

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025

PRESENT: Councillor Non Dafydd (Chair)
Councillor Arfon Wyn (Vice-Chair) (from 2:45pm)

The Education Authority

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Keith Roberts

The Religious Denominations

Mr Edward Morus Jones (Union of Welsh Independents)
Rev Deborah Stammers (The Baptist Union of Wales)

Teacher Representatives

Mr Owain Roberts (Ysgol Cybi)
Mrs Manon Morris-Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen)

Non-Religious Representative

Sarah Lloyd (Humanists)

IN ATTENDANCE: Director of Education, Skills & Young People
Mr Owen T Davies (Senior Manager, Primary Sector) (RVE Advisor to the SACRE)
Mr Phil Lord (Independent RVE Advisor)
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

ALSO PRESENT: Jenny Downs (Bangor University)
Nia Lloyd Thomas (Ysgol Rhyd y Llan, Llanfaethlu)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Dylan Rees
Mrs Collette Owens (The Catholic Church)
Rev Neil Ridings (The Church in Wales)
Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch)
Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reported that Elaine Green, who represented the Presbyterian Church in Wales on the SAC for the past four years has retired from the role. The Chair thanked Mrs Green for her valuable contribution to the SAC over the years and wished her well for the future.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2. MINUTES

The draft minutes of the previous SAC meeting held on 13 February 2025 were presented and confirmed as correct, subject to the following:

Matters arising from the minutes: -

- The Senior Manager, Primary Sector (SMPS) reported that he has emailed the SAC's Catholic Church representative to discuss amendments to the Section 50 reports template and is awaiting a response from Mrs Owens.
- The SMPS reported that the link to the WASACRE RVE video has been shared with schools through the schools' bulletin and SharePoint.
- It was confirmed that the 'The Teacher Voice Project' has been shared with all schools on Anglesey through the schools' bulletin.
- The SMPS confirmed that the new Governors' Playlist has been added to the Governors' Training Programme for next year. He reported that a pack has been prepared for the Training Programme.
- It was confirmed that dates for the Governors' training session will be included in the Governors' Training Programme and shared in due course.
- The SMPS explained that a Welsh version of the RVE and the Curriculum for Wales presentation for Primary Teachers has not yet been completed. He stated that it is on the Department's Work Programme to be completed.
- As the Diversity, Equality and Hate Crime Officer could not attend today's meeting to give a presentation on her work for North Wales Police, it was **RESOLVED to invite the Officer to attend the SAC's next meeting.**
- It was confirmed that the SMPS has emailed Dr Gareth Evans-Jones for clarification on the current situation at Bangor University on joint working and is awaiting a response, and
- copied The Welsh Language Commissioner and Lynne Neagle, the Minister for Education in Welsh Government in the email.

3. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

- The draft minutes of the last meeting of the Association held virtually on 6 March 2025 were submitted for information and noted.
- **RESOLVED to note the letter to Lynne Neagle, MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education from the Chair of WASACRE on support for mandatory Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) in Wales.**
- The SAC's RVE Advisor reported that the Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual WASACRE meeting hosted by Anglesey on 2 July 2025.

The RVE Advisor referred to a presentation in the meeting on Sentientism, an offshoot of Humanism and Atheism, looking at the respect all Sentient individuals deserve. He stated that since RE has changed to RVE, there is more scope for

schools to look at different belief systems and non-religious world views. He referred to Atheism, which is divided into a lot of separate belief systems and encouraged schools to explore the variety of topics within the systems.

4. MEMBERS' VISIT TO YSGOL Y GRAIG, LLANGFNI

A visit was conducted by the Chair and Councillor Dylan Rees to Ysgol y Graig, Llangefni in March this year. The Chair reported that a virtual service is held in the school on Monday mornings, which is conducted from the classroom. She explained that on alternate weeks, the service is held in Ysgol y Graig Fach on Fridays.

The Chair reported that she and Councillor Rees had enjoyed participating in the morning service, where the children acted out a story about Jesus. She explained that it was evident in the presentation that the children enjoyed acting and bringing different educational elements together. At the end of the performance, the school awarded prizes to each class, and the children were given stickers to thank them for helping out. She stated that the school celebrates the simple things in life, and the pupils' actions were appreciated, which was positive to see.

A teacher explained that the school uses Bible.net and commented that she would like to see the website updated, together with the four RVE purposes being available on Hwb. She asked the Chair to raise these matters with the SAC.

The Chair reported that she thoroughly enjoyed the visit to Ysgol Rhyd y Llan, as did Councillor Rees.

The RVE Advisor stated that he encourages schools to separate collective worship and RVE, as the right of withdrawal is relevant for RVE, but not for collective worship. He stated that the Anglesey Agreed Syllabus is on HwB as part of the Humanities AoLE, which has been digitised.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

5. TRANSLATING THE UNTRANSLATABLE (that which is so meaningful it cannot be translated)

A presentation was received by Jenny Downs from Bangor University on the impact the 1588 translation of the Welsh Bible has had on the spirituality of Wales, its linguistic culture and landscape. She stated that she has explored the translation narrative through 'Cynefin' and sought to understand its deeper meaning and how it supports learners' spiritual development in the Humanities AoLE in the Curriculum for Wales.

