

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February, 2016

- PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)
- The Education Authority**
- Councillors Gwilym O.Jones, Alun Mummery
- The Religious Denominations**
- Mr Rheinallt Thomas (The Presbyterian Church in Wales) (Vice-Chair)
Kirsty Williams (The Church in Wales)
Mr Christopher Thomas (The Roman Catholic Church)
Stephen Francis Roe (The Methodist Church)
- Teacher Representatives**
- Mrs Manon Williams (Ysgol Gynradd Llangaffo)
Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr D.Gareth Jones (Primary Education Officer) (Clerk to the SACRE)
Ann Holmes (Committee Officer)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor R.Llewelyn Jones, Mrs Catherine Jones (The Baptist Union of Wales), Professor Euros Wyn Jones (Union of Welsh Independents), Mrs Mefys Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Miss Bethan James (GwE Challenge Advisor)
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1. PRESENTATION

The Chair informed the SACRE that due to unavoidable circumstances, the planned presentation by Ysgol y Borth on the work of the Foundation Phase would be postponed until the next meeting in June.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

3. MINUTES OF THE 6 OCTOBER, 2015 MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 6th October, 2015 were presented and confirmed as correct.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- It was noted that any member of the SACRE not in receipt of the pro-forma for recording members' collective worship visits to schools was welcome to request a copy from the GwE Challenge Advisor.
- The Primary Education Officer confirmed that he had written to the Diocese of Bangor with regard to the Section 50 inspection report on Ysgol Llangaffo to highlight the inaccuracy in the Welsh

version in relation to the use of the term, “collective worship” and that he was awaiting a response.

- The GwE Challenge Advisor informed the SACRE that two workshops to assist schools with their preparation of RE self-evaluation reports had been held at Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni at which approximately eight schools were represented by a combination of Head teachers, co-ordinators and teachers. Those representatives present were reminded of the documentation that is available along with guidance issued by the Welsh Government regarding planning and assessing RE as well as the resources and materials which they should be looking to access, and they were provided with advice on how to approach RE self-evaluation.
- The Chair confirmed that the Primary Education Officer had forwarded a copy of the SACRE’s Annual Report for 2014/15 to the Welsh Government. The Chair, Primary Education Officer and the GwE Challenge Advisor plan to re-visit the SACRE’s Action Plan in light of the recommendations it had made to the Education Authority in the annual report and **to re-present it to the next meeting.**

The GwE Challenge Advisor said that schools’ response to the review of the curriculum in the wake of the Donaldson review – Successful Futures - needs to be monitored. Certain schools in Wales have been designated as part of the Pioneer Schools Network to develop and trial the new curriculum for Wales jointly with other partners. She suggested that the SACRE would be keen to keep abreast of any developments in Religious Education in order to influence some of the partners that advise schools. The SACRE therefore needs to be taking action next year to ensure it is in the best position to bring influence to bear on the shape of the new curriculum and that it is interested in learning about any creative, exciting or contemporary RE activities that teachers on Anglesey are trialling as potential examples for the new curriculum. It was noted that the WASACRE is a key stakeholder in the discussions on the development of the Donaldson Review.

- The Primary Education Officer confirmed that he had followed up those schools that had not as yet provided the SACRE with their RE self-evaluation reports.
- Correspondence sent by the Chair to the Assembly Member for Anglesey on behalf of the SACRE summarising its position with regard to the Welsh Government’s proposed plans for the future of Religious Education was presented and was noted.

5. ESTYN INSPECTIONS AUTUMN 2015

The relevant information from Estyn inspections undertaken at Ysgol y Borth, Ysgol Garreglefn, Ysgol Llandegfan, Ysgol Llannerchymedd, and Ysgol Rhosneigr was presented for the SACRE’s consideration.

The SACRE noted that overall, the observations made by the inspectors with regard to the schools’ provision in terms of meeting the requirements of the Religious Education agreed syllabus, providing meaningful collective worship periods for pupils and promoting pupils’ spiritual, social and cultural development are positive. The SACRE also noted that although shortcomings had been identified with regard to the quality of learning experiences and planning at Ysgol Garreglefn, the school is described as a happy and caring community where the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through assemblies and charity fundraising.

The Primary Education Officer reported that following inspection, Ysgol Garreglefn was identified as requiring special measures and Religious Education is included as part of the inconsistencies highlighted in relation to the standard of planning at the school. The school has formulated a detailed Plan of Action in response to the recommendations of the Estyn inspection report which incorporates Religious Education, and the GwE Challenge Advisor has visited the school. The school will also be visited each term by Estyn to monitor the progress made against each of the recommendations issued.

The SACRE was agreed in also wishing to monitor progress with regard to Religious Education specifically at Ysgol Garreglefn and there was consensus that this would best be done by the presentation in due course of a progress report by the GwE Challenge Advisor.

It was agreed to note the information.

ACTION ENSUING: GwE Challenge Advisor to report back to the SACRE in due course on progress made at Ysgol Garreglefn with regard to Religious Education provision and planning specifically.

6. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATIONS

The Religious Education self-evaluation reports provided by Ysgol Penysarn, Ysgol y Talwrn, Ysgol y Graig, Canolfan Addysg y Bont, Ysgol Amlwch and Ysgol y Ffridd were presented for the SACRE's consideration.

