

AN EVALUATION OF *REsilience / AtGyfnerthu* 2009-2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 850 schools in England and Wales were involved in at least one stage of the *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* Programme. 112 schools in England and 40 in Wales participated in the full project, including contact with a mentor who visited and supported the RE department. According to the teachers who participated, the Programme:

- raised their cultural awareness and knowledge of religions and beliefs, in many cases making it clear that more was involved in knowledge of religions than they originally thought;
- improved their confidence in teaching contentious issues, particularly through managing discussion in the classroom;
- increased their understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of diversity within and between religions, although some teachers remained confused over this issue;
- helped them identify resources, including speakers, for teaching about different beliefs and perspectives;
- increased their confidence in taking pupils to visit places of worship, museums and galleries;
- increased their knowledge about extremist views and violent behaviour associated with religions and their confidence to teach these topics;
- strengthened existing areas of confidence, such as in demonstrating and promoting respect for people with faiths different from one's own.

However, although the Programme made a positive impact, it was clear from teachers' feedback that more training and resources were needed to make large numbers fully confident in their understanding of contentious issues and in their teaching of them.

There is potential for the *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* Programme to continue, but in what form remains to be decided.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIGINS AND SPECIFICATION

1.1.1 ORIGINS

The *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* project was the outcome of discussions between various members of the Religious Education (RE) professional community and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)¹ about on-going needs in RE. The Department developed the outline project, which was put out to competitive tender in May 2009 and awarded to the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC). It was a small project (£650K) of finite duration (less than two years overall) with the possibility of a one-year extension envisaged. The contract between the Department and the REC was signed in June 2009. Subsequently, a contract variation was signed in January 2011 at the request of DfE, reducing the value of the contract to £550K.

An extension to include schools in Wales was agreed with Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and a contract between WAG and the REC to the value of £90K was signed in December 2009. The programme for Wales was similar to that for England but with modifications to recognize differences between the education requirements in the two countries and the need for the programme in Wales to be delivered bilingually.

1.1.2 SPECIFICATION

REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu was developed in the context of the 'Prevent' strategy, designed to bring together work at local, national and international levels with the aim of stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists or violent extremists. Religious education was identified as one of the subjects with the potential to make a particularly significant contribution to the promotion of community cohesion, peaceful conflict resolution and tolerance, and the prevention of violent extremism, because its subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others and understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

1.1.2.2 Purpose

The stated purpose of the *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* programme was to:

contribute to minimising the development of violent extremism out of religious extremism through developing the knowledge and skills of teachers of religious education so that they are better able to promote community cohesion and respect for difference, and to confront and address controversial, dangerous and divisive issues that arise, including those related to religion, ethnicity and negative stereotyping.

1.1.2.2 Objectives

The contracted objectives of the *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* programme in June and

¹ The DCSF is now called the Department for Education and the Department will generally be referred to as the DfE throughout this document.

December 2009 were, in summary, to:

- develop a suite of suitable materials to underpin the development of the appropriate knowledge and skills of teachers of RE (all to be provided bilingually in Wales);
- engage with at least 1500 maintained secondary schools/colleges in England of which at least 1000 make use of one or more element of the project's materials, with a focus on priority areas specified by DfE (England) and DCELLS (Wales);
- deliver face-to-face sessions for teachers from at least 700 schools with trainer/mentors from the project (England) and at least 40 schools (Wales).

Some of these initial agreed objectives were subject to change as the project developed (see Section 2).

1.2 EVALUATION – SHAPE AND CRITERIA

1.2.1 SHAPING THE EVALUATION

Because *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* is answerable to the DfE and DCELLS, its funding bodies, the criteria for evaluating its success must demonstrate the effectiveness with which the project met the requirements of the specification, and so these requirements shape the key questions at the heart of the evaluation.

The specification indicated that:

1.2.1.1 The training provided should give teachers of RE:

- Cultural awareness to facilitate appreciation and promotion of shared values;
- Confidence and competence to facilitate discussion around controversial issues like identity, diversity, ethnicity, religion and belief in order to promote tolerance and challenge extremism;
- Theological knowledge and understanding of different faiths' teachings to draw out shared values of respect, tolerance, appreciation of others and peaceful conflict resolution.

1.2.1.2 The project was expected to last 22 months in total and to be broken down into planning, development and delivery phases. A model of the timing and content of these phases was provided in the invitation to tender, which '*should not be seen as comprehensive or prescriptive*' (although a number of items within the model are stated as imperatives).

1.2.1.3 Certain features were '*desirable*' at each stage. These included

- the development of '*a small executive delivery group with representatives from delivery organisation(s) and DfE (and subsequently DCELLS), to meet at least every two months*'; and '*a large advisory group of key stakeholders including representatives from the RE community, teachers and experts in extremism*', to meet at least every 3 months (England and Wales).
- The development and piloting of a '*high quality training package for RE teachers, which must include an element of face-to-face training and materials to sit alongside the training package*' (England and Wales).

- The publicising of the training package to schools, colleges and RE teachers in maintained secondary schools.
- Chairing a Welsh Advisory Group, the purpose of which was to ensure that materials and other plans developed for England could be used in Wales, ensuring that necessary modifications were implemented and that the programme was promoted to high priority schools in Wales.
- Delivery of the package, the production of an evaluation report and the publication of training materials on a dedicated website (England and Wales).

1.2.1.4 Three key deliverables were listed in the English contract. The Welsh contract did not involve the first of them because it was agreed at a later date but the other two were similar.

- an interim report listing and evaluating existing resources and programmes relevant to the purpose of the project;
- a suite of materials (in any appropriate medium) and suggestions as to how they can be used most effectively, capable of being rolled out following the end of the project;
- a final report that describes the activity and results of the project (including statistics covering take-up and feedback), and includes an evidenced evaluation of the project's impact and the extent to which it has achieved its purpose.

1.2.1.5 These requirements and recommendations in the specification relate to three distinct aspects of the project:

- The process – how *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was managed, how the training was set up, what quality assurance procedures were in place and how the project was evaluated
- The impact – how effectively the programme improved the knowledge, skills and confidence of teachers of RE when dealing with contentious issues, especially those related to violent extremism.
- The future – the legacy of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* and its potential for continuation in some form.

These aspects of the project have shaped this evaluation and have given their names to the three following sections herein.

