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(Re) Creating Jesus

REview Wales

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I am pleased to be able to present the first issue of the bilingual on-line journal, *REview Wales*. *REview Wales* is published twice a year, and offers RE professionals quality, peer-reviewed articles to support religious education in the areas of research, curriculum development, religion and culture, and resources. The journal is complemented by the on-line newsletter, *RE-Bulletin* which focuses on short news items and is published more frequently.

In this issue of *REview Wales*, the 'Research' section covers two recent research projects involving faith schools, and reflects on some of the results. In *Church in Wales Schools: a perspective from within the Church*, David Lankshear and Mandy Robbins explore attitudes of Church in Wales Clergy to Church in Wales schools. These results form part of the detailed Church in Wales Education Review in which David has played a leading role. In *The new Christian schools and their unbelieving pupils*, Sylvia Baker also presents some of the results of a much larger project, focusing on the new independent Christian schools in the UK (Wales has at least five such schools, possibly more). In her article, Sylvia looks at the effects of these Christian schools on the views and values of their pupils who claim to have no religious beliefs.

In the 'Curriculum Development' section, Gavin Craigen takes a hard look at Post-16 religious education in his article, *Up against a hard place? Provision for RE in Post-16 settings*. In his article, Gavin places Post-16 religious education in context and raises some challenging questions. In *Supporting religious education at St Deiniol's Library*, Tania ap Siôn introduces the work of the St Mary's Centre, which was established at St Deiniol's Library last year. The introduction covers the new Centre's interests in research, curriculum development, and providing accredited courses for the continuing professional development of teachers and clergy.

The 'Religion and Culture' section features Aled Jones-Williams who shares his motivations for writing the critically-acclaimed (and for some, controversial) play, *Iesu!* (Jesus!) which Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru took on tour throughout Wales last autumn.

'A year in the life of ...' focuses in detail on specific jobs relevant to religious education. In this issue, we read about the work of a chief examiner from the perspective of Chris Owens, chief examiner for Specification B Religious Studies and principal examiner for Islam in Specification A Religious Studies with the WJEC.

The final 'Resources' section is divided into two parts: *In Focus* and *Reviews*. *In Focus* provides space for authors of religious education materials to discuss one of their recently published resources. In this issue, Gill Vaisey writes about her new resource, *The Baby Birds* which is the third title in her series of Muslim stories for Foundation Phase pupils. *Reviews*, as the title suggests, introduces and appraises a range of resources for religious education and collective worship.

Tania ap Siôn
Editor

Church in Wales schools: a perspective from within the Church

David W Lankshear and Mandy Robbins

Introduction

In 2006 the Church in Wales launched a review of its work in education. The focus of the review was the work of the 168 Church in Wales primary schools and the four Church in Wales secondary schools. From the outset there was a determination to ensure that the report of the review group should be informed by data, and to this end a number of enquiries were undertaken. Among the issues explored were two of the themes on which *The Way Ahead* (Dearing, 2001) had focussed: the Christian identity of Church in Wales schools and the Christian vocation to teach.

This article will present the results of the two surveys designed to address the question 'How are Church in Wales primary schools perceived by Church in Wales parishes?'

Methodology

In the first survey, every clergy person in the Church in Wales with a responsibility for a benefice was sent a questionnaire which focussed on their commitment to schools in their parish and their views about education including Church in Wales schools. In this enquiry 275 returns were received, representing 60% of the total number of incumbents.

In the second survey, the secretary of every Parochial Church Council in Wales was sent a questionnaire which focussed on the parish's contacts with schools in the parish and the number of children, young people, and adults who formed part of the active Christian community in their parish. In this enquiry 538 returns were received, representing 51% of the number of parishes in the Church in Wales.

The results of these enquiries were reported to the review group and have been used to inform the consultation document. The period of consultation closed on 30 September 2008.

Results

Clergy time commitment

Some Church in Wales benefices are quite large and may contain more than one type of school. Of the incumbents who responded to the questionnaire 39% reported that they had a Church in Wales primary school in their benefice and 36% reported that they were a member of the school's governing body (some incumbents delegate the role of 'ex-officio' governor to a colleague which may explain the difference between these two figures). Of those who were members of the governing body over one third acted as 'Chair of the Governors' which is a demanding and time-consuming role.

The proportion of incumbents reporting that they lead worship in Church in Wales schools was identical to those who reported that they were on the governing body (36%). This is to be expected as it is likely that the priest who is a member of the governing body will be asked to lead worship. Over a third of those leading worship reported that this included presiding at school Eucharists. This reflects the different practices in schools in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist with primary school children.

Although membership of a school's governing body and leading school worship were two of the most common formal roles fulfilled by incumbents in relation to Church in Wales schools, the reported proportion of the working week that incumbents commit to Church in Wales schools indicate that other tasks are also undertaken. It is likely that these additional tasks include a contribution to religious education and the pastoral care of pupils, parents, and staff. In terms of time allocation, 43% of incumbents committed a proportion of every working week to Church in Wales primary schools, with half of these reporting a commitment of at least half a day each week. It is also worth noting that 77% of incumbents also reported a commitment of time each week to working with community schools, with over a quarter committing more than half a day each week.

Clergy perception of Church in Wales schools

The incumbents responded to a range of statements about Church in Wales schools on a 5-point 'Likert' scale. In this article the five points have been collapsed into three points: 'agree', 'uncertain' and 'disagree'. One group of statements sought the incumbents' views about the place of Church in Wales schools in the broader education system. **Table 1** shows their responses to statements in this area.

These statements reflect some of the current controversial debates within the education system in England and Wales. Broadly the responses to these statements could be taken to suggest that incumbents are generally supportive of the continuing place of Church in Wales schools within the education system, although there is clearly also support for the concept of interdenominational schools.

A second group of statements sought the incumbents' views about the task of the church schools in relationship to the mission of the church. **Table 2** shows their responses to statements in this area.

The main assumption being tested in the first four of these questions is whether the incumbents see the Church in Wales schools as a means of teaching children the Christian faith with a view to conversion. While the opinions of incumbents appear to be divided on the most direct of these questions, the majority clearly believe that it is educationally sound for these schools to teach the faith and to encourage the acceptance and practice of it. There is a suggestion that they are rather less convinced that the schools do this effectively.

A third group of statements sought the incumbents' views about school worship. **Table 3** shows the incumbents' responses to statements in this area. Although only one third of those incumbents with church schools in their benefice are presiding at Eucharists, results show that there is clearly a significant number who support school

Eucharists in primary schools but have not yet persuaded their own Church in Wales schools to adopt this practice.

Parochial involvement

Clergy in the Church in Wales may have responsibility for more than one parish; some have several. For this reason it was decided to seek the views of an active lay member of each parish concerning the parish's links with schools and their engagement with children, young people, and adults. The secretaries of Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) convene, organise the business of and record the decisions of the body responsible for running the church in the immediate locality and therefore are an obvious group to provide an informed lay view of the work of the church at local level.

Of the PCC secretaries who responded to the questionnaire, 23% reported that there was a Church in Wales primary school in their parish, and almost the same proportion reported that their parish links with Church in Wales primary schools were close or very close. In addition, 40% reported close links between the parish and teachers and 37% reported close links between the parish and governors. Members of both these groups (teachers and governors) as well as support workers in schools were represented on their own PCCs. Also, 37% reported that relationships with local schools had been on the agenda of their church councils within the last year and 7% reported that the church had a budget heading to support work with local schools; 5% reported that local schools used the church building and 47% reported that joint activities between local schools and the church existed in their parish.

Parochial contact with children and young people

PCC secretaries were asked about their parishes' work with children, young people, and adults in order to explore the relationship between their parishes' contact with schools and their work in a parish setting.

In total 284 of the PCC secretaries reported that their parishes had close or very close links with a least one type of primary school (53% of the sample) and 254 reported that no close or no very close links existed with any type of primary school (47% of the sample). These two subsets are referred to as the 'contact parishes' and the 'non-contact parishes'.

Table 4 shows the proportion of contact parishes and non-contact parishes having a range of activities that involve children or young people organised within the church. In each case the difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

This table suggests that there was a significantly higher range of activities offered to children and young people in churches in the contact parishes than in the non-contact parishes. It should be noted, however, that there was no single activity offered by more than 35% of the contact parishes, and some non-contact parishes clearly offered none of these activities.

Table 5 shows the number of confirmation candidates in different age bands and by gender in relation to contact parishes and non-contact parishes. This table summarises much more detailed information gathered within the questionnaire. The levels of statistical significance relate to the more detailed information.

In **Table 5** the differences are of the highest statistical significance among the adult groups while also being significant in each of the other categories. This table also suggests that those churches reporting good contact with at least one primary school were more likely to have higher numbers of confirmation candidates than those churches that did not have such a contact level. It does not demonstrate, however, that the one causes the other.

Respondents were asked to estimate the normal numbers of adults, secondary school age, primary school age, and pre-school age children attending worship on a Sunday. **Table 6** presents the figures for each age group separately.

The differences for each of these groups are statistically significant at the .001 level. It is clear that the churches that reported close contacts with a primary school were also reporting greater numbers within all age groups at worship than those parishes that reported no close contacts with a primary school. What has been demonstrated earlier in this article is that if a parish contains a Church in Wales primary school, there is almost always close contact with it; where there is a community primary school in the parish such close contact is not always the case.

Discussion

These results suggest that many incumbents are deeply committed to and involved in work with local primary schools in general and almost always this is the case when the local primary school is identified with the Church in Wales. It further suggests that PCC secretaries are aware of these links and have an understanding of their significance for the parish. However, the links with the parish are not the sole responsibility of the incumbent. It is clear that in many parishes teachers, support staff, and governors of schools are active in the parish. This is demonstrated by their reported presence on PCCs.

While incumbents are clearly supportive of the continuing presence of Church in Wales schools within the education system, there is evidence that they would prefer these schools to reflect their Anglican identity not only through their ethos and the worship that they provide in general, but also specifically through the provision of school Eucharists. This is an issue about the Church in Wales schools' pattern of worship which will need to be addressed by the current review.

The research also points to the possible benefit to parishes of being actively involved in work with local primary schools, in that those parishes that have good links seem to have more children, young people, and adults involved in their worship than those parishes that do not have such links. It can

be argued that the link is not causal and that it may be that these are simply active and lively parishes, which attract people to them and also have good links with their local community. However, the findings of the current research are generally in line with those of earlier research in England reported by Francis and Lankshear (Francis and Lankshear 1990, 1991) and as such are suggestive of a more direct relationship. The weakness of this research lies in the difficulty of linking the responses of the incumbents and the PCC secretaries.