The SACRE noted the following:

- Variations within the self-evaluation reports both in terms of content and presentation with some of the schools adhering to the agreed pro-forma and others adopting a more narrative approach. Particular reference was made to the self-evaluations provided by Canolfan Addysg y Bont and Ysgol Amlwch as descriptive reports.

The SACRE was advised that the pro-forma has been circulated to schools as a matter of guidance and local good practice but that there is no national framework for drafting self-evaluation reports. The SACRE was informed also that Mrs Catherine Jones who was unable to attend today's meeting had visited Canolfan Addysg y Bont in November to observe a collective worship period at the school as part of the SACRE's agreed monitoring practice.

The SACRE agreed that it would be helpful and informative for it to invite the Head teacher of Canolfan Addysg y Bont to a meeting of the SACRE to discuss the school's RE provision from the perspective of a special school.

- That several of the schools note that more community visits would enhance pupils' knowledge and appreciation of other faiths and improve their ability to discuss and express their opinion about them.

The SACRE was advised that there is a responsibility on schools to show that community visitors do provide helpful experiences for the pupils and that they can report on personal faith experiences that are relevant to the studies. The GwE Challenge Advisor said that opportunities for schools in a predominantly rural environment like Anglesey to ensure that pupils have access to a variety of contact with other faiths are more limited compared to schools in urban areas although schools have in the past made use of the mosque in Bangor and there are increasing opportunities to make contact through digital means e.g. virtual visits and contact via Skype. Whilst those kind of experiences are good they are not as valuable as being able to chat face to face with a person of another faith.

The GwE Challenge Advisor also informed the SACRE that she had amended the self-evaluation pro-forma to incorporate a provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT standards in Religious Education. Some statements made by schools tend to be generic and so in order to encourage teachers to refer both to Religious Education and to skills across the curriculum a sub-heading to that end has been included in the template. Also, following the workshop held with primary teachers the previous term, the guidance provided has also been adapted to fashion more statements that teachers can use in preparing self-evaluation especially in terms of providing examples of how RE provision in a school is different or stands out.

It was agreed to note the RE self-evaluation reports presented and to thank all the schools involved for providing them.

ACTION ENSUING: Primary Education Officer on behalf of the SACRE to issue an invitation to the Head teacher of Canolfan Addysg y Bont to a future meeting of the SACRE to give a presentation on the school's RE provision.

7. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS 2015

A report by the GwE Challenge Advisor with regard to examination results in Religious Education for the summer 2015 was presented for the SACRE's information and was noted.

The GwE Challenge Advisor reminded the SACRE of the proposed changes to the Religious Studies GCSE course which is intended to combine the current course A specification (more traditional content) and the current course B specification (more contemporary content) and which was to have become effective in September, 2016. She said that it had become apparent that neither the new course specification nor guidance on assessment would be completed and available in time for teachers to be able to prepare adequately for implementation in September, 2016 and individuals, organisations and practitioners involved with Religious Education had all consequently made representations to the WJEC, Qualifications Wales and the Welsh Government's Minister for Education to request a deferral. She said that it could now be confirmed that the introduction of the new course had been postponed until September, 2017.

Mrs Heledd Hearn, Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern thanked the SACRE for lending its support to the call for the introduction of the new GCSE course to be deferred and asked the SACRE for its further support for the following –

- To press the WJEC by letter :
 - to make INSET arrangements and to issue guidance for the new GCSE course for the Autumn term, 2016 (instead of Spring, 2017).
 - to ensure that Welsh medium resources are available in time for the new A Level course.
- To recommend that the Authority's secondary school Head Teachers consider releasing RE Heads of Subject/teachers for a period in the Summer term, 2016 to allow time for them to meet to jointly discuss and compile RE resources /notes for the new A level course and similarly for a period in the Summer term, 2017 in preparation for the new GCSE course.

The SACRE was agreed in supporting the three courses of action above and further suggested that a copy of the proposed correspondence to the WJEC be also sent to the Secretary of the WASACRE.

It was agreed –

- **That correspondence be sent to the WJEC to raise the issues outlined above.**
- **That the SACRE recommends that the Authority's secondary school Head Teachers consider releasing RE Heads of Subject to allow them to meet together at the time and for the purpose as proposed.**

ACTION ENSUING: The Primary Education Officer on behalf of the Chair of the SACRE to send a letter to the WJEC with a copy to the Secretary of the WASACRE in relation to the two matters specified.

8. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES

The following documentation was presented and **was noted by the SACRE –**

- The minutes of the meeting of the WASACRE held in Ebbw Vale on 25 November, 2015

The SACRE also noted the presentations made at the meeting.

- The Treasurer's Report for 2014/15
- Correspondence sent on behalf of the Anglesey SACRE to the Chief Executive of the WJEC to express concern about the changes in the work programmes of Education/RE examinations for students in Wales and the timing of their introduction.

NO FURTHER ACTION ENSUING

9. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the SACRE is to be held at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 14th June, 2016.

**Councillor Dylan Rees
Chair**

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