1.2.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Key evaluation questions

In relation to the next three sections of this report, the evaluation addresses the following questions:

1.2.2.1 *The process*

- Was the project completed within the time and budget allowed?
- Did the planning of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* deliver the desirable and required elements in the original DfE model?
- How effectively was the project managed?

1.2.2.2 *The impact*

- What scale of impact was it reasonable to expect?
- How effective was the Programme in improving the knowledge, skills and confidence of teachers of RE when dealing with contentious issues, especially those related to violent extremism?
- Were there any differences in impact between England and Wales?

1.2.2.3 *The future*

- Do any aspects of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* have the potential to be continued in some form?

2 THE MANAGEMENT OF *RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU*

This section is an evaluation of the process through which *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was developed. It is structured on the basis of the key questions identified in the introduction above.

2.1 WAS THE PROJECT COMPLETED WITHIN THE TIME AND BUDGET ALLOWED?

2.1.1 PROJECT DELIVERY

In accordance with the contractual agreements, *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was delivered in three phases.

2.1.1.1 The Research and Planning Phase (scheduled for June – September 2009) successfully met all its significant targets on time and within budget.

2.1.1.2 The Development Phase (scheduled for October 2009 – March 2010) was not completed fully by 31 March 2010. It started on time and many of the tasks planned for the phase were completed as scheduled. Much of this work (for example, reporting on existing materials, developing and piloting the training packages and drafting gateway documents) was undertaken by members of the project team with assistance from members of the advisory group for quality review. Some work was put out to tender (for example, design and website development) and was completed satisfactorily by the appointed contractors.

However, when five interrelated work packages, including the all-important delivery of the programme to schools, were put out to tender to REC member organisations, no sufficiently high quality response was received for a recommendation to appoint to be made to the EDG. Rather than implement the contingency plans that were in place for such an eventuality, the EDG, with the strong backing of the Departments, decided to 'try again'. Consequently the development phase overran and quickly fell within the period of General Election purdah.

2.1.1.3 The Delivery Phase (scheduled for April 2010 – March 2011) encountered significant problems, because the Development Phase was over-running and also in relation to the purdah imposed by the General Election in May 2010 and the subsequent review and revision of priorities by the new Government. Some tasks

(such a recruitment and training of mentors) went ahead as planned. For several months it was not clear whether *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* would continue to be funded at all or, if funding were to continue, what the reduction might be and how this would impact on planning. One far-reaching decision was clear from shortly after the new Government took office, that DfE would not (as previously planned) play any direct role in publicizing the Programme to schools in England and that direct expenditure by the REC of DfE funds on promotion or advertising was banned.

Although the contracting uncertainties that had led to the Development Phase over-running were resolved early in May, when the EDG decided that the work packages concerned should be delivered in-house by the REC itself, post-election uncertainties meant that the delays to completing the Phase were repeatedly extended, with the REC instructed to continue with 'business critical' tasks only. The final decision, given at the end of September, was positive but with a reduced budget and resulted in the Development Phase being completed on 30 September 2010 and the full Delivery Phase starting on 1 October, five months late.

The outcome of the decision was a reduction of 20% in the English budget for 2010/11 to £400K and a new target of 400 schools, 300 to be in identified priority areas. The budget for Wales was reduced to £58K for the financial year with a target number of 40 schools unchanged. The termination date for enrolling English schools was unchanged (31 March 2011) but an extension was agreed for Wales (to May/June 2011). Postponement of delivery of the final evaluation report to 31 July 2011 was agreed.

2.1.2 ACHIEVEMENT OF KEY DELIVERABLES

The three key deliverables listed in the contract were all achieved on time.

- An interim report was completed on schedule and delivered to DfE as required on 11 November 2009.
- Suites of materials were produced for schools in England, for English speaking schools in Wales and for Welsh speaking schools.
- The final report on the project was produced on schedule and delivered to DfE and DCELLS/WAG on 30 March 2011.

2.1.3 MEETING TRAINING TARGETS

2.1.3.1 Wales

In Wales all targets were met and 40 schools were accepted and enrolled. The Programme in Wales was planned to run slightly behind its delivery in England, resulting in an increase in the number of participating schools possible before the Programme closed. Other reasons for the more extensive delivery in Wales will be considered below.

2.1.3.2 England

In England the number of schools participating in the full programme fell below target to 112. Teachers from 33 other schools received face-to-face training from a *REsilience* mentor or team member in other sessions. About 300 schools registered directly with the project and over 800 schools or individuals accessed

at least some materials through the website or were sent them by email following direct contact initiated by a member of the project staff. The following reasons contributed to this shortfall from the target numbers:

- The DfE's decision, following the election, that it should not become involved in the direct promotion of the Programme to schools, and the prohibition of expenditure of its funds on marketing or advertising. Hence the strategies for promoting the programme to schools in England had to change and rely on in-house publicity through the REC and its member organisations.
- Promotion in Wales was organised differently from in England and the relative success in recruiting schools was due largely to the efforts of advisers and WASACRE. The solidarity between RE organisations in Wales was less evident in England, where not all REC member organisations were equally keen or able to support the project proactively.
- There is clear (though anecdotal) evidence that in England three post-election conditions posed major distractions from *REsilience*:
 - (i) Community cohesion, with which *REsilience* had important links, became less of an overt national priority and this was reflected in its reduced importance in Ofsted inspections;
 - (ii) The non-inclusion of RE in the English Baccalaureate produced a major threat to the status of the subject in many schools and resulted in anxiety as heads of department lost examination classes;
 - (iii) Many RE advisers were made redundant during the period in which *REsilience* was asking them to encourage schools to engage with the Programme.

2.2 DID THE PLANNING OF *RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU* DELIVER THE DESIRABLE AND REQUIRED ELEMENTS IN THE ORIGINAL DFE MODEL?

2.2.1 PROJECT DELIVERABLES

In accordance with DfE requirements, the management of *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* included an executive delivery group (EDG) and an advisory group (AG) whose members were drawn from key religious and professional organisations concerned with religious education. The project also publicised and delivered a high quality training package for teachers of RE, which included an element of face-to-face training and materials to sit alongside the training package.

