

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October, 2018

- PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)
- The Education Authority**
- Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Alun W Mummery, Alun Roberts
- The Religious Denominations**
- Mrs Anest Frazer (The Church in Wales)
Mrs Catherine Jones (The Baptist Union of Wales)
Professor Euros Wyn Jones (Union of Welsh Independents)
Mr Christopher Thomas (The Roman Catholic Church)
- Teacher Representatives**
- Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Helen Bebb (Ysgol Uwchradd Porthaethwy) (Challenge Advisor to the SACRE)
Mrs Gwyneth Hughes (Senior Standards and Inclusions Manager, Education) (*Clerk to the SACRE*)
Reverend Tracy Jones (The Church in Wales)
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Glyn Haynes
Mrs Mefys Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch)
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)
-

The Chair welcomed all those present, and extended a particular welcome to Mrs Gwyneth Hughes, Mrs Helen Bebb and Reverend Tracy Jones to the meeting. He reported that Mrs Gwyneth Hughes would be acting as Clerk to the SACRE for today's meeting, and Mrs Helen Bebb, who is Head of Religious Education in Ysgol David Hughes, will be undertaking the role of Challenge Advisor to the SACRE for the next twelve months.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH APRIL, 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 18th April, 2018 were presented and confirmed as correct, subject to the following:-

Matters Arising

(2) - Minutes

- Mr Rhun ap Iorwerth, AM's response regarding the Welsh Assembly's Petitions Committee's decision on the collective worship petition was forwarded to SACRE members on 9th May, 2018.
- Further to the SACRE's concerns regarding the lack of suitable RE teacher training through the medium of Welsh, Professor Euros Wyn Jones reported that Mr Rheinallt Thomas, as President of the Free Welsh Churches, will be raising the matter in a forum meeting of the Welsh National College and Colleges of Higher Education, and will report back to the SACRE in due course.
- It was noted that the new template for schools' self-evaluation reports has been shared with the SACRE.

(3) - Chairman's Summary on the Anglesey SACRE's Annual Report for 2016/17

It was confirmed that a copy of the Chairman's Summary has been forwarded to the Head of Learning to finalise the Anglesey SACRE's Annual Report for 2016/17.

(4) - Religious Education Standards

Due to a full agenda, it had not been possible to include 'Collective Worship in Schools' on the WASACRE agenda for the meeting held in Anglesey on 6th July, 2018.

RESOLVED that the Chair on behalf of the SACRE, requests that 'Collective Worship in Schools' be included on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the WASACRE.

Action: As noted above.

(5) - Support for the Future

It was noted that Mr Arwyn Thomas, GwE's Chief Executive, has not responded to the Chair's correspondence expressing SACRE's concern that Miss Bethan James's support to the Anglesey SACRE has been withdrawn without prior notice.

RESOLVED:-

- **That the Chair writes to Mr Arwyn Thomas, expressing the SACRE's disappointment that he has not responded to concerns raised by the Chair.**
- **That the SACRE invites Mr Thomas to attend its next meeting in February 2019.**

Action: As noted above.

- The Chair reported that the Head of Learning has arranged for the Heads of RE Departments from each of the five secondary schools in Anglesey to undertake the role of Challenge Advisors to the SACRE, alternating on an yearly basis.

The SACRE agreed to monitor the situation, but felt that the support and guidance necessary to fulfil its role and responsibility would not be met via the arrangement. Members of the SACRE showed concern that teachers would be put under greater pressure to undertake extra duties, when they are already overstretched.

- It was noted that the Portfolio Holder for Education has been informed of the SACRE's concerns regarding GwE withdrawing the support and guidance of the GwE Challenge Advisor to the SACRE.
- The Welsh Government Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, AM, has responded to concerns raised by the SACRE that the new GCSE curriculum in RE is too onerous, and that there is a lack of available resources for teaching RE in Welsh.

RESOLVED that the SACRE monitors the current situation and concerns raised regarding the new curriculum, and acts upon feedback from RE teachers in due course.

Action: As noted above.

- The Anglesey Presbyterian Church of Wales has not responded to the SACRE's request for the Church to nominate a member to represent the SACRE.

RESOLVED that the Clerk to the SACRE writes to the Presbyterian Church of Wales requesting that the Church nominates a member as a representative on the SACRE.

Action: As noted above.