Conclusion

The data suggest that the incumbents in the Church in Wales are largely supportive of Church in Wales primary schools and work with them in a way that demonstrates significant commitment. The data also suggest that the benefits of such commitment can be seen in parish life in that PCC secretaries are reporting a pattern of increased involvement of children, young people, and adults in the life of the parish where there are good links with the local primary schools.

Those undertaking the review and considering the future policy of the Church in Wales towards its schools may take encouragement from these results when making recommendations for the future development of Church in Wales schools.

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Table 1
Incumbents' views on the place of Church in Wales schools within the education system

	Yes %	? %	No %
C in W schools should be given over to the state	4	12	85
The C in W has too many schools	5	28	67
The C in W should develop more secondary schools	67	26	8
I would support the development of interdenominational church schools	68	21	11
C in W schools are racially divisive	1	13	86
C in W schools are socially divisive	3	14	83
The C in W school system has outlived its usefulness	3	17	80
C in W schools give unfair advantages to Christian teachers in the promotion stakes	1	38	62
Only committed church people should be appointed to teach in C in W schools	41	23	36

Table 2
Incumbents' views on the relationship between Church in Wales schools and the church

	Yes %	? %	No %
It is educationally unsound for C in W schools to try to convert children to the Christian faith	37	24	39
It is not the task of the C in W schools to initiate children into religious faith	29	20	51
It is educationally unsound for C in W schools to try to teach the Christian faith	2	12	87
C in W schools should encourage pupil to accept and practice the Christian faith	76	18	6
C in W schools often alienate their pupils from the church	6	37	57
C in W schools often help to turn pupils away from Christianity	5	33	63
The C in W school in my parish does not have enough contact with the clergy	3	58	39

Table 3
Incumbents' views on school worship in Church in Wales schools

	Yes %	? %	No %
C in W schools should teach their pupils about the communion service	83	13	4
C in W schools should have communion celebrated in school	53	33	14
The idea of 'worshipping God' in school worship should be abandoned	3	7	89

Table 4
Activities for children in churches having different levels of contact with schools

Type of activity	contact %	non-contact %	p<
Children in church choir	16	4	.001
After school club	20	6	.001
Holiday club	13	4	.001
Parent and toddler club	18	7	.001
Uniformed groups	32	13	.001

Table 5
Confirmation candidates for churches having different levels of contact with primary schools

Type of candidates by age and sex	N candidates in contact parishes			N candidates in non-contact parishes			p<
	0 %	1-5 %	6 %	+0 %	1-5 %	6+ %	
Primary boys	86	12	3	96	4	0	.05
Primary girls	80	17	3	94	6	1	.01
Secondary boys	75	25	1	88	11	1	.01
Secondary girls	73	24	4	87	12	1	.01
Men	73	26	1	90	10	0	.001
Women	67	32	2	85	15	1	.001

Table 6
Worship attendance by age group

	contact %	non-contact %
Pre-school		
None	13	31
1-10	78	67
11-19	6	1
20 or more	3	1
Primary school		
None	6	27
1-10	69	62
11-19	16	8
20 or more	10	2
Secondary school		
none	7	32
1-10	81	67
11 or more	12	2
Adults		
50 or fewer	62	90
51-100	28	7
101 or more	10	3

The new Christian schools and their unbelieving pupils

Sylvia Baker

For the past thirty to forty years a network of about 100 small independent Christian schools has been operating in the United Kingdom. The story of these schools has recently been told at a popular level (Baker and Freeman, 2005) and there has also already been some assessment of them made at an academic level (Francis, 2005; Francis and Robbins, 2005; ap Siôn, Francis and Baker, 2007). Now a much bigger research project is under way, one which is intended to examine the schools in much more detail. One strand of this project is taking a comprehensive look at the beliefs, opinions, views and values of the current population of teenage pupils in the schools. What are their religious beliefs? What are their moral values? How do they view the unusual education that they are receiving?

The second strand of the project is following up these teenagers at the age of eighteen. By this stage, most of them will have spent two years in either further education or a work setting. How easy has it been for them to make this transition? How have their beliefs and values changed since they left their Christian school? The third strand is investigating those former pupils from the new Christian schools who are now in the twenty to forty years of age bracket. What kind of citizens have these young adults become? Are they making a worthwhile contribution to society? Did their unusual education prove to be an asset or a hindrance to them? Have they retained their Christian beliefs? How do they view their schooling from the vantage point of adulthood?

This article will bring you some initial results from the first strand of the project. It will begin by describing in more detail the background to the schools and what they are aiming to achieve. It will then focus on a small but significant subgroup, the 11% of teenage pupils in the schools who claim to have no religious belief.

The new Christian schools: what are they?

The new Christian schools have been established by parent groups or churches as a response to the growing secularisation of education within the United Kingdom. In general, they do not serve wealthy communities and their parent bodies do not usually have a commitment to private education *per se*. The parents often feel that they have been forced to seek independent schooling in order that their children can be educated in accordance with the family's Christian beliefs. Parents often make considerable sacrifices to achieve this and the schools on the surface may appear to be humble institutions, lacking many of the facilities provided by state schools

The *raison d'être* for the existence of the schools is to provide a profoundly Christian education within a consciously Christian context. The schools aim that every part of school life, including the curriculum, should be 'Christ-centred' and all teachers must be practising Christians. The schools are very small, with numbers ranging from a handful to over 200 pupils. About 50% of the schools are linked to a network, the Christian Schools Trust (CST), and it is these schools which are the focus of the current research project. About 50% of CST schools are primary schools, with the remainder covering the full age range from four to sixteen years.

The schools often have a reputation within their localities for high standards, coupled with a caring ethos. For these reasons, non-Christian families and families with children with special needs often seek them out. About 25% of the families involved with the schools describe themselves as non-Christian.

The current pupils

In the summer of 2006, 695 teenage pupils currently receiving their education in new Christian schools completed an extensive questionnaire. Of these, 679 came from 22 of the 23 schools possessing secondary

departments linked to the Christian Schools Trust. The remaining 16 responses came from similar schools not linked to the Trust. All the schools surveyed were located in England. The pupils were evenly divided between Years 9, 10 and 11 and were aged between 13 and 16 years. 250 of them were male and 216 female. The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate their religion; 602 (87%) of the teenagers described themselves as Christians while 78 (11%) indicated that they had no religion. It is this 11% who will now be examined in detail.

The pupils with 'no religion'

What is it like to be an unbelieving pupil in such a strongly religious setting as the new Christian schools? Do such pupils perceive the context to be hostile to them? Are they unhappy? How do their views and values compare with those of their peers within the school? The extensive questionnaire used in the survey has provided some initial answers to these questions and the answers should be of value to both parents and teachers. The survey results indicate that the unbelieving children do indeed hold very different beliefs from the majority of their peers. In a very real sense, they represent a subculture within the school.

Approximately one third of the unbelieving pupils indicated that they were from Christian homes; for the Christian pupils that figure was 85%. Despite claiming that they had no religion, about 25% of the pupils concerned indicated that they believed in God, in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. When it came to sexual morality, just 17% believed that it was wrong to have sex outside marriage compared with 70% of the Christians and 45% believed that abortion is wrong compared with 72% of the Christians. The two groups also saw the school experience differently. 64% of the unbelievers claimed that they found school to be boring, compared with 39% of the Christians. While the majority of each group was able to say that they were happy at school, there was still a significant difference between them,

with 62% of the unbelievers claiming to enjoy school compared with 78% of the Christians. The unbelievers were much less likely to consider that their teachers were doing a good job (47%) than were the Christians (74%) or to believe that their school was preparing them for life (47% compared with 78%).

In their wider social context, the two groups of young people appear to lead rather different lives. Just 28% of the unbelievers have a group of friends most of whom think religion is important compared with 56% of the Christians. The unbelieving teenagers are much more likely to have friends who smoke, drink and take drugs than are the Christians. The Christian teenagers were nearly twice as likely as those with no religion to believe that the police were doing a good job (62% compared with 36%). There was an interesting response to the item *I find it helpful to talk about my problems with close friends*. 70% of the Christian pupils were able to respond positively to this, compared with 56% of the teenagers with no religion.

The differences: their implications

How should parents and teachers respond to the findings that have just been described? Should the parents consider withdrawing their children and sending them to a secular school? Should the teachers begin to feel that here is a subsection of their pupils who they are in some sense failing? Some further data exists which will help to answer these questions. Francis and Robbins (2005) investigated the beliefs and values of young people in England and Wales growing up in urban areas, a project referred to as Urban Hope. The survey itself was carried out in the 1990s and involved 23,418 teenagers from Years 9 and 10, aged between 13 and 15. The pupils were from a wide range of different kinds of schools. About 10% were receiving their education in independent schools. The great majority (about 85%) of those from State schools were in non-denominational schools. Francis and Robbins used a questionnaire for their

Data from the new Christian schools compared with that from the Urban Hope project

	New Christian Schools		Urban Hope Data	
	None	Christian	None	Christian
	%	%	%	%
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	63	86	50	60
I find life really worth living	51	78	68	71
I feel I am not worth much as a person	26	13	14	13
I often feel depressed	42	23	51	54
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	30	17	28	26
I am happy in my school	62	78	67	74
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	41	39	33	37

survey that was very similar to that used with the new Christian schools. While this does allow some comparisons to be made, the interpretation of the data needs to be approached with caution. At least ten years separated the two surveys and the age range that it covered was not exactly the same in each case. The Urban Hope project involved schools from both England and Wales; the new Christian school project was confined to England and involved pupils who lived in rural as well as urban areas. These differences mean that while general comparisons between the two sets of data can be made, they should not be pressed too far.

The table compares the responses of the two different sets of young people to some key items that were included in both questionnaires. The items refer to the general well-being of the young people.

The data show that a good majority of the young people in the new Christian schools feel that life has a sense of purpose but that significantly fewer of the unbelieving pupils can say this, 63% compared with 86% of the Christians. At first sight, this seems to suggest that to be an unbeliever in a strongly religious school leads, in some cases, to a more hopeless view of life. However, comparison with the Urban Hope data suggests a different story. With this survey, where the majority of the respondents were in secular non-denominational schools, only 50% of the pupils with no religion could say

that for them life had a sense of purpose compared with 63% in the new Christian schools. Similarly, the response to the item *I often feel depressed* was answered in the affirmative by 42% of the unbelieving pupils in the new Christian schools compared with 23% of those who were Christian. The fear that education in a Christian school might lead to depression for an unbeliever is offset by the Urban Hope data which show 51% of those with no religion in the wider survey often felt depressed.