2.2.1.1 Key management groups

REsilience/AtGyfnerthu was directed by the Executive Delivery Group (EDG) which was accountable to REC Board for the success of the project and to which the contracted project manager reported. This key group was composed of seven people who, collectively, offered a wide range of experience and subject expertise in the field of RE. The Advisory Group (AG) consisted of 43 key stakeholders. The experience and expertise of these groups helped to ensure the successes of the project.

2.2.1.2 The training package

One of the most distinctive strengths of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was the method of training employed. 'CPD' is often understood by schools as the external provision of training courses which teachers travel to attend. Inevitably such courses usually target general rather than specific needs of delegates and much of the time and money is taken up with travel and subsistence.

REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu employed the opposite strategy. Within the broad definition of the project, it was the school not an external trainer that decided what the focus of the training should be, and the 'trainer' (in reality a mentor/facilitator) travelled to the school. Thus, the programme did not attempt to devise a standard 'syllabus' for participants. Instead a **self-evaluation questionnaire (SEQ)** was designed and deployed to enable schools to identify their strengths and training needs for themselves.

One of the key factors contributing to the success of the training was the availability of a trained **mentor**, whose role was to discuss the completed self evaluation with the school, agree a needs analysis based on it and identify materials to support the school in meeting its targets. Mentors' involvement followed a flexible model in which support could vary from one term to six months depending on the needs of the school. How the mentors then developed the programme, collaboratively with and for that school, depended on whether it wished to be self sufficient, to join a group with other schools to pursue similar interests, or to have more intensive support and training from a mentor.

2.2.1.3 Materials

Another strength of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* has been the production of training materials which, according to DfE/DCELLS requirements, may be found on the website and are available to all registered schools. The main catalogue of resources comprises 34 'gateway' documents (slightly different for England and Wales in English, with the Wales set also translated into Welsh) each of which gives a brief overview of a contentious issue identified in the SEQ and 'signposts' which point to reliable sources for the teacher to research further. Many of the gateway documents contain information not easily accessible elsewhere. The organisation of the project ensured direct linkage between the SEQ and materials, so that schools could easily find materials supportive of their specific needs.

The gateway documents were valuable because:

- Schools had limited mentor time and the documents were permanent points of reference and guidance.
- Schools' needs may develop after the mentor's job is done. As they move on to new areas the gateway documents will be a useful starting point.
- It is likely that individual teachers in the same school will have different priorities. The gateway documents provide flexibility for individuals to pursue alternative areas, which can then be shared with colleagues.
- The priority for mentors was working alongside colleagues to help them think about teaching strategies. The gateway documents took the pressure off mentors to provide 'subject knowledge'. Once schools had identified their needs they used the gateway documents to hone their knowledge. The

mentors could then concentrate their efforts on discussing with teachers *how* their new knowledge of controversial issues might be taught in the classroom.

- For Welsh medium schools, the gateway documents had the added value of being in available Welsh (the general availability of materials in this language is less than in English).

2.3 HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE MANGEMENT OF RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU?

This section examines particularly the effectiveness of:

- The management structure and roles;
- Quality assurance procedures;
- Adaptability to changing requirements.

2.3.1 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND ROLES

The advantage of the RE Council winning the project tender was that it is the only organisation that includes among its membership such a wide range of expertise and experience in matters relating to religions and religious education. Throughout the life of the project the Council was able to call on this expertise for advice, which was always forthcoming.

The project was managed effectively by Geoffrey Penzer (of Penzer Allen Ltd), who has over 20 years experience of project management in the public sector, including CPD in the education sector. His lack of practitioner experience in the RE field had the advantage that it enabled him to maintain a distance from the everyday subject concerns of others involved in the project while remaining heavily committed to its successful outcome.

Other roles, be they individual or collective, were clearly defined and all those working to deliver the Programme worked well together.

2.3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

Quality assurance procedures were an integral part of the project at all stages and were built into every activity, for example mentor training. An early pilot exercise was evaluated in order to get feedback from teachers on the effectiveness of the training and the overall value of the Programme. Regular reports secured the accountability of the project manager to the EDG, and the accountability of the EDG to the DfE and DCELLS. The DfE's and DCELLS' ex-officio memberships of the EDG further ensured that the Governments were kept abreast of developments at all stages.

2.3.3 ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGING REQUIREMENTS

The management of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was consistently capable of adapting to changes brought about by external factors, notably the general election in 2010. Changes in the use of language and concepts, for example the redefinition of community cohesion, were quickly accommodated within *REsilience* materials for England. A request that the Programme include within its remit helping teachers to address contentious issues arising from some non-violent extremist

narratives (e.g. far right, Islamism, etc) were addressed effectively by producing additional gateway documents.

2.4 SUMMARY

- The required deliverables were produced on time.
- The planned activities for each phase were achieved.
- Where targets were not met, this was strongly influenced by external factors rather than weaknesses in project management.
- The project was effectively managed and successfully adapted to significant financial, practical and philosophical changes during its short life.
- Quality assurance and evaluation procedures were included in project planning and were applied regularly throughout so that stakeholders were kept well informed of progress.

3 THE IMPACT OF *RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU*

3.1 PLANNED OUTCOMES

The DfE originally identified two sets of skills needed by teachers in order to build resilience to violent extremism; these were:

- broad cultural **awareness** and specific **knowledge** of religions and beliefs to facilitate integration and promotion of shared values; and
- confidence to **facilitate** effectively discussion and debate around issues of identity and diversity, including those relating to ethnicity, faith and belief, to challenge extremist narratives and promote appreciation of others and peaceful conflict resolution.

In other words, the DfE expectations of *REsilience* were that it would improve teachers' knowledge and their teaching expertise in relation to the target issues.

3.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The role of this evaluation is to consider how far the intended outcomes were achieved. The key questions are:

How effectively did the Programme improve teachers':

- cultural awareness and knowledge of religions and beliefs?
- confidence to:
 - facilitate discussion and debate around issues of identity and diversity, including those relating to ethnicity, faith and belief?
 - challenge extremist narratives?
 - promote appreciation of others and peaceful conflict resolution?