- The Chair reported that there is also a vacant seat on the SACRE for a member from the teaching sector.

RESOLVED that the Clerk to the SACRE requests nominations from teachers for the role of teacher representative on the SACRE.

Action: As noted above.

3 THE ANGLESEY SACRE'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016/17

The above report was adopted by the SACRE at its last meeting in April, 2018.

The Chair reported that the Action Plan was drawn up by Miss Bethan James, the GwE Challenge Advisor at the time, based on four recommendations within the report.

The SACRE showed concern that the Action Plan has not been updated, and there is uncertainty as to who will prepare the SACRE's Annual Reports in future. It was

suggested and agreed by SACRE's members, that funding be sought via the Head of Learning, with a view to purchasing external expertise to undertake the task of preparing the Annual Report for 2017/18, which is a statutory requirement.

It was noted that some SACRE members felt that they have not been afforded an opportunity to fulfil their duties successfully in terms of delivery of the Action Plan for 2016/17.

RESOLVED:-

- **That the Clerk on behalf of the SACRE, seeks funding from the Head of Learning, with a view to securing external expertise to undertake the task of preparing the Annual Report for 2017/18.**
- **That Mrs Helen Bebb, with the assistance of Mrs Heledd Hearn, prepares the SACRE's Action Plan for 2018/19. In order for this arrangement to be fulfilled, arrangement will need to be agreed for additional hours to be allocated to Mrs Bebb.**

Action: As noted above.

4 ESTYN INSPECTION REPORT (JUNE 2018)

The Clerk to the SACRE summarised information on the RE Estyn Inspection Report at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The report sets out clearly the standards expected from schools.

It was noted that standards are good in RE in the majority of schools. In KS2, most pupils make good progress in developing their RE skills and knowledge. However, some schools do not make sufficient progress with more able children and need to challenge them more. In KS3, most pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve standards in line with their ability and age.

The following points were highlighted during discussion:-

- Words like 'should' are used repeatedly in Estyn terminology, which states exactly what is expected of schools. When referring to numbers, Estyn uses terms such as 'many' to mean 70% or more'; 'few' to mean below 20%. It is important that teachers familiarise themselves with the new Estyn terminology.
- There is a need for more bridging work to be carried out between the primary and secondary sector in RE.
- Leadership is good overall in the majority of schools, with greater strength reported in the secondary sector rather than the primary sector.
- More needs to be done than raise awareness of the new curriculum and Successful Futures (Donaldson 2015). It was noted that only a minority of schools have made changes to the curriculum to date.
- Concerns were raised regarding the increased use of IT in RE and the new curriculum, and its impact on teachers, who are expected to adapt to the changes without being offered any IT training to improve their skills.

- Some teachers are fearful they 'might say the wrong thing' when teaching religions other than Christianity. The teachers also noted that it can be challenging when there are strong agnostic feelings from the home.
- It was noted that the SACRE does not have an overview of RE co-ordinators in schools for the primary sector to facilitate the sharing of information and resources. It was therefore suggested **and agreed that a database of RE co-ordinators be compiled to enable schools and the SACRE to have points of contact in primary schools.**
- The report states that 'most Head Teachers are aware of the local SACRE, but are unsure of its role and purpose'.

To raise awareness of SACRE's role and responsibility, a suggestion was put forward that **SACRE members be invited to attend the next meeting of the Heads of Anglesey's secondary schools.**

RESOLVED:-

- **That the SACRE accepts the above recommendations.**
- **That the Challenge Advisor includes the recommendation in bullet point 7 above, in SACRE's Action Plan for 2017/18.**
- **That the Clerk to the SACRE updates the Chair on arrangements for the meeting of the Heads of Anglesey's schools.**
- **That an invitation be extended to Mrs Heledd Hearn and Mrs Helen Bebb to attend the above meeting.**

Action: As noted above.

5 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

Estyn School Inspections - Spring 2018

Information from Estyn inspection reports undertaken at Ysgol Rhosybol, Ysgol Bryngwran and Ysgol Gynradd Llanfairpwll was presented for the SACRE's consideration.

The Chair reported that all three schools inspected had been awarded excellent results by Estyn, and were to be congratulated on their work.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the contents of the information presented.**
- **That the Clerk to the SACRE:-**
 - **writes to the three schools congratulating them on their success in the Estyn inspections reports, and**
 - **informs the above schools that the SACRE has discussed their achievements in today's meeting as part of the SACRE's work monitoring RE standards in schools, and**

- invites the Head of Ysgol Rhosybol to the SACRE's next meeting to discuss the school's achievements and good practices.