Comparison of the responses from the two different sets of data to the items *I am happy in my school* and *I have sometimes considered taking my own life* are so similar that the differences between them are probably not significant for the unbelieving teenagers. The same probably applies to the item *I often long for someone to turn to for advice*, although in this case there is the possibility that a small negative difference exists for unbelievers in the new Christian schools. However, the remaining two items do show differences which might indicate areas where the new Christian schools are having a negative effect on some of their unbelieving pupils. 51% of those unbelievers indicate that they find life really worth living. While this is still a majority, it is a considerably smaller majority than the 68% of unbelievers in the wider school population who can say the same thing. Similarly, 26% of the unbelieving pupils in the new Christian schools indicate that they

feel they are not worth much as a person compared with 14% of their counterparts in the wider population, a large difference.

Conclusion

The new Christian schools in England contain a subgroup of pupils who claim to have no religion. This subgroup has a very different values profile when compared with their Christian peers within the schools and follows a significantly different lifestyle. Data suggest that members of the subgroup are less likely to be depressed and more likely to have a sense of purpose in life than their counterparts in the wider school population. They are also no more likely to have considered taking their own lives and just as likely to be happy at school as those attending other types of schools. The new Christian schools do need to consider how to counter the feeling, expressed by nearly half of the subgroup, that life is not really worth living, a result very significantly different from that given by their Christian pupils. They also need to consider how to help the 26% of unbelieving pupils who feel that they are not worth much as people since this figure is notably higher than the 14% of those in urban schools who say the same thing. However, it must be borne in mind in making these comparisons that the two school populations cannot be directly compared, so the data indicate possible trends only. What is needed now is further research that will enable direct comparisons to be made between the pupils in the new Christian schools and their more exact counterparts in the current wider school population.



Pupils at Trinity Christian School, Stalybridge

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Sylvia Baker's current research is concerned with an empirical study of the outcomes of Christian schooling in the UK, and she co-founded one of the new Christian schools in 1978.

Up against a hard place? Provision for RE in Post-16 settings

Gavin Craigen

How the matter of religious education in Post-16 settings is responded to by different senior teachers or curriculum managers and the issues that seem to influence the decisions around whether a school meets the statutory requirements or not, have always intrigued me.

It is often the case with anything that is a statutory requirement that some people feel it is sufficient simply to refer to the legal aspect, and consider that no further debate is necessary. Sadly, this kind of approach does not necessarily lead to the best kind of provision – as demonstrated also in the matter of statutory RE for key stage 4 pupils. In addition, mere re-iteration of the statutory requirements often leads to perfunctory provision and a less than satisfying or stimulating experience for pupils.

The hard place of benefits

The issue that needs dealing with is that of the benefits of a programme of RE, appropriately fashioned and delivered for students in Post-16 education. If providers and curriculum managers engage with this sincerely and professionally, then I believe that their response to ensuring that their school meets the statutory requirements will not be just a ‘ticking the right box’ or an ‘avoidance of a maximum of a Grade 3 for Key Question 3’ syndrome. Rather, it would be a desire to provide their pupils with something that is their right as well as something that makes a positive and dynamic contribution to personal development, academic achievement, and social and global awareness.

Where there is a quality programme of religious education for Post-16 pupils, that is adequately resourced and staffed as well as supported by curriculum management, the benefits are measurable. There will be benefits in terms of future employment of the pupils – awareness, knowledge, and skills that will assist them in the work place significantly in the multi-cultural and diverse society of the UK today. Pupils will gain enormously in terms of social development – thinking, understanding, and

attitudes that will enable them to be committed and positive members of their communities. Engagement with issues and values and evaluating the beliefs, teachings, and practices that motivate and frame the lives of people today, cannot but give students a grounding and scaffolding for personal development on the basis of which the aims and purposes of education expounded in the Education Acts¹ could really be achieved. In addition, given the emphasis on education for global citizenship in education today, there is no doubt in my mind that a good general RE programme in the sixth form will enhance and build up what has been offered in this aspect in previous key stages.

It seems axiomatic that we all desire a society in which our young people develop as effective learners who:

- analyse their values and gain transferable skills;
- grow up to be citizens who understand themselves and understand those around them;
- respect and value diversity to the extent that they value and want to work for community cohesion;
- are responsible members of society who can recognise the issues facing communities, and realise something of the ethical and moral aspects involved;
- are maturing people who are able to ask meaningful questions about what is important and valuable in life, to challenge common perceptions, and to consider the contribution of the spiritual.

However, these self-evident aspirations do not often lead to the conclusion by senior staff that a good RE programme perfectly matches all that is wanted. Each of the aspects above – the things we all desire our pupils to become or be – are the very essence of RE thinking, understanding, and skills. As students engage with fundamental questions, explore religious beliefs, teachings and practices, and express personal responses, they will develop the

critical thinking skills and understanding that is a relevant and far-reaching preparation for adult life.

The hard place of outcomes

The response of pupils to good RE seems clear – they enjoy it because it allows them (even encourages them) to talk, to think, to argue, to form opinions, and to evaluate and to reflect on a wide range of issues, while taking account of different perspectives and viewpoints. Many pupils recognise and value the fact that their RE programme prepares them for adult life: it gives them ways to consider and to respond to fundamental issues and important choices that we all face. RE also helps them to deal with the harsher realities of life – illness, death and loss, suffering, unemployment – and enables them to make moral judgements as well as challenging the focus of materialism and appraising the role of spirituality. They know the significance all this has in terms of their own personal development, well-being, and identity.

There has been much talk in England, and also in Wales, about the importance of community cohesion and the development of ways to value diversity and to encourage respect for differences. Yet few seem to have considered that these very issues are the substance of good RE teaching and learning. The one subject that has most to give to these important areas is the one that is least sought and supported for its contribution to these issues. It is clear to anyone who knows what RE is about today, that RE is a subject with tremendous potential in equipping young people and growing adults to deal with issues that arise in the workplaces and communities or neighbourhoods in which they will be involved.

In addition, good RE programmes help tackle issues of extremism and religious discrimination, positively promote respect for self and others, contribute to an understanding of history and culture, develop personal well-being and happiness, and contribute to the safeguarding of ethical standards in business and public life.

However, these well-known and recognised outcomes do not seem to lead to the conclusion that RE provision is worthwhile and desirable.

The hard place of attitudes

Failure to have access to or experience of such a valuable facet of education, at any level, is a real loss – not just of a statutory entitlement, but of a major ingredient that will lead to a fulfilled life. However, failure to have the opportunity for a robust and challenging RE experience in Post-16 environs is an even greater loss because the very issues and aspects of the subject are things that learners of this age are particularly able and equipped to experience.

Too many senior staff and managers seem to consider RE in terms of what they experienced twenty or thirty years ago; RE has changed much from those times, and is now a more important subject than many wish to admit.

It is a subject that is significant in current world affairs, and a subject that links with many other areas of study – English literature, art, music, history, politics, social and cultural issues, global citizenship, economics, and much more besides.

It is not possible to live untouched by issues to do with faith and belief, and it is impossible to begin to understand humanity without understanding something of the subject. Matters of religion and belief affect all our lives – in the past, in the present, and no doubt in the future too.

Yet, despite these issues, the attitudes that prevail in many secondary schools seem to come from a markedly different viewpoint.

The hard place of timetabling

One of the biggest problems for schools is the matter of timetabling and staffing the subject in Post-16 settings. The costs of providing a suitable programme of RE for all pupils in the sixth form – as is required in law – is significant. Finding the appropriate amount of time on timetables that are

already heavy laden is also a major headache for school curriculum managers. These difficulties are acknowledged – but how real are they?

The Wales Association of SACREs took up the issue of costing with ELWa (the division of the Assembly Government responsible at the time) and it confirmed that costing for such statutory requirements was built into the formula for funding. Yet there are schools that still would argue that they are unable to fund this important and statutory aspect of education.

The vast majority of faith schools seem to manage to fit RE into their timetables as well as all the national curriculum requirements. If they can do it, why can't other schools? One needs to ask whether the issue is really a matter of cost and space on the timetable, or whether it is a disposition towards the subject.

In addition, the models for delivery are so many and varied. The DCELLS Guidance document for 14 – 19 RE identifies some 14 different possibilities – combinations of which could easily enable schools to meet not only the statutory requirement, but also the provision of RE that delivers all the outcomes and benefits discussed above:

- examinations courses (GCSE short course, further short course, or full course);
- timetabled lessons for all sixth formers;
- cross-curricular weeks;
- cross-curriculum enrichment programmes;
- wider curriculum enrichment programmes;
- learning-core timetabled tutorial sessions;
- annual (termly) day conferences;
- day conferences to support GCSE or A-level work;
- Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification;
- Key Skills provision;
- ASDAN awards;
- retreats and conferences;
- charity work and visits;

- using BBC e-clips for RE.

Such a diverse and wide ranging list of models means that every school could find a pattern that suits their situation and timetable – if there is a will to do so.

The resources for delivery of many of these models are available. Schools and teachers are not left, as was often the case in the past, to devise their own resources. True, there is a cost in acquiring these resources, but schools can build this into their budgets as they would do with any other initiative or statutory requirement. Recently, the Wales Association of SACREs provided a free copy of the RE Today *Spiritual Engagement* folder, and translated all of it into Welsh – including the Power Points and stimulus materials on the CD – so that every school with Post-16 students and every FE college in Wales had a copy for their use.

The hard place of conclusions

So, who is really up against the hard place?

Headteachers:

- because of the costs of providing an adequate programme?
- because of the difficulties of timetabling?
- because of their attitude or thinking about RE?

Curriculum managers:

- because of the pressures on time and staffing?
- because of their attitude or thinking about RE?

Pupils:

- because they are denied something they need and should have?

It is time to take stock and decide whether we really do acknowledge the purposes, benefits, and outcomes of RE. We need to recognise the potential benefits for our students, for our society, and for future generations as well as to boldly plan, resource, and implement good RE for all students in Post-16 education.

If we do not, the hard place of the future will judge us and find us wanting.



Jane Hutt AM (centre) displays the new DCELLS guidance document for delivering RE to 14 to 19-year-olds at the Post-16 Conference held in Wales in October 2008.

¹ The whole curriculum in schools should: ‘(a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at schools and of society; (b) prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.’

Gavin Craigen is Religious Education Inspector/Adviser and Officer to SACREs for the LEAs of Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire. He has recently been appointed by WJEC as Chief Moderator for Religious Education in relation to KS3 teacher assessment.

Supporting religious education at St Deiniol's Library

Tania ap Siôn

It has been almost a year since the St Mary's Centre for religious education was established at St Deiniol's Library through a dynamic partnership between the Library and the St Mary's College Trust. Tania ap Siôn writes about some of the Centre's achievements in its first ten months.

The mission of the St Mary's Centre is to promote excellence in religious education in Wales and to represent Wales on both the UK and international RE scenes. This is being achieved through three main interests: research, curriculum development, and accredited continuing professional development qualifications for practitioners in schools and churches.

