are SACRE's recommendations to Gwynedd Council?

- Ensure that religious education teachers are able to access the subject guidance of the WJEC examination board.
- Invite the RE Department from Ysgol Friars to share good practice at a meeting of Gwynedd SACRE. A significant number of boys (78) and girls (88) sit the GCSE examination and the gap between the L2 achievement of boys and girls is not as significant as other departments, (5.2%).
- Facilitate professional learning communities for religious education teachers in order to respond to the ESTYN Inspection Report and to explore key questions such as:
 - *Why do pupils choose the subject? Why don't pupils choose the subject? Why do more girls than boys choose to study the subject?*
 - *What can departments learn from other departments about the best way of supporting boys as they prepare for external examinations. What other strategies should be considered in order to close the gap between the results achieved by boys and girls?*
 - *How can departments challenge pupils to produce work of the highest standard?*