

# STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

## Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022

**PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)

### **The Education Authority**

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Alun Roberts

### **The Religious Denominations**

Mrs Elaine Green (The Presbyterian Church of Wales)  
Rev Deborah Stammers (The Baptist Union of Wales)  
Mr Christopher Thomas (The Catholic Church)

### **Teacher Representatives**

Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Gwyneth M Hughes (Senior Welfare Manager, Education)  
(RE Advisor to the SACRE)  
Mr Owen Davies (Senior Primary Manager)  
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Mrs Manon Morris Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen,  
Newborough)  
Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones,  
Amlwch)  
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)

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## **1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None received.

## **2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 23 November 2021 were presented and confirmed as correct.

**Matters arising from the minutes:-**

Item 3 –

- Reference was made to leaders in secondary schools sharing their expertise in planning the curriculum with the primary sector in South Anglesey. A question was raised whether engagement with the primary sector is currently taking place in the other four secondary schools on Anglesey?

The RE Advisor responded that two SACRE teachers are leaders in Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones and Ysgol Bodedern. She reported that she would seek clarification from GwE as to whether teacher expertise in RE is available in every school in Anglesey, and report back to the SACRE's next meeting.

The Senior Primary Manager reported that GwE has established regional boards in each of the six Humanities Areas of Learning and Experience, and teachers from Anglesey schools sit on these boards. He highlighted the need for local collaboration between the secondary and primary sector, and stated that arrangements are already in place.

It was noted that GwE will assign a Humanities representative to support schools, but specialist support in RVE will not be provided to the SACRE.

It was suggested that the SACRE requests specialist expertise from GwE, to fulfil its function in supporting schools. There needs to be equity in the Humanities AoLE, or RVE may be lost, if it is not given the same status as the other Humanities subjects.

**RESOLVED that the RE Advisor contacts GwE to request information and clarity regarding arrangements between the secondary and primary sector in Anglesey schools.**

- With reference to the SACRE's concerns regarding home education, Councillor Gwilym Jones reported that this issue was raised in a meeting of the Schools Programme Review Panel on 25 November 2021. A presentation was also received, as confirmed in the Panel's minutes below:-

- *Reference was made to the discussion which took place during the previous Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) meeting held on the 23rd of November 2021, and reference made to an increase in the number of children and young people educated at home.*
- *It was noted that today is an opportunity for the Education Service to share the developments of the past few months with the Elected Members and also an opportunity for the Members to ask questions.*
- *This area was a bridge between the Education Service and Social Services and it was noted that there had been numerous comments regarding elective home education at previous Social Services Improvement Panel meetings. This is because of the potential for safeguarding issues arising.*
- *Reference was made to the procedures in place to work proactively so as to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements. Teulu Môn is a point of contact if there are concerns. Strategic focus also through the North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board.*

- *North West Arrangements → Operational Level: new Elective Home Education Lead Teacher post created in February, 2021 (funded through Welsh Government grant funding) within the Education Welfare Team. Main objective of the role - to create positive contact with families. Processes and procedures in place since September, 2021 to assess the education provision of home educated children / young people. Collaboration between the Lead Teacher and the Education Quality Officer - this includes joint visits where appropriate.*
  - *Contact Data: 92 children/ young people educated at home and 58 contacted by phone, email or visit by the Specialist Teacher. Aim -build positive contact and offer support to parents (e.g. via a Facebook page run by a group of parents etc.). Establishing and maintaining relationships with parents is key to the success of the contact. Welfare Officers check any welfare issues where concern arises on the educational side. The Council cannot enforce contact.*
  - *Statutory requirement for the person responsible for teaching to provide an annual educational report. Many examples of high quality education being provided for children at home.*
  - *Forum in place to discuss children where there is concern. Arrangements in place including the need to create action plans and an expectation to report / monitor and take further action as required. School Attendance Order is a possible step to take if there is cause for concern.*
  - *Arrangements for additional learning needs also apply to this cohort of children / young people - this includes Additional Learning Plans and timely reviews.*
  - *Extensive network of provision available to home educated children through the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service such as psychologists, Careers Wales (post 16 provision), Health Board specialties etc.*
  - *Details are anticipated from the Welsh Government in the New Year on what level of provision should be offered to home educated children / young people.*
  - *Going forward - an objective of increasing the number of visits to home educated children. Also, review our arrangements in light of the Welsh Government's announcement on the nature of the support offered.*
- The RE Advisor confirmed that she is in the process of distributing the £4,000 grant funding centrally between the 5 Anglesey schools within each catchment area.