Developing new resources

Curriculum development in religious education has focused on two major projects at the St Mary's Centre this year: *World Faiths Today Series* for key stage 2 pupils and two new story book series for Foundation Phase pupils: *Stories to Remember* and *Places of Worship*.

World Faiths Today Series

Leslie J Francis and Tania ap Siôn have now completed the final part of the bilingual, key stage 2 *World Faiths Today Series*, a DCELLS sponsored series, which they have both managed and authored. The series comprises seven story books and a teachers' handbook, which introduce pupils to how beliefs affect practices in seven different faith traditions in Wales and the wider world. The story books were published last year.

In February 2009 the English version of the comprehensive teachers' handbook, which supports the story books, was published. The Welsh version will be available this summer. The Handbook includes information for teachers, activities, and photocopiable worksheets to support the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*.

The series is available from the Welsh Books Council (<http://www.gwales.com>).

Stories to Remember and Places of Worship

The St Mary's Centre has been working in association with Religious and Moral Education Press (RMEP) on the Welsh editions of two new story book series for Foundation Phase pupils. Each series contains six titles in both Big Book format and pupils' book format. The books introduce aspects of the six major world faiths represented in the UK, and provide a useful resource to support Foundation Phase RE in Wales (specifically, 5 to 7-year-olds).

In the *Stories to Remember* series two titles in the six-book series are now available in both English and Welsh:

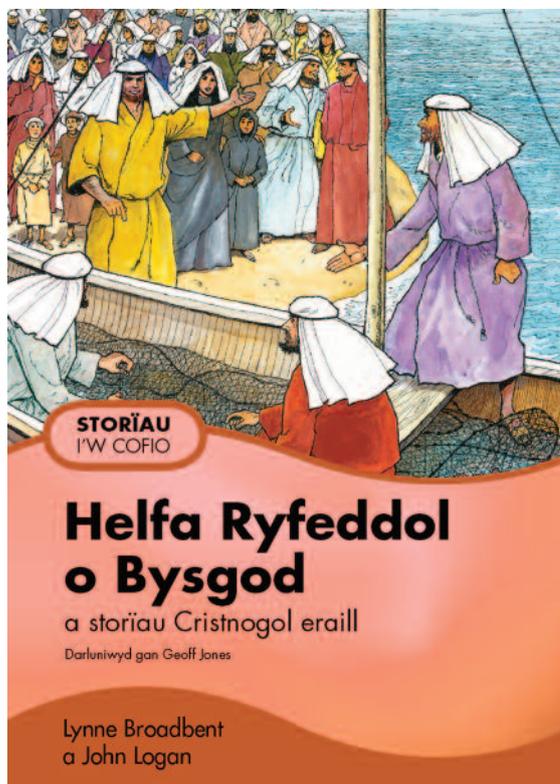
- *The Amazing Catch of Fish* presents three stories from the Bible which reflect key themes in Christianity: 'The Amazing Catch of Fish'; 'The Little Man in the Tree'; and 'The Birthday of the Church';
- *The Boy with Stars in His Mouth* presents three stories from the Hindu tradition which reflect key themes in the Hindu faith: 'The Boy with Stars in His Mouth'; 'The Elephant-headed God'; and 'The Monkey General'.

In the *Places of Worship* series two titles in the six-book series are now available in both English and Welsh:

- *At Home and the Church* explores Christian worship in an Anglican church and a Baptist church through the eyes of two Christian children, Tom and Megan;
- *At home and the Synagogue* explores Jewish worship in an Orthodox synagogue and a Reform synagogue through the eyes of two Jewish children, Rachel and David.

The other titles in both series will be available later in the year.

Further information is available on the St Mary's Centre website under 'curriculum development': www.st-marys-centre.org and also the RMEP website: www.rmeop.co.uk



Collective worship online

Working in collaboration with SPCK, the St Mary's Centre manages the Welsh version of SPCK's assemblies' website, providing free assemblies for primary and secondary schools which are updated monthly (<http://www.assemblies.org.uk/cymru/>)

The popularity of the Welsh assemblies' website is reflected in the latest statistics which show that there were around 26,000 hits per month during 2008 on this section of the website alone.

Bilingual journal for RE

REview Wales is the new online journal for RE, appearing twice yearly in May and November. *REview Wales* publishes more substantial articles of relevance to religious education professionals focusing on research, curriculum development, religion and culture, and resources. Accompanying the journal is a more regular online newsletter, *RE Bulletin*, which focuses on delivering shorter items of news as they happen.

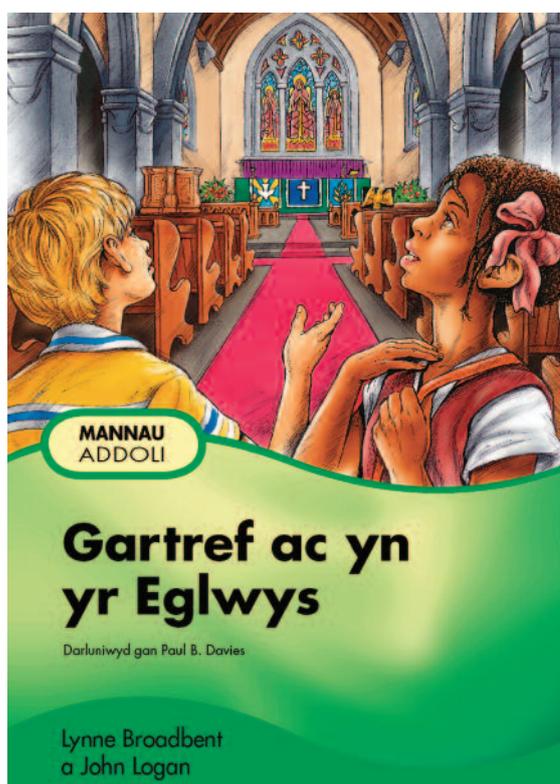
The journal, *REview Wales*, and the newsletter, *RE Bulletin*, are free and it is possible to 'sign up' on the St Mary's Centre website to receive e-mails with a link to the publications as soon as they appear (www.st-marys-centre.co.uk or cymraeg.st-marys-centre.co.uk).

Research in religious education

At the St Mary's Centre the principle that quality research informs and shapes good practice, both in schools and in chapels and churches, is central. Both core members of staff and research fellows at the St Mary's Centre are active researchers in the field of practical theology, producing regular, peer-reviewed publications and papers at conferences.

The St Mary's Centre also coordinates the Wales arm of UK and international research projects, for example, *the Young People's Values survey* and the *Faith and Humour survey*.

Two titles from the new *Stories to Remember* series and the *Places of Worship* series.



Young People's Values survey

This is a replication and development of an original survey of almost 34,000 pupils in years 9 and 10 across England and Wales, conducted in the late 1990s. The most recent book to emerge from that survey is *Urban Hope and Spiritual Health* by Leslie J Francis and Mandy Robbins. The second survey of young people's values will update information and map trends.

That survey has generated a great deal of valuable information useful to schools, to parents, to policy-makers and to all concerned with the welfare of young people.

Already a number of schools in Wales have participated in the survey and others are still being invited to do so.

Faith and Humour survey

The St Mary's Centre is collaborating with Professor Willibald Ruch from Switzerland in an international study designed to explore the relationship between religion and humour among post-16 year olds.

Again, already a number of schools and sixth-form colleges in Wales have participated in the survey and others are still being invited to do so.

Continuing Professional Development

The St Mary's Centre is coordinating the MA programmes for the CPD of teachers, Christian educators, and clergy in the areas of rural theology, religious education, church school studies, and implicit religion in partnership with York St John University, the validating body.

The courses are delivered through distance learning, with short residential sessions provided at St Deiniol's Library, where students have opportunities to share their work and receive supportive feedback from their tutors and peers.

The MAs offer two distinctive features: course tutors are internationally recognised in their fields and the students' assessed work is individually tailored to their interests and working contexts.

The MAs can, of course, be exited at Certificate and Diploma-level.

Network for Psychological Type and Christian Faith

The Network for Psychological Type and Christian Faith is based at the St Mary's Centre. The Network brings together MBTI practitioners and researchers who are interested in exploring the relationship between psychological type and Christian faith. This reflects the Centre's interest in establishing creative and informed dialogue between research and practice.

Concluding observations

The St Mary's Centre was established through partnership between St Deiniol's Library and the St Mary's College Trust, enabling both trusts to fulfil their objectives or 'missions' more fully as a result of that partnership. As the examples of the work of the St Mary's Centre also demonstrates, an outward perspective which works collaboratively and in partnership with others maximises what can be achieved.

Overall, the St Mary's Centre has achieved a great deal in its first ten months, and now that the first building blocks are in place, the Centre is set to grow.

To find out more about the St Mary's Centre visit www.st-marys-centre.co.uk (English) or cymraeg.st-marys-centre.co.uk (Welsh).

Tania ap Siôn is Executive Director of the St Mary's Centre for Religious Education at St Deiniol's Library, Senior Research Fellow in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, University of Warwick, and Visiting Senior Fellow in Religious Education at Glyndŵr University.



PROFILE: ST DEINIOL'S LIBRARY

St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, is the national memorial to William Gladstone, four times Prime Minister of Great Britain, who founded the Library in 1894 for the 'pursuit of Divine learning'. It is the only Prime Ministerial Library, and holds a unique position as a residential library with excellent conference and restaurant facilities.

Although a committed Anglican, Gladstone wanted the Library to be non-exclusive and accessible 'for all Christian denominations; not only for Christian denominations but for all religions, not only for all religions but for people of any ideology'.

Throughout 2009 St Deiniol's Library is celebrating the bicentenary of Gladstone's birth through a special programme of events and launching the Gladstone 200 Campaign.

The Gladstone 200 campaign has an overall objective of raising £1.25 million for:

- building a new Reading Room focusing on Islamic Studies;
- building a Resources Centre for Religious Education and Research;
- and enhancing and supplementing the Library's existing Islamic collection and religious education material.

St Deiniol's Library is internationally recognised as a residential centre of excellence for the promotion of research and scholarship in theological and religious education.

To find out more about St Deiniol's Library visit <http://www.st-deiniols.com>

(Re) Creating Jesus

Aled Jones-Williams

When Aled Jones-Williams' critically acclaimed play *Iesu! (Jesus!)* toured throughout Wales last year, it caused a storm of controversy among certain religious communities. Now, the dramatist, poet, and priest reflects on his motivations for writing the play.

Writing *Iesu! (Jesus!)* was a very difficult process. The play could easily have fallen between two stools: between the people who knew very well – or thought that they knew very well – who Jesus was, and the people who have by now drifted so far from religion that they dismiss out of hand any play with a religious theme.