Action: As noted above.

6 SCHOOLS SELF-EVALUATION GUIDANCE NOTES

The Clerk to the SACRE reported that the guidance notes had been prepared by Miss Bethan James, and are very useful in terms of how to self-evaluate collective worship and RE in schools. They include ideas for schools on how to present evidence, and use words that are familiar to Estyn.

The Clerk referred to the schools self-evaluation template, which lists examples of the type of information that should be presented in electronic format. It was noted that Estyn have now included five questions in the template, compared to the previous three. It was further noted that all the schools inspected last year have received a copy of the guidance notes.

The SACRE showed their appreciation to Miss Bethan James for her excellent work.

RESOLVED to note and accept the information presented.

Action: None

(Mrs Helen Bebb left the meeting at 3.00 pm)

7 SACRE WORKSHOP MEETING RE THE NEW CURRICULUM

The Chair reported that he attended a SACRE Workshop meeting on 18th September, 2018 in Llandudno, together with Mr Christopher Thomas and Mrs Anest Frazer.

Mr Christopher Thomas gave an update on the meeting, and reported that he was very encouraged that schools will now have an opportunity to design their own curriculums within the framework. It was noted that Mr Thomas considered the absence of examinations in future as a move forward, and referred to the positive achievement outcomes schools will be using for assessments eg. 'I can do this', 'I have experienced this', which gives a much better impression of what a child is doing.

It was noted that Successful Futures will be implemented in 2022, and that pupils currently in Year 2 will be impacted by the changes. It was further noted that the absence of the GwE Challenge Advisor to provide clear, objective advice is not going to help the SACRE in its role.

Mrs Anest Frazer reported that this is an anxious time for teachers and pupils who have chosen RE as a subject for GCSE, as there are no bi-lingual resources, and no recognition of where the curriculum is at the moment. She stated that she had expected more answers rather than uncertainty from the new curriculum.

It was drawn to the SACRE's attention that there have been discrepancies recently in a WJEC's RE examination paper. It was noted that five questions presented in an examination paper had disparity between the Welsh and English versions. The SACRE responded that such errors in examination papers were unacceptable, and agreed to inform the WJEC of their concern.

RESOLVED:-

- That Mrs Heledd Hearn confirms in writing to the Chair, the circumstances of the discrepancies encountered with the above examination paper.
- That the Chair on behalf of the SACRE, drafts an official letter to the WJEC requesting an explanation regarding the examination paper error, and that the SACRE's concerns about inconsistencies in examination papers are noted.

Action: As noted above.

8 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

The Chair reported that the WASACRE meeting on Anglesey on 6th July, 2018, was well attended by members of the Anglesey SACRE. He stated that the main points raised included concerns in North Wales following the GwE Challenge Advisor's service being withdrawn, which also affects SACREs in Gwynedd, Flint, Conwy and Denbighshire. It was noted that uncertainty was expressed about the future regarding how the SACREs should move forward, which is still under review.

The Chair reported that a presentation was given on the Estyn report in KS2 and KS3; the new curriculum under Donaldson was discussed, as well as the Workshop meeting in Llandudno.

It was noted that Mrs Helen Bebb is now a member of the National Assessment Panel for RE (NAPfRE). As a member, Mrs Bebb will be expected to attend national meetings of the NAPfRE, as a representative of the Anglesey SACRE.

RESOLVED to note the Chair's feedback and points raised in the meeting.

Action: None

9 CORRESPONDENCE

A response from Kirsty Williams, AM was discussed in Item 2(5) of the minutes.

Humanist Membership of Ynys Mon SACRE

The Chair read out a letter he receive in June, 2018 from Mr Richard Spate, Chair of the Bangor Humanists Group requesting that the SACRE accepts non- religious representatives on the SACRE.

The Chair reported that he has requested information from Mr Spate regarding the number of Humanists on Anglesey, but to date has not received a response.

RESOLVED that the SACRE does not come to a decision at present, but awaits a response from Mr Spate to the Chair's request.

Action: None

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The SACRE noted that the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 2.00pm on Tuesday, 19th February, 2019.

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**