3.3 THE EVIDENCE BASE

3.3.1 COMPOSITION OF EVIDENCE BASE

There are five components to the evidence base:

- Information provided by schools about their current levels of confidence in handling contentious issues (mainly in their completed self-evaluation questionnaires (SEQs)).
- Feedback from schools and individual teachers on standard feedback forms (EV1 and EV2) and through correspondence:
 - EV1 gives teachers' views on the quality of the facilitation provided by mentors and the extents to which teachers already teach *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* issues and plan to do so in the future. Forty-four EV1 forms were completed and returned by 20 July 2011.
 - EV2 provides feedback from teachers about the value added by *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* to their existing knowledge and confidence. Twenty-six EV2 forms were completed and returned by 20 July 2011.
- Reports by mentors on their work with each school or group of teachers with which they have spent time and their subjective evaluations of impact. Eighty-three reports had been received from mentors by 20 July 2011.
- General statistical information about numbers and locations of participating schools, etc.
- E-mail correspondence with members of the EDG, AG and planning group about the overall success of *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* and lessons learned for the future.

3.3.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The evaluation of *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* was a qualitative exercise. Most of the data is based on teachers' perceptions of their starting points and the difference made by the Programme. There has been no third party confirmation of the impact of the Programme except in a few cases by mentors.

Teachers were asked to 'grade' themselves and sometimes their department on a four level scale using the best-fit method. The grade descriptions varied slightly between questions and for the sake of consistency this report will refer to levels 1-4 (1 being the best level). Because the evidence base is small (for example, only 26 EV2 forms had been returned by schools at the time of this evaluation), the results will be given in whole numbers rather than percentages.

3.4 HOW EFFECTIVELY DID THE PROGRAMME IMPROVE TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND THEIR CONFIDENCE TO TEACH CONTENTIOUS ISSUES?

3.4.1 TEACHERS' PRIORITIES

Prior to meeting their mentor, participants in the Programme were asked to complete the SEQ. In discussion with the mentor, teachers would use the completed SEQ to form an action plan of (generally) three priority areas. With 36

options² to choose from in addition to free choices and only 26 EV2 respondents, it was unlikely that any specific options would dominate in the feedback received.

Nevertheless, a few options did appear more frequently than others, in particular 'rate how confident you are that RE provision in the school uses effective strategies for teaching contentious issues' (SEQ 3.1). This was selected by 11/26 teachers. 'Rate your confidence when it comes to engaging students with issues around terrorist organisations claiming religious authority, such as Al Qa'ida' (SEQ 4.2) was prioritised by 8/26 teachers. Seven teachers prioritised 'encouraging pupils to express their own ideas sensitively' (SEQ 2.7); 'involving pupils in effective LOtC' (SEQ 2.10) and 'knowing how to guide students to develop discernment when using the Internet (SEQ 2.13).

Seven options were not prioritised by any teachers and three options by only one teacher. These ten options all appear in SEQ sections 1 and 2. Their subjects were in the general areas of 'understanding diversity within religions' and 'promoting tolerance and respect'.

3.4.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING SUCCESS

3.4.2.1 Factors contributing to progress

Teachers were asked to name the three options in which they felt they had made most progress. Since each school identified its individual priorities most options were named at some point and none emerged as being overall successful. However, teachers' comments do give indications of factors that helped them make progress.

Mentors.

- Most of the 26 respondents wrote warmly of their mentor's knowledge, expertise and commitment.
- Several teachers on the Programme were experiencing a range of personal and professional problems that hindered their concentration on the Programme and several of them praise their mentor for kindness and patience in helping them 'beyond the call of duty'.
- For several teachers, meeting their mentor was their first opportunity for several years to have a professional discussion about their subject and this alone was of great value.
- Mentors were able to suggest 'a wealth of resources for teaching and learning which were not in the gateway documents'.

Gateway documents.

- Several teachers refer to the gateway documents as 'invaluable', 'thought-provoking' and 'useful'.
- The documents were used as a starting point for further research.
- The documents were regarded as a useful permanent reference bank.

² The term 'options' will be used for the 36 individual items in the SEQ

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REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu methods.

- 'Everything was very well organised'.
- 'Communication was very good'.
- 'It enabled me to really think about my teaching and look at issues that I had not previously recognised'; 'it is so unusual to have to set aside time to really think about and discuss issues that affect RE here' wrote two teachers, so expressing the views of several.
- *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* made discussion with other teachers of RE essential, as several questions on the SEQ/EV2 related to the respondent's confidence in the department. One teacher wrote of the 'painful but important' discussions with several non-specialists who had been conscripted to teach the subject and the improved relationships that resulted.
- Teachers who attended the conference in London over the Easter break found the experience 'valuable and interesting'.
- The website was appreciated for its quality and ease of access and navigation.
- The SEQ and planning grid were extremely thorough but suitable for the task.

Practical activity.

Planning a task to be completed in a set deadline proved helpful in reinforcing *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* objectives. Teachers:

- created schemes of work around an issue in their school action plan; for example right-wing inspired race hatred and the Israel-Palestine conflict; a unit of work entitled 'what is truth?'.
- followed up a meeting with the mentor by creating a display to challenge stereotypes or, in one case, a permanent display of a current controversial topic in the media associated with religion or belief.
- planned and managed purposeful visits to places of worship: for example 'We are going to the Gurdwara and Mandir with Year 8 next week and the conversations I had with my mentor gave me the confidence to do this'.
- forged links with outside agencies and local faith communities, e.g. by becoming the secondary representative on SACRE.
- set up RE liaison groups with parents in order to improve their understanding of the subject and its importance. One RE department developed the novel idea of inviting parents to an 'RE café' where they could discuss the controversial issues that their children discussed in lessons.
- One mentor supported the planning of a 'religion and science' collapsed timetable day for Year 11 on the subject of genetic engineering. This was not a *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* theme but one chosen by the school.

Support from senior managers

Mentors found that the Programme was most successful in schools where the head and senior managers were aware of the nature of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* and supportive of its intentions.

3.4.2.2 Barriers to progress

Teachers gave the following reasons why their progress with *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was slower than they had hoped.

Time

The lack of time, particularly given other commitments, featured in most responses. Even teachers who had made considerable progress said that they would have done more given the time.

Curriculum

- For some teachers *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* came at the wrong time of the academic year. A number of teachers are planning to implement the Programme in the next academic year when the issues will be more relevant to their schemes of work.
- Inflexibility in the school curriculum was an issue for two teachers who were not allowed to use a whole day taking pupils to visit places of worship.

