

# **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2017**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)  
Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Alun W Mummery (Vice-Chair),  
Bryan Owen

### **The Religious Denominations**

Professor Euros Wyn Jones (Union of Welsh Independents)  
Mrs Einir Wyn Morris (Presbyterian Church of Wales)  
Mr Christopher Thomas (The Catholic Church)

### **Teacher Representatives**

Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr D Gareth Jones (Primary Education Officer) (Clerk to the SACRE)  
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Mrs Mefys Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones)  
Mrs Catherine Jones (The Baptist Union of Wales)  
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)  
Mrs Kirsty Williams (The Church in Wales)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Miss Bethan James (GwE Challenge Adviser)  
Mr Adam Rhys Williams (Head Teacher, Holyhead High School)  
Ms Nicola Williams (Ysgol Llanfawr)  
Mr Joe Morino (Gobaith Môn) (for Item 5 only)

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The Primary Education Officer (Clerk to the SACRE) welcomed members of the SACRE and newly elected members Councillor Bryan Owen and Mrs Einir Wyn Morris to the meeting.

### **1 CHAIRPERSON**

Councillor Dylan Rees was re-elected as Chair of the SACRE.

### **2 VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Councillor Alun Mummery was elected as Vice-Chair of the SACRE.

### **3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dylan Rees declared a personal interest, as he is a volunteer with Gobaith Môn.

### **4 MINUTES OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2017 MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 were presented and confirmed as correct.

### **5 PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Holyhead High School**

Mr Joe Morino from Gobaith Môn gave a presentation on the organisation's work with secondary schools on Anglesey, with particular reference to Holyhead High School.

Mr Morino gave an overview of Gobaith Môn, who are a registered charity and Christian body made up of an inter-denominational board of trustees. The organisation works primarily with young people, bringing Christians from all denominations together, and encouraging and developing youth work in schools, churches and communities on the Island.

Mr Morino reported that Gobaith Môn approach their work in Holyhead High School by looking at the whole aspect of collective worship, both in assemblies and form classes. He gave a summary of collective worship arrangements at the school, and referred to the model adopted to facilitate the collective worship sessions. It was noted that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used at the school to present multi-media stories, dramas and clips. Biblical stories are shared as part of topical based assemblies, which inspire young people to look at the bigger questions in life.

Mr Adam Rhys Williams, the Head Teacher of Holyhead High School reported that the work carried out by Gobaith Môn is subtle, engaging and relevant. Pupils are engaged in the morning assembly, and interact well with the team. Gobaith Môn also provide breakfast for pupils at the school; work on the school newsletter, and provide support on pastoral issues in a welcoming and safe environment.

#### **Ysgol Llanfawr, Holyhead**

Ms Nicola Williams, a teacher at Ysgol Llanfawr presented members of the SACRE with a portfolio of the work pupils at the school had prepared. She gave a presentation of the process the school has adopted for collective worship, which includes holding a separate daily service for infants and juniors. It was noted that the school holds sessions of collective worship to study the Old and New Testament; and looks at moral issues relating to Biblical stories and messages. One collective worship session is facilitated by the children at the school.

Ms Williams stated that Ysgol Llanfawr participates in the 'Open the Book' programme, which has been simplified for infants and re-worked for junior pupils. Gobaith Môn have also held an informal collective worship session at the school.

The Chair thanked representatives from both schools for their presentations and hard work.

## **6 ESTYN REPORTS - SPRING 2017**

Information from Estyn Inspection reports undertaken at Ysgol Gynradd Niwbwrch and Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge was presented for the SACRE's consideration.

### **Ysgol Gynradd Niwbwrch**

The Primary Education Officer reported that Estyn have not made any recommendations for improvements at Newborough Primary School. The school has satisfied the National Curriculum and Agreed Syllabus in RE. It was noted that there is adequate provision for collective worship sessions at the school, and the curriculum supports spiritual development effectively.

