

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)

The Education Authority

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Alun W Mummery

The Religious Denominations

Mrs Anest Frazer (The Church in Wales)

Mrs Catherine Jones (The Baptist Union of Wales)

Mr Christopher Thomas (The Roman Catholic Church)

Teacher Representatives

Mrs Amanda Earnshaw (Ysgol Cybi)

Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Helen Bebb (Ysgol Uwchradd Porthaethwy) (RE Co-ordinator)
Mrs Gwyneth M Hughes (Senior Standards and Inclusions
Manager, Education) (Clerk to the SACRE)
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Glyn Haynes, Aled Morris Jones, Alun Roberts
Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)
Mrs Manon Morris Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen)
Mr Rheinallt Thomas, Co-opted Member (Sunday Schools'
Council)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr Gerald Hewitson (The Quakers)

The Chair welcomed all those present, and extended a particular welcome to Mrs Amanda Earnshaw and Mr Gerald Hewitson to their first meeting of the Anglesey SACRE. Mrs Earnshaw has been appointed as a teacher representative to the SACRE.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 19 February 2019 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Matters arising from the minutes:-

- With reference to the Chair's request to attend a meeting of the Primary Schools' Forum, the Head Teachers' Liaison Group have approved the request, and an invitation will be sent to the Chair and the RE Co-ordinator to attend a Forum meeting in due course.
- It was confirmed that the number of Estyn reports listed in the table in Section 2.3.3 of the 2017/18 Annual Report is correct.
- It was noted that amendments to the SACRE's Constitution in terms of membership on this Committee will be discussed at a later date.
- The Chair and Clerk to the SACRE have held a discussion with Mr Arwyn Williams, the Head of Learning, regarding the lack of professional expertise that is available to the SACRE to carry out its statutory function. Mr Williams acknowledges that the SACRE needs professional support and guidance, not just from this Authority, but also from GwE and Estyn, who are aware of the situation.
- The Clerk to the SACRE reported that she is awaiting a response from the Secretary of the Union of Welsh Independents to the SACRE's request for the Church to nominate a representative to join the Anglesey SACRE.
- In relation to the SACRE's concerns regarding the lack of bi-lingual teaching resources, the matter has been raised in a meeting of the County Council's Language Forum. It was confirmed that the Chair of the Language Forum has written to Mr Mark Drakeford, the First Minister for Wales, expressing the Forum's concerns.
- The Chair confirmed that he has emailed Mr Richard Speight of Bangor Humanist Group informing him of the SACRE's decision not to appoint a member of the Humanist Group on this Committee.
- In relation to schools' self-evaluation reports, **it was suggested and adopted that schools in the 5 catchment areas be targeted in turn, resulting in 8 reports being requested each term. Any schools who have not provided a report would be highlighted on the following 6th term.**

RESOLVED:-

- **That the Clerk to the SACRE reviews the options available to include membership from other religious denominations to the SACRE.**
- **That the Clerk to the SACRE actions the above proposal in relation to schools' self-evaluation reports.**

3 ANGLESEY SACRE'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017/18

- The SACRE's Annual Report 2017/18 was presented before the Committee for approval.

A member of the SACRE highlighted that a table in Section 2.3.2 of the Welsh version of the Annual Report had not been translated.

RESOLVED to adopt the SACRE's Annual Report 2017/18, subject to the correction noted above.

- The SACRE's Action Plan 2019/22 was presented for consideration and comment, with particular reference to the Committee's achievement against the priorities and outcomes listed in the Plan, which will be monitored by the SACRE on a regular basis.

The RE Co-ordinator reported that the Action Plan is based on information collated from SACRE's Annual Report, the New Curriculum for Wales 2022, and Estyn's report (June 2018) discussing RE at KS2 and KS3. She highlighted that teachers and pupils need to be aware of the changes the curriculum will bring.

Discussion focused on whether the primary and secondary sectors would collaborate in relation to the new curriculum? It was noted that currently there is no collaboration, but there will be in the future. It was further noted that the term 'to avoid duplication' is used in the new curriculum, and schools will need to ensure that they work jointly in the primary and secondary sector to maintain continuation in RE as a subject.

Reference was made to the Supporting Framework for RE, which is due to be published in January 2020, which will assist teachers to develop the curriculum for learners. **It was suggested and agreed that the Framework be included in the Action Plan for monitoring purposes.**

The Chair thanked the RE Co-ordinator, for her work in preparing the Action Plan, which was well received by the SACRE

RESOLVED:-

- **That the Draft Framework for RE be included as an action point on the Action Plan 2019/22.**
- **That the SACRE adopts the Action Plan 2019/22.**

Action: As noted above.

4 THE NEW CURRICULUM FOR WALES 2022, AND HOW THIS WILL AFFECT RE?

The Chair referred to the Draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance, forwarded by Mr Rheinallt Thomas, requesting that the SACRE provides feedback on the new curriculum. The Chair reported that he would share the guidance with the SACRE electronically.

The Clerk to the SACRE added that the consultation period will conclude on 19 July 2019, then feedback will be considered by education professionals involved in its development. The guidance will be refined, and rolled out in 2022 for all year groups in the primary sector and Year 7 in the secondary sector, followed by Year 8 in 2023, rising year on year to 2026.

It was noted that there will be challenging times ahead for teachers in the secondary sector during the transition period. Schools will be impacted significantly, as teachers and staff will need to deliver the old and new curriculum at

the same time. The new curriculum is being praised for being more contemporary and positive in its thematic approach.

Concerns were raised that it is easy to lose the RE aspects of Humanities in the new curriculum, as the specification needs to be developed. It is hoped that the supporting framework will be delivered and monitored to the highest standards.