Commitment

- Nearly all respondents demonstrated personal commitment to *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* but sometimes progress was hindered by a lack of commitment in others. The 'others' were usually senior managers for whom the Programme was not a priority or large numbers of non-specialists teaching RE for such a short time each week that investment in the Programme did not seem important to them.
- In a small number of schools the senior managers had signed up for the Programme and it was the RE department that was unwilling to participate. In these schools *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* made little impact.
- Take-up was proportionately higher in Wales than in England. The fact that in Wales, but not England, schools were offered payment for a day's teacher cover might have influenced this outcome but there is very little evidence that money was a factor. Not all Welsh schools claimed the cover payment and no English school said it wanted to participate but could not afford to do so.

Distractions

Several teachers said that the current issues facing RE had distracted them from the programme. Chief among them were the redundancy of local RE advisers, some of them mentors, and the exclusion of RE from the English Baccalaureate, which threatened the continuation of RE GCSE classes in some schools.

The context of the RE department

- Mentors commented on the 'challenge' of supporting some RE departments because of their situation. For example, one department was 'in disarray, with no subject leader, no schemes of work and low status within the school'. In this case the mentor felt able to use the Programme as a vehicle for improving the department's organisation because this was a prerequisite for any kind of progress.
- In one school where the Programme was not successfully implemented the mentor found that the head of department was about to retire and was

unenthusiastic.

Gateways

- The gateway documents were neither intended nor designed to be learning materials for teachers to use in the classroom but rather resources to extend teachers' own knowledge and expertise.
- The gateway documents received mixed reactions. Some teachers found them very helpful (above) while others were critical because they expected the gateways to be teaching materials ready for classroom use.
- Mentor reports demonstrate that a number of schools were hoping to use gateways as teaching materials, a role they were not designed for.

Misunderstanding

A few schools had signed up for *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* without fully understanding what it was for. E.g. a Christian school engaged with the mentor but would not accept some of the assumptions in the Programme (such as impartial teaching) or some of the procedures (such as monitoring improvements through action plans).

3.4.3 THE IMPACT OF *RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU* ON TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE

This section draws on the 26 EV2 forms completed by participating teachers in England. At the time of writing, no EV2 forms have been received from Welsh schools, where the Programme was only recently completed.

For each option, teachers gave a grade for their current level of confidence. A comparison with the grade for the same option in the SEQ before the Programme began indicates how much progress in each option teachers considered that they had made.

3.4.3.1 How effectively did the programme improve teachers' cultural awareness and knowledge of religions and beliefs?

SEQ question 3.2 asked 'how confident are you that RE provision in the school is based on sound knowledge about a range of religions?'. Interestingly, the number of teachers expressing lack of confidence with overall departmental knowledge of religions rose slightly *after* participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu*. The reason for this, according to two schools, was that the Programme made them realise how much more was involved in knowledge of religions than they initially thought. The lower grades after participation signified more realistic understanding of the breadth of knowledge needed to teach *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* issues rather than decreased confidence. This is borne out by teachers' responses to other questions about details of subject knowledge, where they gave more modest estimates of their confidence.

3.4.3.2 How effectively did the programme improve teachers' confidence to facilitate discussion and debate around issues of identity and diversity, including those relating to ethnicity, faith and belief?

Facilitating discussion

Question 3.1 in the SEQ asked how far respondents were confident that their RE

department had developed appropriate strategies for teaching contentious issues. Initially 15/26 graded their departments as 3 or 4 but after participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* this number fell to 5/26, with a corresponding increase of 10 grading their department as 1 or 2. Even on a small sample this was an important outcome since improving teachers' confidence to teach contentious issues was a key purpose of the Programme.

SEQ questions 2.7-2.9 homed in on a specific aspect of teaching; handling discussion. Although managing class discussions is generally one of the most common teaching strategies among RE teachers, 10/26 initially graded their department as 3 or 4. Respondents indicated that this was an area in which the Programme made a particular impact and after participation 23/26 graded their department as a 1 or 2. Teachers recorded similar improvements in their departments' confidence in developing strategies for handling disagreement in the classroom (SEQ 2.7) and in managing discussion when unplanned contentious issues arose (SEQ 2.9).

*Confidence with issues of **identity** and **diversity***

The Programme aimed to improve teachers' confidence in facilitating discussion and debate around issues of identity and diversity, including those relating to ethnicity, faith and belief. For many years, Ofsted has been critical of secondary school pupils' lack of understanding of the reasons for and consequences of diversity within and between religions. A report from Warwick University³ was similarly critical of textbooks that presented generalised and stereotypical accounts of religions, failing to recognise the extensive and important differences *within* them. *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* took account to such criticisms and produced gateway documents designed to support CPD related to these issues. However, as noted above, these options were among the *least* popular in teachers' action plans.

Teachers expressed a particular lack of confidence in one option in SEQ section 1. Only 11/26 were at least confident in their understanding of terms such as 'fundamentalism' and 'relativism' that are important for understanding the reasons for diversity. After participation in the Programme this number rose to 15/26, suggesting that this is an area where more work is needed.

SEQ questions 1.6 and 1.7 are taken directly from the descriptions for Levels 7 and 6 respectively in the Non Statutory National Framework (NSNF), specifically because attainment in these areas is rarely found in schools. Rather worryingly, 9/26 teachers expressed a lack of confidence (grades 3-4) in relation to SEQ 1.6 and 8/26 in relation to SEQ 1.7. These numbers had decreased to 5/26 and 4/26 respectively by the time teachers completed EV2 but, in reality, we should expect all teachers of RE to be confidently achieving the levels expected of their more able pupils in Key Stage 3. So again, although the Programme has made a difference more work is needed here.

Teachers expressed greater confidence with the other four questions in this section (SEQ 1.1; 1.3; 1.4 and 1.5). However, it is worth noting that at best only

³ Jackson, R., Igrave, J., Hayward, M., Hopkins, P., Fancourt, N., Robbins, M., Francis, L. and McKenna, U. (2010) *Materials used to Teach about World Religions in Schools in England*, London: DCSF

12/26 expressed themselves as 'very confident' even after participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu*. 12/26 (an increase of 4 after participation) were 'very confident' in engaging pupils with the questions 'what are the differences between terms such as knowledge, belief, opinion, proof, evidence...?' and 'why do people have different beliefs – both in general and in their religions?'. All but 3 were confident in engaging pupils in the question 'why do people have different interpretations of the same religion?' and all but 1 in the question 'what do people mean when they refer to an issue as contentious or controversial?'. However, only 10/26 were 'very confident' with these two questions and this is a matter of concern.

