



Ms Catherine McCormack
St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School
Albert Avenue
Flint
CH6 5JZ

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

Dear Catherine,

RE: Response from the Welsh Government to headteachers' joint letter

We are writing to share with you the response from the Welsh Government to the letter signed by all Catholic headteachers in Wales.

Firstly, we would like to express our disappointment that the response did not come from the First Minister nor was the response directed to the individual headteachers who took the time to sign the letter. This is, we feel, a huge snub to you as a headteacher, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, particularly during the last few challenging months of COVID-19.

As you will see, the response from the Education Minister completely fails to understand the centrality of RE in Catholic schools and dismisses our community's concerns with inadequate arguments. We will of course be responding to the Minister to rebut her claims on the following areas:

"Responses to the consultation clearly favoured a change in name." The Welsh Government's own consultation analysis highlighted that opposition to their proposals came from across the whole sector and there was no clear unanimous view. 606 respondents explicitly stated they did not want to see a change in the name of RE compared to 377 respondents who favoured Religion, Values, and Ethics. We do not think this demonstrates clearly that responses *"clearly favoured a change in name"*. The consultation ranked every response equally regardless of whether it was from an organisation or school representing a large group of teachers, governors or education professionals. We are aware that many Catholic headteachers responded on behalf of their school communities. We believe this shows a disregard for the expertise and experience of those working in the school sector.

"We in no way intend to diminish its importance of religion, rather to emphasise wider aspects." The Catholic community and CES have been clear with the Government throughout the process to reform the Curriculum that RE is at the core of the core curriculum in Catholic schools and that it is an academic subject in its own right. The State's attempt to redefine RE to include other subjects, in an already full curriculum and school timetable, will diminish the religious education content of this subject and therefore the academic rigour and Catholic content.



“I would like to reassure you that in the new curriculum schools of a religious character will continue to be able to deliver denominational RVE in accordance with their trust deeds.” The RVE consultation and recently published Bill have demonstrated that the Government does not support a Catholic approach to RE. Indeed the Government’s own Regulatory Impact Assessment concluded that *“There will be a negative impact for some religious groups and parents especially Catholic and humanists in respect of RE”* (page 152). The proposed legislation treats schools with a religious character in a different way to schools without a religious character. It would force all Catholic schools to additionally offer the locally agreed RE syllabus to the child of any parent/carer who requests it. This expectation is not mirrored for community schools, foundation schools or voluntary controlled schools. This burden to provide two parallel curricula, potentially at considerable cost to the school, will have a detrimental impact on a school’s ability to deliver denominational RE. The Government is suggesting that only Church schools will have this additional burden. This discriminates unfairly against Catholic schools and against families who want their children educated in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

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Whilst the Bill contains all the problems we feared (as outlined in the RVE consultation and earlier consultations such as the name change and removals of the parental right of withdrawal), it also contains additional threats to Catholic education which have not been consulted on. This includes additional powers to the Education Minister to amend any legislation on RE (including Catholic RE) at any point in the future without consultation or scrutiny from the Senedd, and changes to Catholic RE in post-compulsory education.

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We wish you a peaceful and relaxing summer – you have certainly earned it!

All best wishes,

Paul Barber
Director
Catholic Education Service

Wendy White
Head of Education Service
Diocese of Wrexham



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

Angela Keller
Catholic Education Service

WalesAdviser@catholiceducation.org.uk

7th July 2020

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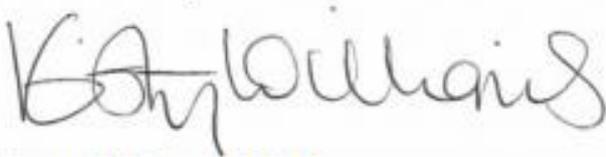
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Yours sincerely

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Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Miss Rachel Molyneux
St Mary's Catholic School
Ffordd Llewelyn
Flint
CH6 5JZ

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Catholic Education Service

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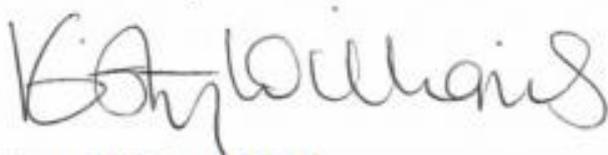
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Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Mrs Eirian Bradley-Roberts
Sanates Helen RC School
Twtl
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1PF

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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

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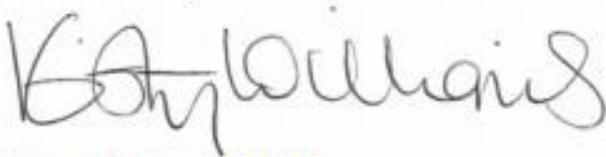
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Mr Richard Jones
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Longford Road
Holyhead
LL65 1TR

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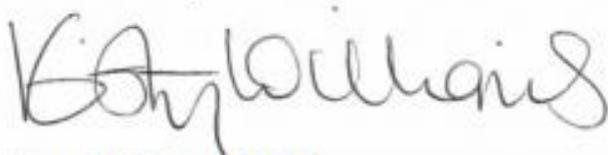
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Firstly, we would like to express our disappointment that the response did not come from the First Minister nor was the response directed to the individual headteachers who took the time to sign the letter. This is, we feel, a huge snub to you as a headteacher, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, particularly during the last few challenging months of COVID-19.