### **Ysgol David Hughes (New Framework)**

The Primary Education Officer reported that from September 2017, Estyn will be implementing a new framework for school inspections, which will have five questions as oppose to the present three. Estyn are presently piloting the new framework, and Ysgol David Hughes and Ysgol Llanfawr have already been inspected as part of the pilot. It was noted that Estyn will give schools three weeks' notice prior to inspections in future, therefore schools will need to be 'inspection ready'.

There are specific plans in place for spiritual development in RE at Ysgol David Hughes, with particular emphasis on the 'voice of the child'. Pupils are given opportunities to influence the programme's content to respond to their needs. Sessions have been held recently at the school to address racial prejudice, prior to refugees from Syria settling in the area.

The GwE Challenge Adviser referred to good practice in literacy in RE observed at the school, as noted in the Estyn Report - *'The school succeeds in providing valuable experiences to develop pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum, including beneficial opportunities to write at length in many subjects. A stimulating example of this are opportunities in RE lessons for pupils to develop their literacy alongside developing empathy, by imagining life in different cultures and religions'*.

### **Action:**

**Primary Education Officer to ask Ysgol David Hughes to share their good practice with the SACRE.**

**It was agreed to note the information.**

## 7 SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATIONS

Self-evaluation reports were presented by Ysgol Gynradd Kingsland, Holyhead; Ysgol Esceifiog, Gaerwen; Ysgol Llanfairpwll, and Ysgol Santes Fair, Holyhead for the SACRE's consideration.

The GwE Challenge Adviser noted that all four schools had judged that standards overall were good in relation to performance in RE, but highlighted the need to identify the main messages in the self-evaluation reports clearly, and take action on matters that needed improving.

The following points were raised during discussion:-

- Sikh and Muslim pupils may feel excluded, and teachers might consider working with the families, so that their religious beliefs are included in lessons, so they feel part of the school.
- Vocabulary and ability to question should be developed, giving pupils opportunities to express their opinion orally and in writing.
- The importance of developing an understanding of the effect of religion on believers' lives.
- KS2 - continue to develop challenging and extended tasks for the more able pupils in every class.

Professor Euros Wyn Jones noted that the Welsh dimension of school life is underdeveloped in St Mary's with a focus primarily on St David, with limited use of the Welsh language in worship. The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that children's experiences in RE in Anglesey schools should be rooted within the local, Welsh and global perspective.

**It was agreed to accept the self-evaluation reports and note their contents. The schools concerned were thanked for making them available to the SACRE.**

## 8 UPDATE BY THE GWE CHALLENGE ADVISER

### 1. New Members of the SACRE

The GwE Challenge Adviser summarised the role of SACRE members, and arranged for new members to receive information on the SACRE's role and responsibility. She informed members that the RE curriculum and guidelines are locally determined, and that each local authority and SACRE in Wales have adopted the National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education.

**Action:**

**Primary Education Officer to circulate the following documents to new members of the SACRE.**

- a) The Role of the SACRE's Members;
- b) Anglesey & Gwynedd's Agreed Syllabus;

### **c) Successful Future.**

## **2. New GCSE Religious Studies Course**

Mrs Heledd Hearn of Ysgol Bodedern provided an update on the new GCSE Religious Studies (RS) course. She reported that RE teachers have shared resources for the course, which commences in September, and will be available on the GwE website.

Concerns were raised that not all schools would have the same amount of time in order to deliver the new RS GCSE course to their pupils. Concerns were also raised that some commercial resources have not been translated.