Four questions in the SEQ/EV2 were to do with resources used in the exploration of contentious issues. 10/26 teachers expressed themselves as being 'not at all confident' initially at 'knowing how to find appropriate speakers with different beliefs and perspectives to talk to students'. After participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* all of these teachers graded themselves as 1-3 and there was an improvement from 4/20 to 13/20 in the number claiming to be 'confident', although only 5 were 'very confident'. This is an important issue because, as Ofsted finds consistently, many pupils prefer learning about religions through discussion with a member of the faith than by any other means. An area in which only one teacher felt 'very confident' before and after participation was in knowing how to guide students to develop discernment when using the Internet. Pupils (and teachers) need discernment for identifying reliable information about religions when engaged in enquiry work in RE. Also, specifically in relation to *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu*, they need to recognise extremist sites that seek to influence them. After participation, 12 teachers felt confident in guiding pupils in this area and 12 'a bit confident'.

The importance of learning outside the classroom (LOtC) has long been recognised in RE. Many RE departments take pupils to visit places of worship, museums and galleries but these visits do not always have a clear learning focus. Prior to participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu*, 9/20 teachers said that they were confident or very confident in providing *effective* LOtC and in their EV2s this number had risen to 21, suggesting that the Programme had a considerable impact. There was also a clear increase in the number of teachers knowing where to find up-to-date resources for understanding equality, diversity, cohesion etc. and after participation 22/26 expressed confidence.

3.4.3.3 How effectively did the programme improve teachers' confidence to challenge extremist narratives?

The SEQ asked teachers to rate their confidence when it comes to engaging students with nine contentious issues which are contexts for extremist views and sometimes violent behaviour. Some of these issues would have been familiar to teachers because they have for some time featured in agreed syllabuses and GCSE syllabuses.

Teachers were particularly confident with issues relating to women and gender equality with 24/26 confident or very confident prior to participation and all after participation, when 15/26 said they were very confident. Similarly, after participation, 23/26 were confident or very confident with religious teachings about homosexuality. SEQ question 4.5 was divided between 'religious teachings about violence, war and the 'just war' theory', which was probably very

familiar to most teachers, and 'interpretations of Jihad', which may have been less well known. 22/26 said that they were confident with this after participation compared with 17/26 before.

SEQ questions 4.7 and 4.8 asked about teachers' confidence in engaging students with 'issues of identity, religious/cultural traditions and belonging' and 'social, cultural and political aspects of religion in the modern world'. Most teachers were 'confident' in these areas before and after participation and in both there was an increase from 5 to 11/26 in those who were 'very confident'.

The three remaining questions in SEQ section 4 deal specifically with religious motivation to conflict and violence. In all three, only 2 teachers said that they were 'very confident' before participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* and 5 after participation. In relation to two issues, 'situations in which religion is involved in contemporary conflict (exemplified by Ireland and Israel/Palestine)' and 'right-wing inspired race hatred, especially when given a religious justification', the greatest improvement was in the number feeling confident after participation (15/26). But in relation to 'terrorist organisations claiming religious authority, such as Al Qa'ida' only 8 were confident and 5 very confident. However, none were 'not at all confident' after participation compared with 7 before.

3.4.3.4 How effectively did the programme improve teachers' confidence to promote appreciation of others and peaceful conflict resolution?

The importance of religious education as a subject is its role in enabling pupils to 'develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own' (NSNF p9). Teachers do not instill respect by teaching about religions but by encouraging a positive, inclusive ethos in the classroom and by leading by example.

Several questions in the SEQ asked about the ways in which teachers created this ethos, first by demonstrating respect for different cultures and beliefs in their teaching (SEQ 2.1). The majority (14/26) said that they were very confident about this, rising to 17/26 after participation whilst the remainder felt 'confident'. Most were at least confident in displaying appropriate sensitivity to the home backgrounds and the beliefs of pupils' families and in adopting an impartial stance while teaching. There was an improvement from 14/26 to 23/26 in the number who felt confident in ensuring displays positively reflect the diverse society, languages and the wider community.

Three questions (SEQ 3.4-3.6) asked about teachers' confidence in their relations with others outside the school. Most felt at least confident in ensuring that complaints or issues arising from RE lessons are handled fairly and effectively. Increased numbers after participation in the Programme (7/26 to 22/16) were confident that RE provision in their schools involved effective collaboration and communication with parents over the ethos of RE, and had constructive links with other schools, advisers, the SACRE, faith and belief communities.

SEQ questions 2.5 and 2.6 asked about teachers' confidence in encouraging positive attitudes in pupils. Most teachers (23/26) were at least confident in encouraging pupils to recognise the advantages of diversity as well as its challenges and in providing opportunities to challenge prejudice, discrimination

and stereotyping, in all its forms. Here the Programme had made only a little difference in these two areas where teachers already felt confident.

3.4.4 WHAT RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU TELLS US ABOUT OTHER ISSUES IN RE

The closing reports submitted by mentors evaluating their contacts with schools contain a rich vein of information about the state of RE in England and Wales.

The 24 reports from Welsh mentors were more positive and optimistic than reports from their English colleagues. This may be due in part to the mentors' evaluations in Wales following hard on their visits to schools. Reports from English mentors often allowed a gap of some months from their school visit and it was during this period that problems with implementation sometimes became apparent.

In over half the schools, visited mentors had a positive reception from enthusiastic and successful RE departments. However, in relation to 25 schools, mentors reported having to deal with fundamental issues outside the remit of the Programme. These were primarily:

- Tired and demoralised teachers feeling unappreciated
- No specialist teachers teaching RE in the school
- RE taught by supply teachers
- RE being taught by a single RE teacher, who felt isolated and unsupported
- Teachers busy, over-worked and stressed
- Heads of department unsure of how to execute basic tasks, such as organising visits to places of worship, writing an action plan and creating high quality classroom displays
- Weak departmental management
- Fear of redundancy
- Fears for the future of RE in the school
- Two Christian schools believing that *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* concerns were not relevant to them.

None of these issues is new, but the proportion of schools in which they were identified (over a quarter) is worrying, as is the fact that they stand in the way of progress.