The Chair reported that he and the RE Co-ordinator, will be attending a meeting of the North Wales SACREs on Thursday in Conwy to discuss responses by SACREs from across North Wales to the new curriculum.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the information presented in relation to the New Curriculum for Wales 2022.**
- **That the Chair and RE Co-ordinator provide feedback to the SACRE following their attendance at the North Wales SACREs meeting.**

Action: As noted above.

5 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

Estyn School Inspections - Winter 2018 & Spring 2019

Estyn inspection reports undertaken at Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch, Ysgol y Graig, Llangefni and Ysgol Gymunedol Pentraeth were presented for the SACRE's consideration.

The Clerk to the SACRE reported that she has provided the full Estyn inspection report for each school, rather than extracts, to give a better picture and flavour of the work undertaken at the schools.

It was reported that there were no issues arising from the Estyn inspections, and that all three schools met the requirements. It was noted that the ethos, RE provision and Collective Worship are good in all the schools.

A member of the SACRE highlighted that Estyn are inconsistent in their use of Welsh ie in the Ysgol Gymuned Pentraeth report, Estyn refers to 'Collective Worship' as 'Cyd Addoli', rather than the correct translation 'Addoli ar y Cyd'.

RESOLVED to note the information presented in the Estyn inspection reports.

Action: None

6 SCHOOLS' SELF-EVALUATION REPORTS

The schools' self-evaluation reports by Ysgol Y Talwrn, Ysgol Gymunedol Pentraeth and Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch were presented for the SACRE's consideration.

It was noted that the standard of teaching attained in RE in the above schools is either adequate or good.

The SACRE showed concern that self-evaluation reports are not checked by a professional body, and there is no means of support for schools who might need assistance to improve and raise standards.

The Chair proposed that he visit Ysgol Y Talwrn to observe Collective Worship, and view the work carried out by pupils at the school.

Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards gave a verbal report on the self-evaluation report she has prepared for Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, entitled the Faculty of Humanities. She highlighted the following 5 key points from her report in relation to RE:-

1. Standards

- KS4 and KS5 results are very good, with each pupil attaining a qualification in the subject;
- KS3 results are adequate to good, as they vary with different groups;
- Standards in relation to boys need to improve, as boys are currently underperforming across the island;
- KS5 standards need to improve in the Philosophy Unit;
- Literacy is very good, due to planning that has taken place to improve oral and written skills.
- Numeracy and IT skills only need to be developed as necessary.

2. Well-being and Attitude to Learning

- Pupil participation in lessons is very good; they enjoy the subject;
- Teachers and pupils have a good relationship in RE lessons;
- Pupils' attitude to more independent learning needs to be developed, and is one of the 12 areas of the new curriculum.

3. Teaching and Learning Experiences

- RE provision as regards lessons, books and speaking to learners is good;
- Pupils benefit from experiences through visits;
- Skills and information on understanding Christianity and other faiths are tailored well within the work plans.

4. Care, Support and Guidance

- Teachers question learners when providing feedback to pupils, which require sharp responses, which in turn improves the standard of work in the classroom;
- Dialogue between teachers and pupils has improved;
- Collective worship sessions are held daily in Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones.

5. Leadership and Management

- Strategic co-working is taking place with other schools regarding GCSEs and A levels, resulting in improved collaboration;
- Self-evaluation happens annually in the school, and the following year's Improvement Plan is based on information provided in the schools' self-evaluation report;
- Each member of staff within the school has an opportunity to develop professionally;
- Need to share good practice in preparation for the new curriculum, as there will be obvious changes.

The Chair thanked the teachers involved in preparing and presenting the self-evaluation reports to the SACRE.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the RE self-evaluation reports presented.**
- **That the Chair contacts the Head Teacher of Ysgol Y Talwrn to arrange a visits to the school to observe a Collective Worship session and the work carried out by learners at the school.**

Action: As noted above.

7 **WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)**

The draft minutes of the previous meeting of the WASACRE held on 26 March 2019, were presented for information.

The Chair referred to Item 8 on the agenda - Professional RE support for SACREs.

The Chair reported that WASACRE has now received a response from Kirsty Williams, the Minister for Education, to concerns raised regarding the lack of professional support for SACREs across Wales. In her response, the Minister outlined the arrangements that had been put in place for meetings between WASACRE and Welsh Government.

It was further noted that Libby Jones and Paula Webber are currently in discussion with the Minister and Welsh Government, and have emphasized that in order to move forward and adopt the new curriculum, investment in resources must be delivered. They have recommended that Welsh Government invests money into establishing consultants regionally to provide vital support, and this proposal has been submitted to Welsh Government.

The SACRE showed concern regarding the Minister's statement that the issue of providing expertise should be resolved between LAs, schools and each individual SACRE. The SACRE was disappointed with this statement, and felt that as SACREs are established by law, responsibility to provide support, encouragement and finance to SACREs should lie with Welsh Government.

RESOLVED:-

- To note the information presented in the WASACRE minutes.
- That RE teachers bring samples of GCSE and A Level examination questions to the next meeting of the SACRE.
- That the Clerk to the SACRE includes an item on the Committee's next agenda to discuss GCSE and A Level results.

Action: As noted above.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair reported that he has received a reminder from Dr Peter Hemming of Cardiff University regarding a previous e-mail Dr Hemming shared with the SACRE, regarding an evaluation survey he is undertaking on Diversity of Religion and Belief Guidance and Resource.

The Clerk to the SACRE reported that responses had been received from schools, but not from SACREs.

RESOLVED that the Clerk to the SACRE re-circulates Dr Peter Hemming's e-mail to members of the Anglesey SACRE.

Action: As noted above.

9 THE ANGLESEY SACRE'S NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next SACRE meeting is scheduled for at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 8 October 2019.

The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**