

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)

The Education Authority

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Alun W Mummery,
Alun Roberts

The Religious Denominations

Rev Jim Clarke (Union of Welsh Independents)
Mrs Elaine Green (The Presbyterian Church of Wales)
Mrs Anest Frazer (The Church in Wales)
Rev Debra Stammers (The Baptist Union of Wales)
Mr Christopher Thomas (The Catholic Church)

Teacher Representatives

Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones,
Amlwch)
Mr Owain Roberts (Ysgol Cybi)
Mrs Manon Morris Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen,
Newborough)

Co-opted Member

Mr Rheinallt Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Gwyneth M Hughes (Senior Welfare Manager,
Education) (RE Advisor to the SACRE)
Committee Officer (SC)

ALSO PRESENT: Rhian Grieves (Ysgol Cybi)

APOLOGIES: Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)
Mr Gerald Hewitson (The Quakers)
Councillor Bryan Owen

The Chair welcomed all those present, and extended a particular welcome to Rev Debra Stammers to her first SACRE meeting.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 26 March 2021 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Matters arising from the minutes:-

It was confirmed that the RE Advisor has conveyed the SACRE's appreciation to Mr Rhys Hearn for presenting Ysgol Gynradd Kingsland's self-evaluation report to the SACRE.

3. SHARING INFORMATION WITH TEACHERS ON AN ELECTRONIC PLATFORM

The RE Advisor reported that Mr Owen Davies, Education Department has developed a micro-site to share resources with schools in Ynys Môn. Feedback was sought from the SACRE's teacher representatives on their views on the electronic platform.

The SACRE'S teachers responded that they welcomed the development of the micro-site, which was proving to be a very useful resource for schools, as it contained a wealth of information, which could be accessed in one specific place. The teachers reported that policies, links to training, Covid-19 updates, and any information that is shared with teachers is uploaded onto the site.

Although the electronic platform is in its initial stage, it is evident that teachers and schools will need to work with the Education Department to maintain substance within the micro-site. It was noted that it will be challenging to keep the platform updated with continually evolving information, and to ensure that its content is bilingual. The Operational Panel for Schools' SACRE will be involved in the process.

The SACRE praised the excellent quality of WJEC's resources on Hwb, but expressed concern that there is still a lack of some Welsh RE resources on their website.

RESOLVED to note the information presented.

4. PRESENTATION ON THE WORK OF THE OPERATIONAL PANEL FOR SCHOOLS' SACRE

Due to Mrs Helen Roberts being absent from today's meeting, the RE Advisor gave an update on current matters relating to the Island's schools. She reported that it has been an extremely challenging time for schools in Ynys

Môn, with secondary schools operating as assessment and examination centres, setting grades for GCSEs and A Levels. It was noted that teachers from the secondary schools had met on several occasions to discuss the assessment process, and to ensure consistency in their work, so that each pupil was treated fairly.

The RE Advisor reported that Head Teachers have had to respond to challenges with Health and Safety requirements in relation to Covid-19, particularly the wellbeing of their pupils and staff. Schools have also been busy administering support grants, which have involved much administration work and working to deadlines.

RESOLVED to note the information presented.

5. UPDATE BY THE RE ADVISOR ON WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

The RE Advisor reported on the Welsh Government's Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE), which will be published in September 2022. She stated that the changes to the curriculum will have huge implications on schools in every subject.

Discussion focused on whether the Curriculum for Wales RVE guidance is clear and robust enough for teachers? The SACRE highlighted that teachers need support, guidance and quality bilingual resources to move forward, and welcomed the Welsh Government's decision to put more resources into professional learning. It was noted that there are risks in allowing schools to choose their own curriculums, as some schools might not give RE due attention in the Humanities AoLE. It was also noted that SACREs will need to be open enough to allow individual schools to have their own ideas to develop.

Following the WASACRE meeting on 16 June 2021, feedback from the WASACRE's Executive was forwarded to SACREs in the form of a PowerPoint presentation.

The Chair showed his appreciation for the early thoughts slides from the WASACRE's Executive, and suggested that the Ynys Môn SACRE consider their responses individually, before reading WASACRE's feedback. He requested that comments on the consultation be forwarded to the RE Advisor by 9 July 2021, for the SACRE to prepare an official response by the closing date of 16 July 2021.

Mr Chris Thomas highlighted the following points from the WASACRE meeting in response to the consultation:-

- Adequate time must be given to RVE, so that leaders can develop a major and ambitious curriculum.
- Flexibility is important for schools to build upon, and have distinct ownership of their curriculums.

- Links need to be looked at and drawn together. Reference was made to St Giles Centre in Wrexham, who have a very helpful and interesting video on how to navigate guidance and links to the hub.
- With reference to glossaries, certain words need a better explanation in English eg “plurality”, “worldviews” and “cynefin”. It was suggested that using a Welsh word in English translation would emphasise its significance.
- The importance of the Welsh Language was highlighted.
- Welsh Government has established that central funding is necessary to develop RE resources for professional learning in digital and hard copy format.
- There is no opt-out of RVE lessons or relationships and sexuality education lessons (RSE).