3.5 SUMMARY

- The wide ranging choices of options in school action plans confirmed the relevance and appropriateness of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* as an individualised programme.
- Some schools selected options that were not at the heart of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu*, being more to do with the general development of teaching and learning. While this was disappointing, mentors made it clear that some departments they visited had very basic needs and were not ready

to engage with the more challenging aspects of the Programme.

- The Programme contributed overall to modest rather than startling gains in teachers' confidence. This is not surprising given the delay in setting up the Programme after the general election and the short period that elapsed between participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* and providing feedback for the evaluation. However, other factors also restricted the Programme's impact (see below).
- The areas where there was an above average increase in the number of teachers becoming 'very confident' were:
 - Adopting an impartial stance while teaching (SEQ 2.4)
 - Encouraging pupils to express ideas sensitively (SEQ 2.7)
 - Providing opportunities for students to develop discussion skills (SEQ 2.8)
 - Involving pupils in effective LOtC (SEQ 2.10)
 - Knowing where to find up-to-date resources for understanding diversity etc (SEQ 2.11)
 - Confidence to teach issues of identity, religious/cultural identity and belonging (SEQ 4.7)
 - Confidence to teach issues of women and gender equality (SEQ 4.8)
- More encouragingly, there were some impressive improvements in areas where teachers expressed no confidence. In all the following areas no teachers expressed a lack of confidence after participation:
 - Prior to participation 10/26 teachers had no confidence in knowing how to find appropriate speakers with different beliefs (SEQ 2.12).
 - Prior to participation 7/26 teachers had no confidence in teaching about terrorist organisations (SEQ 4.2)
 - Prior to participation 6 teachers had no confidence in teaching about right-wing inspired hatred (SEQ 4.4) or in how to collaborate effectively with parents over RE (SEQ 3.4)
- In only three areas were all teachers confident or very confident after participation but it is encouraging that following participation in the Programme there were very few areas in which more than two or three teachers remained 'not at all confident'.
- The feedback received from schools and mentors suggests that more needs to be done to improve the confidence of RE teachers. By far the majority of teachers who responded were at least confident in most areas by the end of the process. Ideally teachers of RE in secondary schools would be 'very confident' in most areas of their work but according to the feedback received this is not the case. In only four of the options in the SEQ were more than half of the respondents 'very confident' even *after* participation.
- Both teachers and mentors identified factors that contributed to the successful implementation of the Programme, or lack of it.

An Evaluation of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu*

- In all cases, the knowledge, professionalism and patience of the mentors was seen as a positive influence
- The methods used by *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* were seen as positive influences, especially individualised programmes, the SEQ and the allocation of mentors.
- Generally *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* had most impact in schools where the Programme was understood and supported by the head teacher and senior managers.
- The commitment and enthusiasm of RE teachers was a prerequisite for success.
- *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was more likely to have a positive impact where teachers followed up the mentor meeting with a practical activity related to the Programme
- Most teachers found that they had insufficient time to implement *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* as thoroughly as they wished, or that there would be a better opportunity to link the Programme to the RE curriculum later in the year.
- Several teachers were distracted by concerns over the future of their department in the light of the omission of RE from the English Baccalaureate.
- Mentors were asked to estimate how useful the Programme had been to the schools they had visited and to the pupils. In their judgement the Programme was:
 - Inspirational for 4 schools
 - Very helpful for 58 schools
 - Marginal for 10 schools
 - A waste of time for 3 schoolsThey believed that the potential impact on pupils was:
 - Major in 21 schools
 - Beneficial but minor in 42 schools
 - Cosmetic in 9 schools
 - None in 3 schools.

4 THE FUTURE OF *RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU*

4.1 OVERVIEW

Setting aside the pressures on the Programme from external sources over which the REC had no control, *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* achieved a great deal in a very short time. Much of this time was spent putting in place the materials, website

and mentors required for the project to succeed. Now that the project is established independent from its initial sponsor, the DFE, it has possibly become a marketable product. The question arises, 'do any aspects of *Resilience/AtGyfnerthu* have the potential to continue in some form?'

There are two broad possibilities:

- continuing to support existing *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* schools;
- extending participation to other/all schools.

Several teachers have said that they will concentrate on implementing *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* during the next academic year because, in the current year, they lacked either time or the curriculum context. In addition, the Programme offers a wider range of opportunities than any school could complete in a year. Feedback suggests that several teachers are interested in pursuing further aspects of the Programme.

The legacy of materials and experience provides the opportunity to exploit what has been achieved so far by developing and extending the Programme.

4.2 CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

If either of these options is taken up, several issues will have to be considered.

Development

Taking account of the comments of teachers and mentors the materials and evaluation methods used so far will need to be developed.

Target schools

REsilience/AtGyfnerthu could be reserved for schools with particular issues, which may be curriculum issues (e.g. teaching about extremist groups) or pedagogy (e.g. how to handle discussion effectively).

Pupils

REsilience/AtGyfnerthu was focused on developing teachers' confidence. Any future development of the project could consider how it might be adapted to have a more direct affect on students' attitudes and understanding.

School networks

Several teachers suggested that it would be helpful if *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* schools were linked for purposes of mutual support. This could be cost effective for schools, for example if a mentor was required.

Other phases of education

REsilience/AtGyfnerthu has the potential for extension to primary schools and certainly to FE. There has also been interest from British schools overseas (e.g. those for HM Forces in Germany and Cyprus).

The wider curriculum context

One of the key issues for the REC to consider is where *REsilience/AtGyfnerthu* sits within the wider issue of changing curricula in schools. As schools develop closer links between subjects, the Programme is ideally suited to cross-curricular

work in the humanities with RE in a leading role, and the potential to involve other subjects that teach controversial issues.

The wider training context

- The Programme has revealed a greater need for training for RE teachers than that offered by *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu*. Mentors, through visiting schools, uncovered a depressed, tired and occasionally defeated profession for whom a visit from a subject specialist was a rare opportunity to talk about general concerns and wider subject issues.
- Several teachers concentrated on general teaching issues, such as managing discussion effectively, which is central to *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* but can stand alone from the more challenging issues of violent extremism.
- If *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* is to have a future, the best context in which to develop it must be a wider consideration of the training needs of RE teachers and the necessity for a national network of RE trainers in the wake of so many redundancies among advisers.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONTEXT

REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu was an innovative project that broke new ground in both its content and method of delivery. Its initial purpose, to contribute to minimising the development of violent extremism out of religious extremism, was ambitious; some would say over-ambitious and some would say inappropriate. It is unlikely that any achievement or lack of it in this area will ever be known. However, a clear picture of its impact on schools has emerged from the responses to evaluation questionnaires from teachers and mentors. Members of the EDG have also expressed their views on the successes of the project and what could have been done better.