I decided to use the words of the Gospels but positioned them differently in the story – was this not precisely what the original Evangelists had done anyway, making use of a parable or a saying in order to paint their own specific picture of Jesus? Therefore, Matthew's portrayal was totally different from that of Luke even though they had both used the same materials. To many people, the Gospels are biographies – that is how it was! But each presents a different portrait *and* a different theology – all four Evangelists had their own points of view and communities in mind as they wrote their Gospels. Therefore, their writing had a political aim.

But there was another consideration – I wanted to write a play – and the essence of a play is to speak, to utter, to pronounce – I wanted to *hear* Jesus. And the original Jesus was someone to be heard and not read. His words were not static words, written on parchment or in books, but sounds full of pain and passion. From Jesus, the church has created Scripture – something authoritative, authorised (mainly by men!) and something totally political to foster and promote power. There are many motives for creating Scripture, some good and some rather dubious. Therefore, I wanted to de-religionize and de-scripturize Jesus.

Iesu! was a theatrical experiment to find the Jesus with whom I have engaged throughout my life. And this is the way I think, by means of theatre – putting someone

on an empty stage and leaving them to find their own way towards something. In a very short time Jesus had turned into a woman – that was not a gimmick – this is how it happened – suddenly and unintentionally. Perhaps the decision was made by my own 'psyche' because the creative process was facilitated by changing Jesus from male to female. This shift from man to woman was a psychological decision for my own benefit. Later, I also realised that this (of course) would undermine the big religious spectre in the Western world – patriarchal oppression.

Other things appeared, mainly reading between and beneath the text. When Jesus asks, 'Who do people say that I am?' – What kind of question is that? It is a question about identity. A question that she, *Iesu*, repeatedly asked, perhaps? The great human question: who am I? What about Jesus' sexuality? The event concerning the woman who poured perfume over his feet and dried them with her hair was a totally sensual act. At that very moment what was happening to Jesus as a sexual being?

Then, there is Judas. I have always felt that Judas has had a raw deal. In the original text, there is something about Judas and money – when he is mentioned, he is frequently connected with money. For example, Judas was the keeper of the purse. Therefore, I wanted to read beneath the text in order to create an alternative story for Judas.

Also, I soon realized that I was a part of something bigger – that is, the path taken by the theatrical world to look at religion post 9/11, plays such as *Paul*, Howard Brenton; *Jesus: The Guantanamo Years*, Abie Philbin Bowman; *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, Stephen Adly Guirgis; *On Religion*, Mick Gordon and A C Grayling – all of them attempting to look at religion following that enormous event in September in New York. And *Iesu!* flowed into that particular stream of thoughts.

In many ways, therefore, this is a play about ideas. On the whole, Wales is a nation which has by now ceased to think. The question I had in mind was this – if you are a religious person, why is this so? If you are



Top: A moving moment between Jesus (Fflur Medi Owen) and Judas (Gareth ap Watkins).

Bottom: Fflur Medi Owen as Jesus in *Iesu!*

a non-believer, why is this so? And to consider how people are still creating Jesus to meet their own particular needs to satisfy their greed for power or to ease some of their inner-psychological process, and then insist that *this* is the true Jesus – people like Pilate, contemporary fundamentalists/evangelicals, and Aled Jones-Williams as well! In one way Jesus is a *tabula rasa* on whom we can write anything we wish: hang-ups, perverted politics, the human heart's deepest yearnings, all my dreams.

Copies of the play (in Welsh) are available from Gwasg Gomer, £5.99, www.gomer.co.uk

Aled Jones-Williams is a Church in Wales priest, Welsh poet and dramatist. He won the Bardic Crown for his poem 'Awelon' at the National Eisteddfod at St Davids in 2002.



A Chief Examiner

Christopher Owens

Christopher Owens reflects on a typical year as chief examiner for Specification B Religious Studies and principal examiner for Islam in Specification A Religious Studies with the WJEC.

I am subject leader of a RS department in one of the largest comprehensive schools in Wales. We enter students for the whole range of RS examinations on offer: Entry Level; GCSE full and short course; and AS and A-level. I am also a chief examiner for the WJEC. I am the person who writes the paper for GCSE Religious Studies specification B option A – Religion and Life.

Many RS colleagues associate the term ‘chief examiner’ with ‘the paper’, but there is a great deal more to the role than writing a new examination paper each year. Writing GCSE examinations and marking papers has been one of the most rewarding parts of my professional career. I believe that it is a privilege to be involved in this process, although it is not without its particular challenges. I hope that this article offers readers an insight into a year in the life of a chief examiner.

For most working in schools, the school year begins in earnest in September. For me, this is when my year as a chief examiner is coming to an end. This is when the brown packages of requests for remarks from the summer examination start dropping through the letter box; I finish my last job of the year as an examiner to remark the scripts which have been queried by centres or parents. I never know how many scripts will need to be remarked, and the process lasts from early September to mid October. Requests for remarks are the exception rather than the norm. My role is to check the original marking of an examiner and ensure that the mark scheme has been consistently applied. The paper may already have been marked twice: by the original examiner in red and by the team leader, who oversees the marker, in green. I over-mark in purple. I may need to mark the paper down, rather than up, because the original marker may have been too generous.

The autumn term is also the term for the

WJEC organised INSET, where formal feedback is given to colleagues about the summer examination. There are marking exercises to prepare in order for teachers to have a go at marking. It is also an opportunity to provide teachers with some ideas for teaching the specification. INSET presentation is usually shared among a team of senior examiners – as the specification has grown so too has the number of INSETs. Materials will have been collated in the summer term prior to the INSET, usually after the summer marking period and into the summer holidays. A lot of time is invested in the preparation of high quality materials, which nowadays are distributed on CD.

After the autumn half term, it is time to sit down and write the examination paper. This is a solitary experience where you work very much on your own, drawing on your own professional experience to write a challenging and interesting paper. At the same time I produce a mark scheme that includes many of the possible answers. I am always conscious of what I call the ‘Christmas deadline’; the new paper has to be completed before the end of December, about eighteen months in advance of the real examination. In each examination paper I may use as many as thirty images, and I am constantly looking for fresh images. The mark scheme needs to cover the six principal religious traditions in Britain and runs into about thirty pages.

After this, the revision process for the examination paper begins almost immediately. The draft paper is sent to the Reviser whose role is to check the paper for accuracy and accessibility. When the revised copy arrives on my desk, I have the chance to make amendments before the ‘QPEC’ – the Question Paper Evaluation Committee – where the paper is reviewed by a number of senior examiners and serving teachers. A full day is invested in this process to get the paper right for the thousands of candidates who will be sitting the paper, and changes are made to my original submission. The guiding principle behind this is to make a

paper that is fair to candidates.

Towards the end of the spring term, I receive a printed 'mock up' of the paper and mark scheme. These need to be checked in minute detail for errors by myself, a small team of senior examiners, and the Subject Officer. I finally sign to say that they are correct for printing. I do not want to make a mistake because the print run will run into thousands of papers.

Normally the examination paper process is finished just before I need to turn my attention to the marking process for the current year. Early spring is when the teams of markers are organised for the summer examination. I check my notes on markers from the previous year and offer suggestions about where personnel are placed. Each team of markers is led by an experienced team leader. Each team leader is led by a senior team leader, who in turn is led by the principal or chief examiner. It is rather like a large pyramid with the chief examiner at the top. Everyone in the pyramid is a marker who completes marking during the summer examination. Everyone who marks has their marking checked during the process and even I am not exempt from this process. The actual marking process itself lasts three weeks. For all markers it is a busy time. On the day of the examination in May I am always anxious that the paper goes well; if there is a mistake on the paper, you can be sure that someone will ring the Subject Officer to tell him. And he will ring me!

At the beginning of the marking process I lead one intensive day of training for team and senior team leaders at a pre-conference meeting. All of us work through three selected papers which will be used in the examiners' conference. The papers are chosen to raise issues and give assistant markers guidance on the standards usually anticipated at grades A, C, and E. The evening before this, the principal examiner and I will have worked through selections of papers chosen from at least four centres to select the most appropriate scripts. During the pre-conference day we work very much as a team; the mark scheme is checked again

by the team leaders and we make any amendments that need to be included. As a team we agree on the standard, and team leaders finish an exhausting day ready for the examination conference on the following day.

At the assistant markers' conference the team leaders do the hard work of leading their teams through the three papers marked on the previous day. Following the opening address from the Subject Officer, I give a short presentation about how the paper has worked with candidates and introduce the procedure for the marking process. During the day I am available to support team leaders and answer any queries. In the evening I usually start my own personal marking – like everyone else I mark ten scripts provisionally which are sent to the Principal Examiner for that paper for checking. When I receive the green light to carry on marking, I am then able to plough on with my own allocation.

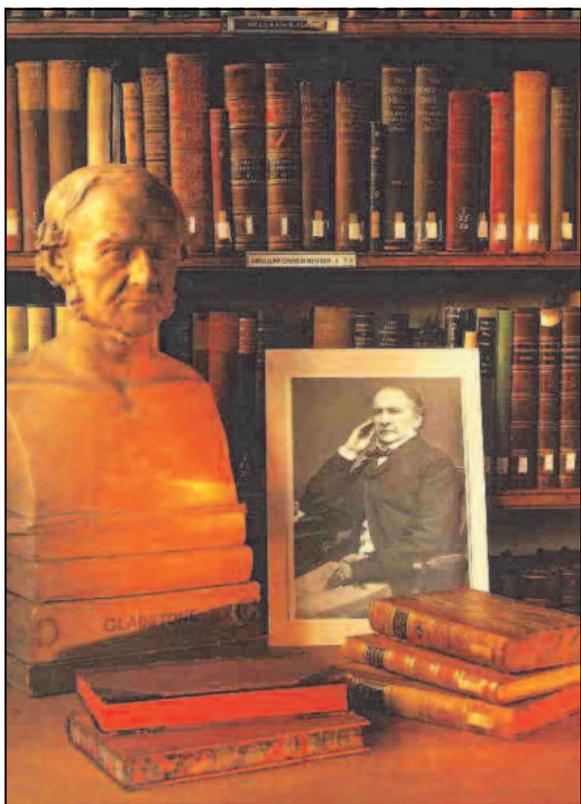
During these three weeks I also need to be available to answer any telephone queries about marking. More recently e-mail has become a very important part of this process. The phone and e-mail are usually 'red hot' during these three weeks when team leaders or markers contact me requiring a judgement on a particular question; a candidate somewhere will have written an obscure answer to a simple question or responded to a question in a way that no one will have anticipated. The earliest call I have received for advice was at 6.15 am and the latest at 11.00 pm! Each marker finds their own daily routine that works for them. At the same time I lead a small team of markers myself and I need to over-mark their first sample of ten scripts and a further selection of twenty-five scripts. Amazingly, at the end of the three-week process, almost all markers meet their deadlines. They have marked over three hundred scripts each and completed their 'L' forms for these papers.