Mr Rheinallt Thomas also attended the WASACRE meeting, and reiterated what Mr Chris Thomas had said, in that we need to be clear that the Agreed Syllabus will be different to past syllabuses. He reported that the syllabus will be a skeleton of guidelines and aims, and a core part of the thinking behind the new curriculum will be that schools can develop their own curriculums. He highlighted the importance of the principles in the RE Framework, which in its final form will be what the Ynys Môn SACRE will have to come to an individual decision about.

It was noted that the Church in Wales is currently working with Welsh Government on the new curriculum. The Church has expressed concern regarding the lack of detail in some resources. The Church wants to develop a lens for Christianity, which is linked to history, and it is important that this will be reflected. It was further noted that the Church in Wales will be presenting its own recommendations on the curriculum.

The RE Advisor reported that the Operational Panel will meet this month to respond to the consultation, and present teachers’ views on the curriculum.

The RE Advisor reported that she has included the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Statutory Guidance and Code on the agenda for information, to give the SACRE the option to participate in the consultation.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the information presented.**
- **That the RE Advisor forwards the St Giles video to the members of the Ynys Môn SACRE.**

6. UPDATE FROM THE CLERK TO THE SACRE ON LOCAL AND NATIONAL RE MATTERS

The RE Advisor referred to collaboration between schools in Ynys Môn and GwE, in relation to the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE). She stated that the SACRE needs certainty as to what GwE’s role will be in supporting the Island’s schools and the SACREs, as part of the joint partnership.

The RE Advisor confirmed that she and Ms Bethan James, the GwE Challenge Advisor, will be working together and sharing ideas and RE expertise with schools and the SACRE.

Although some improvements have been made with regard to Welsh medium resources in RE, more needs to be done to improve the situation. The SACRE felt that GwE should put pressure on the consortia to deliver, and the SACRE will need certainty that these issues are currently being addressed.

Mrs Manon Williams reported that some schools in the primary sector have already started training with GwE, and are in the initial phase of how to present their curriculums ie are children going to be taught by subject, or in a more integrated way, which might distant or lose RE? It was noted that schools in the primary and secondary sector are working together to ensure the transition from the primary to secondary sector happens with minimal disruption, which is more of a challenge in secondary schools.

It was noted that Ynys Môn's secondary schools have been offered training on Philosophy for children. Three primary schools have already completed the training, and Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern has registered for the course, which will complement RE in terms developing the Humanities AoLE.

RESOLVED to note progress on the RE matters raised.

7. NAPFRE MEETING

RESOLVED to note the NAPfRE agenda on 15 June 2021 for information.

8. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

The minutes of the previous WASACE meeting held on 23 March 2021, were presented for information. It was noted that Mr Rheinallt Thomas gave feedback from this meeting to the SACRE in its meeting on 26 March 2021.

The WASACRE's response to the Curriculum for Wales (RVE) Consultation has been discussed in Item 5 on today's agenda.

The WASACRE's Annual Report for 2020/21 and Statement of Accounts were forwarded to the SACRE, following the publication of the agenda. The SACRE agreed to pay the WASACRE's annual subscription of £480 for this year's Membership.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the information presented in the WASACRE minutes.**
- **To note the WASACRE's Annual Report for 2020/21.**
- **To note the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.**
- **To accept the WASACRE's Membership fee of £480.**

9. ANY OTHER MATTERS

The RE Advisor reported that the RVE Curriculum will be relevant to children from 3 to 16 years of age. With regard to nursery education, “Cylchoedd Meithrin”, it is expected that the new curriculum will be tailored to suit children from 3 years of age.

Rev Jim Clarke reported on the “Mudiad Meithin” Nursery Movement’s provision of RE resources. He referred to the “Dewch i Ddathlu” (Come and Celebrate) resource, and stated that it is a comprehensive, and excellent pack for nursery education. It was noted that Mrs Helen Roberts, a member of the SACRE’s Operational Panel, created the resource, which has been commissioned with grant funding from Welsh Government.

Rev Clarke reported that there are six units covering the major world religions, together with a timetable to present the different religious celebrations. He expressed concern that the resource is now mandatory for some children in Ynys Môn from 3 year of age, and opens the door to multi-religions for under 5s.

Concerns were raised that children in nursery education may not cope with learning different religions at such a young age, and it was suggested that the SACRE monitor nursery education from January 2022.

A proposal was put forward that an advisory teacher with expertise in nursery education be invited to join the Operational Panel. The Panel would then have continuity from nursery education at 3-5 years to the primary sector.

RESOLVED to note the information presented.

10. NEXT MEETING

The SACRE noted that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 12 October 2021 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**