Item 5 - The Chair reported that he has not yet received a nomination for a representative from the Union of Welsh Independents to join the SACRE.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk to the SACRE contacts Rev Jim Clarke to request that he nominates a representative from the Church to sit on the Anglesey SACRE.**

Item 6 – **RESOLVED that the Clerk to the SACRE invites a member of the Church in Wales to attend the SACRE's next meeting to present an overview of the Pilgrimage Project.**

### **3 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ANGLESEY SACRE FOR 2020/21**

The draft Annual Report of the Anglesey SACRE for 2020/21 was presented for consideration and approval.

The Chair and members of the SACRE thanked the RE Advisor for her excellent work in preparing a comprehensive Annual Report for 2020/21. The Annual Report was approved by the SACRE, subject to minor amendments as noted in discussion.

Reference was made to Mrs Catherine Jones in the report, a former member of the SACRE, who represented the Union of Welsh Baptists for many years prior to the pandemic. Mrs Jones stepped down from her role when virtual meetings became the norm. The SACRE extended their gratitude to Mrs Jones for her input and long service to the SACRE.

Concerns were raised that the uptake in pupils sitting RE GCSE in some schools is increasing, while in other schools, the subject is in decline. It was questioned whether the difference was due to a lack of expertise available in some schools, or whether the syllabus is too challenging compared to other subjects.

Discussion focused on the number of pupils who are taught RE A Level in their own schools, or have to travel elsewhere to study the subject. Mrs Heledd Hearn confirmed that 2 pupils from Year 12 and two from Year 13 from Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni attend Bodedern School for RE lessons, due to the lack of expertise currently available in their local school.

It was noted that due to the decreasing trend in the uptake of RE, schools need to be as flexible as possible in terms of teaching. RE is now being offered through the medium of English, which has been welcomed by the SACRE as a way forward.

#### **RESOLVED:-**

- **That Mrs Deborah Stammers conveys the SACRE's appreciation to Mrs Catherine Jones for her contribution to the SACRE over many years.**
- **To adopt the SACRE's Annual Report for 2020/21, subject to the correction of minor errors.**
- **That the RE Advisor forwards a copy of the Annual Report for 2020/21 to Welsh Government.**

### **4 REPORT BY THE RE ADVISOR TO THE SACRE**

The RE Advisor reported that she had shared correspondence with the SACRE's teachers in relation to the requirement for pupils to sit A Level examinations this year. She stated that it will be a challenging time for pupils and teachers to return to examinations in schools, and echoed the SACRE's concerns. It was noted that some flexibility has been given to schools regarding the choice of subjects.

Clarity was sought regarding the current arrangements in schools for RE GCSEs and A Levels. Mrs Heledd Hearn confirmed that pupils will sit 3 out of 4 units for GCSE, and each school will decide which unit not to study. With regard to pupils in Year 10, schools have received some information on what the content of the examinations will be eg the Synagogue and home will be included in Judaism, and it is likely that the question will be an evaluation, carrying 15 marks. As regards A Level, the content of the examination is unclear, but it has been confirmed that some changes will be made. The syllabus for Buddhism will stay the same for Years 12 and 13, and the syllabi for Ethics and Philosophy have been reduced, which has been well received by teachers.

**RESOLVED to note the matters raised during discussion.**

## **5 AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS**

The Chair referred to the Anglesey and Gwynedd Agreed Syllabus Conference held virtually earlier today. He stated that the Conference had been very successful, and all 3 groups – Councillors, members of religious institutions and teachers voted unanimously to accept the Agreed Syllabus for Anglesey.

**RESOLVED to accept the Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics for adoption by Anglesey County Council.**

## **6 ANY OTHER MATTERS**

The Chair reported that the WASACRE's draft Constitution was circulated to the SACRE for information, following publication of the agenda.

**RESOLVED to note the changes to the SACRE's Constitution.**

The Chair referred to the forthcoming County Council Elections, and stated that he was unsure whether he would be attending any future SACRE meetings. As Chair of the Anglesey SACRE, he thanked the SACRE for all the support he has received, and wished everyone well.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES  
CHAIR**