Although I finish my personal marking in early June, my job is not yet over. At the end of the summer term, usually in the first week of the summer holidays, I attend an 'award'

meeting where the standards of the examination are checked and where a team of senior examiners and teacher representatives check the standard of the examination answers with archive scripts from the previous year. This full and intensive day maintains the standards of the GCSE process. Prior to this meeting, I will have written a report on the paper, which

will be published and sent to all centres in the autumn. The aim of the report is to offer guidance to centres on how candidates have performed in the summer examination. It is the very last part of my job as the chief examiner before the end of the academic year! Now where is that purple pen for September ...?

St Deiniol's Library - a health farm for the mind



Founded by William Ewart Gladstone in 1894, St Deiniol's Library is recognised as the most important independent research library in Wales.

Many of our scholars come to the Library to find space and inspiration for their own writing. Over the past 10 years, some 400 books have been written or researched wholly or in part at St Deiniol's Library - a striking testimony to the creative and stimulating environment which scholars enjoy.

St Deiniol's Library holds an internationally important collection numbering over 250,000 printed items. The online catalogue can be searched remotely via our website.

The Library boasts outstanding resources in our core subject areas of Theology and Victorian Studies which are kept up to date with the latest publications. Most of the holdings are on open access and readers are able to browse among extensive collections which also include Religious Education, Church History, Biblical Studies, Philosophy, Political and Social History, Literature, Art and Cultural History.

St Deiniol's is open to all those who wish to undertake research within the collections, subject to a satisfactory testimonial.

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In Focus

Gill Vaisey

Resources

Author Gill Vaisey writes about her new resource for the Foundation Phase, *The Baby Birds*, and explains how good RE is fun.

RE should be fun. This is the philosophy behind the resources I have produced for Books@Press – resources which are specifically designed for use with children in the early years and Foundation Phase of education. I began to develop my first set of resources in 2001, which was published in 2003. The resources were produced to support best practice in working with early years children as observed in 2001 – this same philosophy is now at the heart of the Foundation Phase curriculum today.

Indoor and outdoor environments that are fun, exciting, stimulating and safe promote children's development and natural curiosity to explore and learn through first-hand experiences. The Foundation Phase environment should promote discovery and independence and a greater emphasis on using the outdoor environment as a resource for children's learning. (*Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year olds in Wales*, p.4).

With the above principles in mind, I have just developed my latest resource to support religious education and understanding of cultural diversity in the Foundation Phase. *The Baby Birds* builds on the success of previous titles *The Tiny Ants* and *Seven New Kittens*.

These three traditional Muslim stories allow children to consider their own attitudes towards living creatures as well as the beliefs of others regarding the creation of and responsibility for all living things. These are ideas with which even the youngest children in our nursery settings can grapple, if explored through stimulating age-appropriate material. What strengthens the appropriateness of these resources is the fact that children can have exciting first-hand experiences of the aspects of the natural world that the books explore. Linking the content and messages of the stories with the real world, brings the stories alive and illustrates the relevance of the stories to the everyday lives of the children.

This provides opportunity to make the

most of the outdoor learning environment. Armed with digital cameras, magnifying glasses, factual reference books, and wellington boots, children delight in finding the creatures identified in the story of *The Tiny Ants* and/or spotting the variety of bird life as prompted by the story of *The Baby Birds*. A trip to the local woods, park, garden or the setting's/school's own forest school area is a real adventure. All the skills of recognising, investigating, identifying, observing, comparing, and describing can be deployed. Searching out the creatures' natural habitats and observing features of their behaviour equip the children to make the most of their own small world play area back in the usual indoor or outdoor classroom. The development of mathematical skills can be promoted through opportunities for sorting, matching, sequencing and comparing objects and events, collecting data, and interpreting information presented in simple graphs or diagrams. Following a mini-beast hunt, the colourful pictogram from *The Tiny Ants* pack provides the children with the opportunity to gleefully record their findings of up to six mini-beasts. In addition, the RSPB website (www.rspb.org/ourwork/teaching) offers downloadable ideas and support sheets for observing and recording birds and their activities in the school grounds or local area.

It is essential that children have access to a variety of media to express themselves and ample opportunities to apply their imagination in a purposeful way. (*Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year olds in Wales*, p.5)

The Baby Birds book is printed in English and is accompanied by a CD ROM which contains a visual and audio version of the book that can be used on the whiteboard or personal computer. In addition, two Welsh versions of the story have been provided on the CD ROM to support both Welsh medium schools and English medium schools with Welsh Language Development. The simplest version of the story has been written by two Welsh language trainers and advisors and includes basic phrases and lots of repetition



In the classroom: Foundation Phase pupils explore birds with the puppets accompanying *The Baby Birds* story book.

that children can enjoy. This version is also ideal to prompt movement and role play because actions such as hopping, flying, diving, and soaring feature strongly in the book. Phrases such as ‘Dw i’n hoffi sboncian’ (I like hopping), ‘Dw i’n hoffi hedfan’ (I like flying) and ‘a fi hefyd’ (and me too) are bound to spring children into action! A set of mother bird hand puppet and five baby bird finger puppets are a real hit with children and support them in their play. The nest (that doubles up as a bag in which to store the birds) also allows the children to develop numeracy skills through play as the birds take turns to fly in and out of the nest. It is amazing what children will use to create their own nest for the baby birds – twigs, feathers, and leaves may seem the obvious choice, but even construction blocks were placed with care to accommodate the little family of five!

Children learn through first-hand experiential activities with the serious business of ‘play’ providing the vehicle. Through their play, children practise and consolidate their learning, play with ideas, experiment, take risks, solve problems, and make decisions individually, in small and in large groups. First-hand experiences allow children to develop an understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. (*Framework for Children’s Learning for 3 to 7-year olds in Wales*, p.4).

This cross-curricular approach supports the philosophy of the Foundation Phase curriculum and interweaves religious education with the other areas of learning.

Seven Areas of Learning have been identified to describe an appropriate curriculum for 3 to 7-year-olds that supports the development of children and their skills. They must complement each other and work together to provide a cross-curricular approach to form a practical relevant curriculum.

They should not be approached in isolation.

Outdoors: inspired by *The Baby Birds*, pupils hop and fly.



Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills across the Areas of Learning, to provide a suitable and integrated approach for young children's learning. (*Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year olds in Wales*, p.14).

While requirements for providing religious education will be found in the locally Agreed Syllabus, all the syllabi across Wales reflect the Foundation Phase curriculum with a skills and range approach. Therefore, the RE Agreed Syllabus sits alongside the Foundation Phase documentation, and in planning for themes or topics practitioners will give consideration to the seven areas of learning plus RE. As with the other Areas of Learning, RE should not be approached in isolation. Many popular topics such as People Who Help Us, Festivals and Celebrations, and Our World will have obvious links with aspects of RE. Other topics such as Animals and Water will require more careful consideration to find appropriate links. Some topics however, such as Pirates and Dinosaurs might be better left without an RE element!

As with other areas of learning, it is not necessary to include RE in every topic. A broad range of topics inspired by children's own interests should ensure that over a period of time all Areas of Learning and RE are adequately explored.

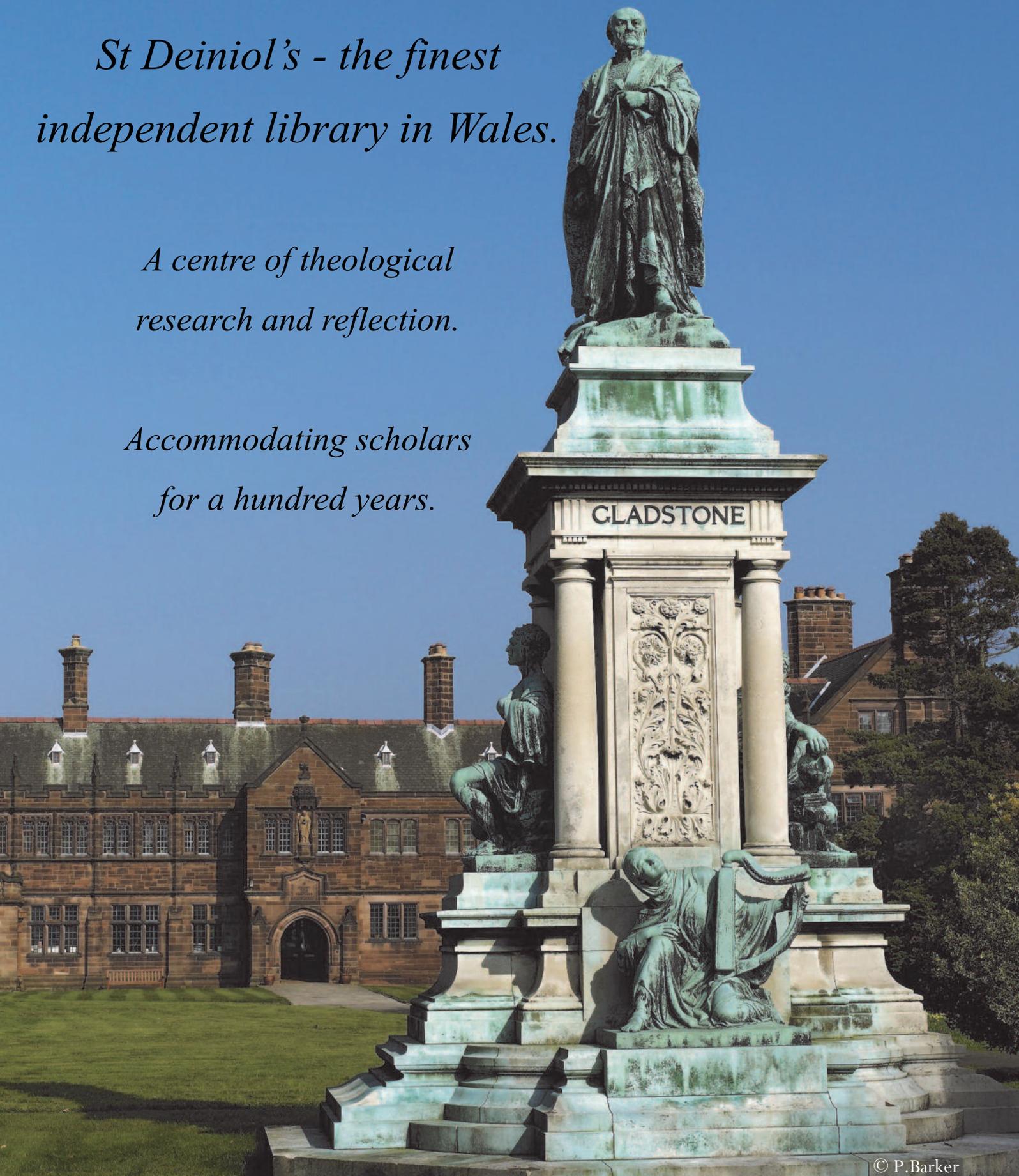
The best RE resources will support children in developing their understanding of religious beliefs and the way that they affect the lives of believers. They will provide opportunity for children to develop and practise a range of skills. They will raise questions and encourage children to think about their own attitudes and values and those of other people. They should provide plenty of opportunity for stimulating and challenging cross-curricular activities. Most important of all – RE should be FUN!