The SACRE thanked the teachers for their input and joint working with Gwynedd:-

- *“Many thanks to the Heads for their support with regard to the new Religious Studies GCSE in allowing time for teachers to meet as a HUB and attend relevant courses;*
- *Understand that a great deal of the preparatory work has already been done and shared with the teachers during the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June in Caernarfon;*
- *Praise the teachers for their willingness to co-operate, support each other and share resources;*
- *Hope that sufficient time is given for the teachers to teach the new course”.*

### **Action:**

#### **Primary Education Officer on behalf of the SACRE to:-**

- **write to Head Teachers on Anglesey,**
  - a) **thanking them for supporting their RS teachers, so that they could attend training courses and meetings to help them prepare for the new RS GCSE course;**
  - b) **congratulating their RE teachers for their hard work, and,**
  - c) **asking that time allocated to the RE Department to teach the new RE course be in accordance with the WJEC guidance.**
- **write to the Dean of the Welsh National College expressing the SACRE’s concerns that theology courses for undergraduates and prospective teachers are in decline.**
- **share the minutes of this meeting with the Head of Learning.**

## **3. Religious Education and the New Curriculum**

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported on the following:-

- that the new curriculum must respond to the following 4 purposes of education from the Donaldson Report – That all our children and young people will be:-

- ambitious, capable learners
  - enterprising, creative participants
  - principled, informed citizens who are ready to act
  - individuals who are healthy and confident
- RE is part of the Humanities area of learning and experience. The RE field must link in to the other 5 fields of learning and experience, and is expected to contribute to health and wellbeing.
  - A group of pioneer schools are responsible for developing each area of learning and experience. To date, the schools have researched curricular modules in other countries, and have received guidance from external experts. Each group has outlined the extent of the areas of learning and experience, and are currently considering the value of identifying the 'big ideas' within RE.
  - The content of the new curriculum has not yet been decided.
  - No decision has been made to date as regards assessment.
  - Inter-curricular skills will continue: literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

The Gwe Challenge Adviser reported that she had attended a meeting of the Humanities group as an observer and representative of the WASACRE/NAPfRE. She further reported that Manon Jones, who is facilitating the Humanities group, has received the draft version of the document 'What is good RE?' developed by NAPfRE members, but the document is yet to be circulated to teachers in the pioneer schools.

Mr Christopher Thomas raised concern that if RE is gradually replaced by Social Studies, there will be an absence of Theology under the Humanities umbrella. The GwE Challenge Adviser responded that in relation to RE and the new curriculum, a fresh approach is necessary to ensure that what is presented is enriching and relevant to the lives of children and young people.

#### **4. Estyn**

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that Estyn inspections had noted that the standards and provision of RE in some schools was weak. Members of the SACRE were given an 'aide memoire' prepared by the Challenge Adviser noting 10 key facts about RE in primary schools. Members of the SACRE were afforded a summary of each key point.

It was noted Estyn will be carrying out thematic inspections of 'RE KS2 and KS3' during 2017-18. They are likely to visit a cross section of 20 schools across Wales.

#### **5. Collective Worship**

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that two pupils from Glan Taf School have established a petition on the Welsh Assembly Government website to abolish collective worship as a statutory requirement in schools. Another petition was set up on the website in favour of preserving the Christian element of collective worship, whilst acknowledging the need to respect other religions within the school community.

Members of the SACRE were invited to sign the petition via a link to the website.

**Action:**

**Primary Education Officer to forward the link to Members of the SACRE.**

**6. Religious Education E-circular KS3**

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that the following Welsh medium e-journals are available on the Hwb website:-

- a) No 1: Organ Donation
- b) No 2: Refugees
- c) No 3: War and Peace

**The contents of the above were noted by the SACRE's members.**

**9 THE COMMITTEE'S CONSTITUTION**

The Primary Education Officer presented the Ynys Môn Sacre's Constitution and Circular no 10/94 to the SACRE for information.

A question was raised as to whether the GwE Challenge Adviser representing Anglesey's SACRE at WASACRE meetings should have voting rights. **The Committee agreed that Miss Bethan James should vote in meetings on behalf of the Anglesey SACRE.**

**The SACRE agreed to note the Committee's Constitution for information purposes.**

**10 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES**

**The Committee noted the draft minutes of the WASACRE held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2017.**

**11 DATES OF MEETINGS 2017/18**

**The Committee noted the dates of the SACRE meetings scheduled for 2.00 pm on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 and 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.**

The meeting concluded at 4.15 pm

**Councillor Dylan Rees  
Chair**