As you will see, the response from the Education Minister completely fails to understand the centrality of RE in Catholic schools and dismisses our community's concerns with inadequate arguments. We will of course be responding to the Minister to rebut her claims on the following areas:

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All best wishes,

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Catholic Education Service

Wendy White
Head of Education Service
Diocese of Wrexham



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

Angela Keller
Catholic Education Service

WalesAdviser@catholiceducation.org.uk

7th July 2020

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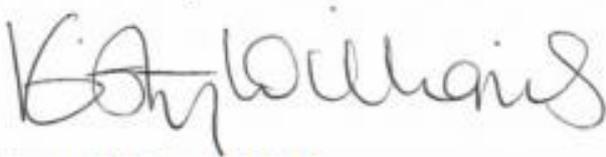
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Yours sincerely

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Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Mrs Lucy Phillips
Ysgol Bendigaidd William Davies
Bodnant Crescent
Llandudno
LL30 1LL

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

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Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

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Catholic Education Service

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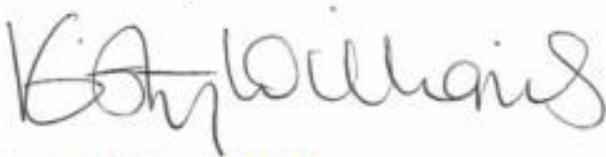
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Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
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Mr Simon Hughes
St David's Catholic Primary School
St David's Lane
Mold
CH7 1LH

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Head of Education Service
Diocese of Wrexham



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

Angela Keller
Catholic Education Service

WalesAdviser@catholiceducation.org.uk

7th July 2020

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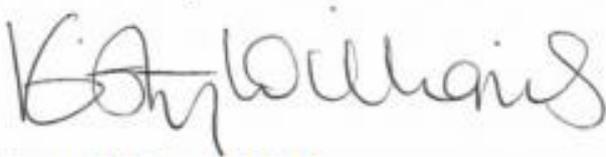
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Minister for Education



Mrs Sarah Ruggeri
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Milford Road
Newtown
SY16 2EH

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

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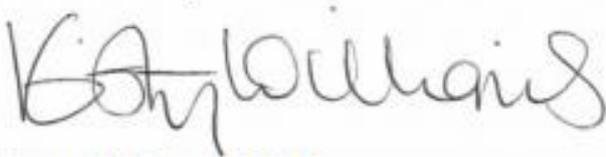
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Ms Amanda Preston
Christ The Word Catholic School
Cefndy Road
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All best wishes,

Paul Barber
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Catholic Education Service

Wendy White
Head of Education Service
Diocese of Wrexham



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

Angela Keller
Catholic Education Service

WalesAdviser@catholiceducation.org.uk

7th July 2020

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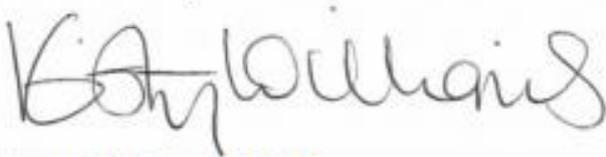
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Yours sincerely

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Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Mrs Claire Priest-Jones
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
Prince Charles Road
Wrexham
LL13 8TH

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

Dear Claire,

RE: Response from the Welsh Government to headteachers' joint letter

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Diocese of Wrexham



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

Angela Keller
Catholic Education Service

WalesAdviser@catholiceducation.org.uk

7th July 2020

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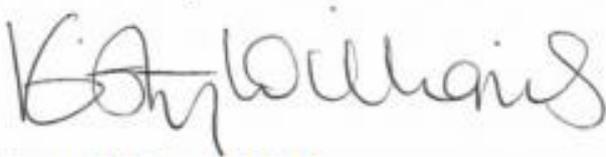
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Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Mrs Rachel Acton
St Mary's RC Primary School
Lea Road
Wrexham
LL13 7NA

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

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Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03304/20

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WalesAdviser@catholiceducation.org.uk

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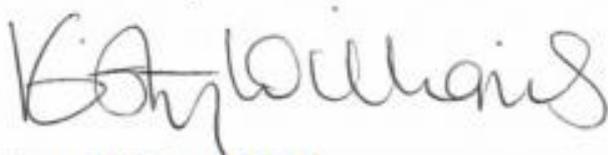
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Minister for Education



Mr Christopher Wilkinson
St Joseph's Catholic And Anglican High
Sontley Road
Wrexham
LL13 7EN

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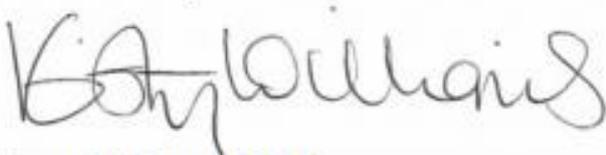
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