5.2 SUCCESSES OF *RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU*

5.2.1 MANAGEMENT

- The project management was extremely efficient, particularly the financial management and the maintenance of momentum.
- The Programme demonstrated that the REC has the capacity successfully to manage and deliver a major project providing it engages appropriately qualified external contractors.
- Welsh schools were very appreciative of the fact that meetings could be held through the medium of Welsh and that the Gateway documents were available in Welsh as well as English and included reference to key documents published by Estyn and the Welsh Government.

5.2.2 THE PROGRAMME

- *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* implemented a novel and effective model for a national CPD programme, which started with self-assessment by teachers and schools and focused on their individual needs.
- The mentoring programme was effective and well received by schools.
- A substantial set of high quality documentation was produced, which has the potential to remain a continuing basis for developing teacher understanding in years immediately ahead.
- *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* has revealed some of the key issues and needs that RE teachers face and clarification of what may be most valuable in future CPD.
- Through training and experience, a group of mentors emerged who have the potential to work in a similar capacity with schools in the future. In the light of the demise of subject advisers, this could be a particularly important contribution of the project.
- The bilingual emphasis of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was a great strength, without which the project could not have run in Wales. The appreciation of this and the more general Welsh dimension of resources and overall provision by the REC and the project manager is seen as significant from a Welsh perspective.

5.2.3 IMPACT ON SCHOOLS

- The Programme encouraged many struggling RE teachers and gave them new impetus and resources to make their lessons more effective.
- It enabled RE teachers to bring their subject to the attention of other teachers and the head of the school in a positive way.
- All participating teachers who completed the Programme made some gains in subject knowledge and in confidence to teach contentious issues using appropriate teaching methods.

5.3 IMPEDIMENTS TO SUCCESS

5.3.1 MANAGEMENT

- The number of English schools that chose to participate was disappointing. This was due in part to external factors but the final number fell far short of the revised aspirational target of 400. Some mentors have suggested that the publicity did not clarify the nature of the Programme sufficiently. Several of those involved who have extensive knowledge of RE in schools suggested that the target was over-ambitious because schools generally support CPD that is directly linked to their development plans. *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* was developed under a Government for which community cohesion was a whole-school issue, making the Programme relevant to many schools' priorities. Community cohesion, as such, is no longer a priority, which means that *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* may have to be re-labeled if it is to be marketed in the future.

- Some key member organisations of the REC were opposed to the philosophy and procedures adopted by the project. Some were uneasy at the association of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* with 'Prevent' and perhaps more could have been done to demonstrate to them that the Programme was far broader than 'Prevent' and had the potential to do good in support of many other aspects of RE.
- Some members of the EDG and AG believed that the Advisory Group was an unnecessary addition. They were unclear about its role and its effectiveness. One member of the AG, in particular, complained that it was used as an editorial rather than advisory group.

5.3.2 SCHOOL RESPONSES TO THE PROGRAMME

- Feedback from mentors revealed that too many RE teachers 'didn't know what they were signing up to'. Some thought that they would be given materials for use in the classroom; others did not expect to be investing time into CPD. This suggests that the publicity could have been clearer.
- Mentors indicated that the Programme was most effective in 'good' RE departments. Many RE departments visited were not ready for the more challenging elements of the Programme. This resulted in mentors spending a lot of time giving general support rather than delivering the full Programme.
- Mentors' experiences illustrate the importance of support from the head teacher and senior managers. Where this was not forthcoming, mentors often wasted time trying to get the school to respond to 'phone calls (one mentor rang 27 times before reaching the contact teacher), and waiting for action plans to be returned.
- A few mentors said that the Programme was 'paper-heavy' and that the time taken to complete the SEQ and EV2 was an additional burden to already over-worked teachers. However, this was a minority view and many teachers valued the SEQ for encouraging them to evaluate aspects of their departments' knowledge and confidence not previously considered. Only 20% of schools returned their EV2 by 20 July 2011 and in some cases this may have been a reflection on the detail asked for in the evaluation instrument.

5.4 WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNT FROM RESILIENCE/ATGYFNERTHU FOR FUTURE PROJECTS?

Section 4 considered what the future of *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* might be. If it does continue in some form, what lessons can be learnt from the initial Programme?

- Any REC project of this size and importance must win the hearts and minds of all member organisations, particularly those which have influence with teachers and schools. Similarly, member organisations may be called upon again to compromise over points of principle in order to work for the common good. In the world of education, RE is a minority interest. Discord among its supporters can do nothing but harm.
- In Wales, the process of engaging with schools was more effective than in England. Basically, WASACRE, through a Wales representative on the

project, communicated with advisers every month or every few weeks with take up figures and a list of the signed up schools, pressing them to try to follow schools up and get new schools on board. The advisers responded with great commitment and by the end of the project some of them were asking whether there were any more places available. It is important to note that this could not be replicated in England where few advisers are still in post. However, there may be a role for SACREs in any continuation of the Programme.

- The experience of working with the direction and organisational discipline of an experienced project management company was invaluable for the REC and learning from the experience should carry over into other aspects of REC organisation. Despite the reservations of some members, the REC should reflect on the benefits of appointing a project manager from outside the RE 'community' who, in addition to possessing necessary professional project management skills, is unencumbered with the wider concerns about the subject and hence able to be very focused on the task in hand.
- The *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* experience has indicated that many teachers need an incentive to become involved in projects on this scale. The REC and any future sponsors need to consider what these incentives might be; for example participation in *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* at one level might contribute to credits for higher degrees; less ambitious teachers might, with the support of senior managers, link project outcomes in their performance review. In particular, if the Programme is to appeal to large numbers of teachers it should produce classroom materials, such as *REsilience/AtGyfnnerthu* schemes of work. There is little indication that modest financial incentives would have increased the take-up by English schools.
- REC links with the Home Office, as also with the relevant community sections of DfE and DCELLS, should be maintained, alongside those with the curriculum sections.