Gill Vaisey is a Religious Education Consultant specialising in primary and early phases of education, and she is Chair of the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education.

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Reviews

Tania ap Siôn & A Suter

All the resources reviewed in this section are part of the RE and collective worship collection at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden.

Visit <http://www.st-deiniols.com> for more information about the Library.

Collective worship

Gordon Lamont (eds) (2008), *Primary School Assemblies for a Just World*, SPCK and Christian Aid, 978-0-281-06014-6, 168pp, b/w illustrated, p/b, £10.99.

This book provides a rich variety of material that explores and explains global development issues for primary school children. There are thirty assemblies clearly marked for KS1, KS2, and whole school with a further 4/5 possible classroom activities with links to PSE Citizenship and RE. The assemblies are grouped into five sections:

- Development
- Food, water, and shelter for all
- Children
- War and Peace
- Environmental Issues.

They conclude with a reflection and prayer to help children relate development issues to their own lives. This is an ideal, user-friendly book for all those who lead primary school assemblies.

Ann Suter

Margaret Cooling (2008), *More Assemblies for Primary Schools* series, RMEP, each title 96pp, b/w illustrated, p/b. Titles in the series include:

***More Assemblies for Primary Schools: autumn term*, 978-1-85175-356-7, £9.99**

***More Assemblies for Primary Schools: spring term*, 978-1-85175-357-4, £9.99**

***More Assemblies for Primary Schools: summer term*, 978-1-85175-358-1, £9.99**

***More Assemblies for Primary Schools Pack*, 978-1-85175-361-1, £24.97**

This is a very comprehensive set of assembly books for busy teachers, and offers a wide programme for engaging and reflective

collective worship. The series draws on insights from the breadth of the Christian tradition and Christian cultures from around the world.

Each book contains 70 'broadly Christian' assemblies for use in primary schools as well as a very informative introduction and guidance on taking collective worship.

Organised into three seasons, each book contains a variety of themes covering charities, saints, values, festivals, biography, science, and Bible stories. Members of staff should be able to find something here which they are comfortable delivering. Most of the assemblies have been written in series of five, and there is an alternative themes index to help create a whole school programme.

Ann Suter

Primary RE

Margaret Cooling (2008), *Bible Storybags*, BRF, 978-84101-532-3, 128pp, b/w illustrated, p/b, £12.99. The resource is also available as a pdf download.

Bible Storybags draws on insights from many areas, including thinking skills, cognitive learning, Christian spirituality, the creative arts, spiritual and faith development. Based on tried and tested storytelling methods such as story sacks and Godly Play, the material is styled with separate scripts for KS1 and KS2 and is ideal for RE or assemblies and collective worship. Each unit emphasises the 'learning from religion' aspect of RE. The stories cover the key events in Jesus' life, the Parables, and people. Clear instructions are included for making the story bags and in addition, interactive web-based visuals of the story bags can be accessed via the *Barnabas* website, www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/storybags

Ann Suter

Tania ap Siôn, Leslie J Francis, Diane Drayson (2009), *World Faiths Today Series: teachers' handbook*, Welsh National Centre for Religious Education, 978-1-85357-192-3, 200pp, b/w illustrated, A4 spiral bound,

£18.00.

This teacher's handbook is part of the World Faiths Today Series, which includes seven story books for KS2 pupils covering the Anglican Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Both pupils and teachers are invited to join Rees and Sara as they celebrate the diversity of religious practice in Wales. The handbook provides all teachers with a valuable and flexible teaching aid containing:

- detailed background information about the seven religious traditions relating to the five themes (places of worship, festival, authority, caring for others and the world, and food)

- a summary of the story

- clear aims and learning outcomes

- classroom activities to further develop pupil's understanding

- keywords

- worksheets for individual or class whiteboard use.

Developed to support the *National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 3 to 19-year olds* (and sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government), the handbook contains many practical suggestions and contributes to learner's spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development from a religious education perspective. In relation to the three core skills defined by the Exemplar Framework, the series uses the skill of 'exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)' as a starting point for 'engaging with fundamental questions' and 'expressing personal responses'. Available in English and Welsh, the handbook will be a significant resource for all teachers. The handbook and story books are available from the Welsh Books Council's online catalogue: <http://www.gwales.com/>

Ann Suter

Gavin Craigen and Fiona Craigen (2008), *Important Religious Questions Series*, UWIC Press. Comprises six-book pupils'

pack (£24.99) or individual titles (£4.99) and teacher's file (£19.99).

***Whose world is it?* [pupils' book] 978-1-905617-36-4, 26pp, colour illustrated, p/b.**

***What makes us human?* [pupils' book] 978-1-905617-38-8, 38pp, colour illustrated, p/b.**

***Can we find peace?* [pupils' book] 978-1-905617-40-1, 30pp, colour illustrated, p/b.**

***Can authority bring freedom?* [pupils' book] 978-1-905617-42-5, 42pp, colour illustrated, p/b.**

***What is real?* [pupils' book] 978-1-905617-44-9, 22pp, colour illustrated, p/b.**

***Do we have to die?* [pupils' book] 978-1-905617-46-3, 44pp, colour illustrated, p/b.**

***Teacher's resource pack*, 978-1-90-5617-48-7, 120pp, b/w illustrated, A4 file.**

The *Important Religious Questions Series* is another high-quality resource commissioned and sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government for key stage 2 religious education to support the *National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 3 to 19-year olds*. As the titles of the six pupils' books suggest, in relation to the three core skills defined by the Exemplar Framework, the series uses the skill of 'engaging with fundamental questions' as a starting point for 'exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)' and 'expressing personal responses'.

The pupils' books are colourful and user-friendly with a good balance between the information and activities; sufficient information is always provided for pupils to engage meaningfully, at their own level, with the tasks. Throughout the series a variety of tasks are employed including those involved with writing, thinking or reflection, drama, partner or group work, art and craft, and reading and research. The accompanying teacher's resource pack contains photocopiable activity sheets and information for the teacher (the latter includes the relationship between the Exemplar Framework's core skills and the series).

Tania ap Siôn

Lynne Broadbent and John Logan (2009), *Stories to Remember Series*, RMEP. Each title in the series is 16pp, colour illustrated. Big Book editions (£15.99 each) and pupil book editions (£2.99 each). Published titles in the series include:

An Amazing Catch of Fish and other Christian stories

The Boy with Stars in His Mouth and other Hindu stories

The Potter's Donkey and other Sikh stories

Father of Many and other Jewish stories

Welsh versions of these titles are available and have been produced in association with the St Mary's Centre at St Deiniol's Library.

The *Stories to Remember Series* introduces 5 to 7-year-olds to a selection of great stories from six faith traditions: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Buddhism. Each title includes three well-chosen individual stories which have been sensitively retold to meet the needs of young children.

Three titles in the series are already published: *An Amazing Catch of Fish and other Christian stories* (stories included are the amazing catch of fish, the little man in the tree, and the birthday of the church); *The Boy with Stars in His Mouth and other Hindu stories* (stories included are the boy with stars in his mouth, the elephant-headed god, and the monkey general); *The Potter's Donkey and other Sikh stories* (stories included are the potter's donkey, Bhai Lalo, the Guru's true friend, and Bhai Ganaya, the water carrier), and a fourth title, *Father of Many and other Jewish stories* (stories included relate to Abraham, Moses, and Ruth) will be published in October.

Each title is available in Big Book format (for class/shared reading) and pupil book format (for individual work). For more information about the series and how to purchase the resources, visit: <http://www.st-marys-centre.co.uk/curriculum-development/stories-to-remember.htm> (for English titles) and <http://cymraeg.st-marys-centre.co.uk/datblygur-cwricwlwm/storiau->

[iw-cofio.htm](http://www.st-marys-centre.co.uk/curriculum-development/places-of-worship.htm) (for Welsh titles).

Tania ap Siôn

Lynne Broadbent and John Logan (2009), *Places for Worship Series*, RMEP. Each title in the series is 16pp, colour illustrated. Big Book editions (£15.99 each) and pupil book editions (£2.99 each). Published titles in the series include:

At Home and the Church

At Home and the Synagogue

Welsh versions of these titles are available and have been produced in association with the St Mary's Centre at St Deiniol's Library.

The *Places for Worship Series* introduces 5 to 7-year-olds to the special places and special practices of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Buddhism through the eyes of children from the respective faith traditions. So far two titles are available in the series: *At Home and the Church* (which explores an Anglican church and a Baptist church with Tom and Megan) and *At Home and the Synagogue* (which explores an Orthodox Synagogue and a Reform Synagogue with David and Rachel). These well-written and engaging stories provide an effective way into learning about the beliefs and practices of faith traditions for older Foundation Phase pupils. The Christianity and Judaism titles also offer pupils the opportunity to achieve higher levels of attainment in RE where appreciation of diversity within a religion is a factor. The Big Book includes further information for the teacher and activities for the pupils.

Each title is available in Big Book format (for class/shared reading) and pupil book format (for individual work). For more information about the series and how to purchase the resources, visit: <http://www.st-marys-centre.co.uk/curriculum-development/places-of-worship.htm> (for English titles) and <http://cymraeg.st-marys-centre.co.uk/datblygur-cwricwlwm/mannau-addoli.htm> (for Welsh titles).

Tania ap Siôn

***Science and Religion in Schools: a guide to the issues for primary schools* (2006), Trafford Publishing, 141209194-2, 49pp, b/w illustrated, p/b, CD ROM included, £12.50. To view sample materials and to order, visit: <http://www.srsp.net>**

This title was created to encourage open-minded discussion of issues concerning science and religion in order to ensure that 7 to 11-year-olds in schools 'have a balanced view of the issues which arise when the claims of science are compared with those of the major world religions'.

This valuable resource contains nine units exploring meaning, values, knowledge, truth, and the nature of human relationships with the world, each supported by background notes and overview, lesson plans, key questions, teacher resource materials, differentiated student support materials, and AV materials. Space is also given to providing teachers with a clear pedagogical foundation for the use of the materials.

Tania ap Siôn

KS 2 and 3

***Christianity Unpacked*, RE:Quest, CD ROM. Free resource.**

Welsh version: *Dadbacio Cristnogaeth*, RE:Quest.

Christianity Unpacked is an enormous free resource for key stage 2 pupils and lower key stage 3 pupils. Available in English and Welsh, it includes three CD ROMS covering 34 topics distributed among three main areas: what's it like to be a Christian?; celebrations; and key teachings of Jesus. In addition, a free website provides many more resources, www.request.org.uk

Efforts have been made to include a good Welsh dimension (in addition to the Welsh language aspect) in the resource, for example, the inclusion of a virtual tour of St David's Cathedral among the virtual tours of cathedrals in the UK section. Also, the great number and diversity of denominations illustrated in the resource is a particularly

valuable feature for older pupils.

All schools in Wales should have received free copies of the CD ROMS, distributed through their local SACRE.

Tania ap Siôn

***Jewish Way of Life* (2008), the Pears Foundation, CD ROM, Free resource.**

The *Jewish Way of Life* is another recently-released free quality resource for schools, designed and developed by learnthings Africa on behalf of the Pears Foundation in association with World ORT and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

The fully interactive CD ROM covers all the essential areas of Judaism included in key stage 2 and key stage 3 RE. The contents of the CD ROM have been clearly structured which makes navigation very simple. The resource is divided into three main sections entitled 'Who we are', 'What we do', and 'What we believe'. 'Who we are' explores the Jewish story in Britain and Jews across the world. It also introduces the two young Jewish characters, David and Sarah, who provide much of the narration throughout the resource and are always a familiar point of contact for pupils (this is one of the factors which makes the resource work so successfully). 'What we do' focuses on time (the life cycle, festivals, and Shabbat), space (home and synagogue), and food. 'What we believe' listens to different Jews talk about their beliefs and explores prayer, actions and values, the Torah, and Israel.

The material is presented in a number of different ways to engage pupils and activities are also included.

Many SACREs across Wales have been active in distributing the CD ROM to their schools. If you have not received a free copy, and wish to have one, visit the website www.jwol.org.uk for more information.

Tania ap Siôn

***Bible Timeline* [Light curriculum resources], Scripture Union (2008, first published 2004), 978-1-84427-362-1, colour illustrated poster and teacher's notes, £11.99.**

Welsh version: *Llinell Amser y Beibl*, 978-1-84427-363-8, £11.99.

Although the *Bible Timeline* (available in both English and Welsh) has been developed to support Scripture Union's *Light* range of curriculum resources for children and young people, it also has roles to play in Church schools and state-maintained schools. With reference to the latter, the resource presents a very useful overview of the Bible and 'salvation history' from a Christian perspective, which can support and further pupils' understanding of the Bible as a sacred book.

In terms of content, the resource is a 16-panel timeline poster which traces significant events and people in the Bible, and is suitable for key stage 2 and key stage 3 pupils. Under each frame, there is a short Bible reference which links the image/event to the relevant section of the Bible. Included with the poster is information detailing how the timeline line is assembled as well as notes, activities, and questions for use with the timeline geared specifically to Christian faith-based contexts.

Based on the same principles and following the same basic structure as the *Bible Timeline*, *The Big Bible Storybook Timeline* by Scripture Union is also available for the under-fives.

Tania ap Siôn

Secondary RE

Terence Copley (2008), *Daring to Do What is Right: the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* [Faith in Action Series], RMEP, 978-1-85175-354-3, 24pp, colour illustrated, p/b, £4.99. (Pack of 15, 978-1-85175-355-0, £69.86).

The latest title to be added to the continually expanding *Faith in Action Series* for KS4 pupils focuses on the Christian pastor and academic, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945).

The resource retells the story of Bonhoeffer's life in staged chronological sections, covering Bonhoeffer as boy, young man, university lecturer, resister of Nazism, conspirator, suspect, and prisoner. It also includes a section on the rise of Nazism in Germany, locating Bonhoeffer's life clearly in its broader context. Within each accessible and well-written section, there is a 'What Do You Think?' series of questions which invite pupils to reflect on aspects of the story in more detail.

Tania ap Siôn

Elicia Lewis (2009), *Truth-Seekers Series*, RMEP. Comprises three books, b/w illustrated, p/b, each with CD included (£39.93 per title).

***Thinking about God's Nature*, 978-1-85175-363-5, 80pp.**

***Thinking about Truth*, 978-1-85175-364-2, 80pp.**

***Thinking about God*, 978-1-85175-362-8, 80pp.**

The *Truth-Seekers Series* successfully provides teachers with the resources and the confidence necessary to develop thinking skills effectively in relation to issues of truth in religion and philosophy. Each book contains two or three units which are usually explored through six key questions apiece. *Thinking about God's Nature* investigates 'What is God like?' in unit A and 'Why does God allow evil and suffering?' in unit B. *Thinking about God* investigates 'Does God exist?' in unit A and 'Can we experience God?' in unit B. *Thinking about Truth* investigates 'The theory of knowledge' in unit A, 'arguing effectively' in unit B, and 'What is truth?' in unit C.

All the units follow a common format which is both succinct and clearly articulated. For each key question, there are learning objectives and outcomes, identification of the philosophical basis of the question, and learning activities with suggestions for differentiation at higher and lower levels, for example. Pupil activity

sheets are collated at the end of each book for teacher reference in A5 size and on the CD for classroom use in A4 size. Activities are well-devised and challenging.

Adaptability is a significant feature of the series. It can be used in various ways to meet the needs of pupils from key stage 2 to key stage 5, following either statutory RE programmes or related examination specifications (for the latter, WJEC specification links are noted where relevant in the various units). In many ways, this is an excellent resource and worth investing in.

Tania ap Siôn

***Science and Religion in Schools: a guide to the issues for secondary schools (2006)*, Trafford Publishing, 141208424-5, 134pp, b/w illustrated, p/b, CD ROM included, £15.00. To view sample materials and to order, visit: <http://www.srsp.net>**

This title was created to encourage open-minded discussion of issues concerning science and religion in order to ensure that 11 to 19-year-olds in schools 'have a balanced view of the issues which arise when the claims of science are compared with those of the major world religions'.

This valuable resource contains five topics for 11 to 16-year olds and six topics for 16 to 19-year-olds exploring meaning, values, knowledge, truth, and the nature of human relationships with the world, supported by background notes and overview, lesson plans, key questions, teacher resource materials, differentiated student support materials, and AV materials. Space is also given to providing teachers with a clear pedagogical foundation for using the materials.

Tania ap Siôn

Online resources

NGfL Cymru, resources to support WJEC Religious Studies, Specification B, Option A, Religion and Life Issues, <http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk>

NGfL Cymru has produced a number of free online resources to support teaching and learning in WJEC Religious Studies, Specification B, Option A, Religion and Life Issues which cover 'Relationships', 'Our World', and 'Looking for Meaning'.

The resources are designed for use in whole-class teaching and promote thinking skills and discussion. These are useful additions to NGfL Cymru's growing web-based resources for religious education.

The Life of the Buddha (December 2008), Clear Vision, site licence £49.00, <http://www.clear-vision.org>

Clear Vision has a well-established reputation for being the leading provider of quality resources on Buddhism for religious education in the UK. Clear Vision's latest resource, *The Life of the Buddha*, is a welcome new online resource for key stage 2 and lower key stage 3 pupils and teachers.

The Life of the Buddha is clearly divided into seven main sections largely corresponding to key stages in the Buddha's life: boyhood of Siddhartha; going forth; Enlightenment; the Buddha decides to teach; teaching the Dharma; and the last days of the Buddha, before concluding with an exploration of the Buddha image. Each section allows pupils to hear and to watch the narrative of the Buddha's life unfolding alongside pertinent and challenging questions and activities which encourage pupils to reflect and to respond to the beliefs and issues raised. In addition, links are provided to useful websites to inform research-based activities, and a user-friendly lion called Bodhi guides pupils through the resource and is there to help with difficulties.

The teacher's 'control panel' enables teachers to set up the resource for use with different pupil groups/classes and to view

the pupils' saved work. Conversely, pupils are also able to view their teacher's comments. Full teacher's notes offer a good overview of the resource as well as guidance for discussion before working online.

This well-priced and sophisticated resource provides ample opportunity for teachers to address the three skills

underpinning the *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*: engaging with fundamental questions; exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s); and expressing personal responses.

Tania ap Siôn

Notes for contributors

Notes for contributors

REview Wales is published online twice yearly. Neither the editor nor the editorial board accept responsibility for the views or statements expressed by the authors.

The editor invites submission of articles addressing issues in areas relevant to religious education (research, curriculum development, and religion and culture). Articles should be in the range of 1,500 and 3,000 words. The articles submitted must contain original material which has not been previously published and which is not being considered for publication elsewhere. Articles accepted by REview Wales may not be published elsewhere without the consent of the editor. The journal should be cited in lists of references as REview Wales.

Manuscripts Manuscripts submitted for publication and all editorial correspondence should be sent to: Ms Tania ap Siôn, St Mary's Centre, St Deiniol's Library, Church Lane, Hawarden, Flintshire, CH5 3DF. E-mail: tania.ap.sion@st-deiniols.org

Submissions should be in Microsoft Word in a PC format.

Refereeing Articles are normally reviewed by appropriate referees (in addition to the editor), unless they are clearly not appropriate for the aims and scope of the journal. The review process is designed to ensure the quality of articles presented in the journal. Feedback from the review process is made available to authors as required.

References Where relevant, references should be quoted in the text by giving the author's name, followed by the year, for example, (Smith and Jones, 1976) or Smith and Jones (1976). For more than two authors, all names are given when first cited, but when subsequently referred to, the name of the first author is given followed by the words *et al.* as for example – first citation: Nau, Caputo and Borkoven (1974) but subsequently Nau *et al.* (1974).

The references should be listed in full at the end of the paper in the following standard form:

For articles Jones, A.N. (1990), The study of beliefs and values, *REview Wales*, 14, 6-12.

For books Smith, A.N. (1990), *Religious Education Today and Tomorrow*, London, Thames Press.

For chapters within books Jones, A.N. (1990), Religious education, in A.N. Smith and D.Z. Evans (eds), *Society in Transition: an international perspective*, pp 213-248, Birmingham, Alabama, Religious Education Press.

For multiple authors Jones, A.N. and Smith, A.N. (1990)

When each part of a journal number begins at page 1, the part number should be included thus: *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 6(2). In other cases the part number is not needed. Titles of journals should not be abbreviated.

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