Ms Downs explained that the Welsh Language Act of 1993 has been significant in raising the profile of the Welsh language and has brought about the changes that led to the development of the Curriculum for Wales. She referred to the four purposes driving the change, which prepares future generations to navigate in an uncertain world. The importance of the mandatory element of RVE was also highlighted in this journey.

Ms Downs referred to the methodology used in her research, using 'Cynefin' as a

lens to explore the six dimensions of the translation narrative. Each section is divided into three parts: the history of biblical translation; how the translators sourced ancient manuscripts; the bardic poetry that informed the language. She stated that the links to the Curriculum and Humanities 'What Matters?' are examined, demonstrating how learners' spiritual development can progress through using the context of the translation as a theme. For instance, considering what motivated William Morgan – specifically, the influence of the natural landscape around him, particularly Ty Mawr and Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant, the places where he lived which inspired his thinking. It was noted that the word 'Cynefin' can describe a sense of the spiritual, the sacred, an interweaving of heritage, identity and culture.

Ms Downs reported that her literature review started with the use of 'Cynefin' in the Curriculum and the evolution of 'Welshness'. She has further researched the global aspects of 'Cynefin', with particularly links to the New Zealand Curriculum, which focuses on cultural narratives, languages and traditions.

Ms Downs concluded the following findings from her research:

- It is essential to create a safe learning environment that fosters exploration of the deeper questions of RVE and so supporting spiritual development.
- The authentic context of the translation could be used across the learning continuum and Wales;
- The importance of enabling emerging practice in RVE;
- The next phase of Ms Downs' research is on narrative and 'Cynefin'.

The Primary Senior Manager questioned whether information from the presentation could be adapted from academic to classroom level and shared with schools? Ms Downs responded that there is definitely a piece of work that schools could use looking at the story of the Welsh Bible and stated that she would be happy to assist in any way.

The RVE Advisor reported that he is currently applying for funding from Culham St Gabriels to fund a 'Cynefin' project with teachers as part of the Humanities AoLE, to see what History, Geography and RVE could bring together.

The Chair thanked Ms Downs on behalf of the SAC for her very interesting and informative presentation.

RESOLVED to note the information presented.

6. EMERGING, RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS (RVE) PRACTICE IN AN ANGLESEY SCHOOL

A presentation on RVE was received by Nia Lloyd Thomas, Headteacher of Ysgol Rhyd y Llan, Llanfaethlu, which was opened 8 year ago.

The Headteacher reported that currently 116 children attend the school. She referred to the school's motto 'Hwyl a Her yn ein Hafan Hapus', which translates to '*fun and challenge in our happy haven*' and explained that it is her vision for the school. She stated that Ysgol Rhyd y Llan is a happy school, where the teachers have a lot of fun with the children. She highlighted the importance of challenging the

children and creating a happy environment at the school.

The Headteacher reported that last year Ysgol Rhyd y Llan had very few books with tasks linked to RVE. She stated that since then, this issue has been prioritised and included in the school's Development Plan for the year ahead. It was noted that teachers have been allocated time to read up on RVE to understand the requirements of the curriculum. It was further noted that an audit of resources has also been undertaken at the school.

As part of the schools' self-valuation process, the Headteacher reported that one of the school's Governors is linked to a certain priority, and the individual visits the school to look at books and talk to the learners about their experiences.

The Headteacher reported that one of the main points learned is that RVE is much more than Religious Education. The values elements is the school's ethos; how the children work from day to day; how they behave towards each other.

It was noted that the lenses have been very useful for teachers, providing a framework to build on. The Headteacher explained that when engaging in tasks linked to religion, the focus needs to be on RVE and not language. The Headteacher stated that the next stage will be to continue to plan interesting tasks and ensure that there is depth to the learning.

The Headteacher gave a slideshow of the work the children have undertaken at the school, including visiting a local Church, the story of Noah's Ark, Santes Dwynwen, the Good Samaritan, different religions and beliefs, nature etc.

A member of the SAC who has visited the school reported that the children were very welcoming and easy to talk to at the school. He stated that the pupils are encouraged to be confident individuals who will grow up to be valued members of their communities.

The Chair thanked Mrs Thomas for her interesting presentation and insight into school life at Ysgol Rhyd y Llan.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

7. UPDATE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS SUPPORT

The SAC's RVE Advisor gave a verbal report on the development of a secondary school RVE network on Anglesey, as discussed in the last SAC meeting. He reported that he met with the Headteachers in the spring, followed by a meeting with four Heads of Departments recently, which was very successful. The conversation focused on the mandatory elements for Key Stage 4 for Years 10 and 11, which many schools are not providing. The teachers discussed how schools would be impacted and how pupils' access to RVE could be improved over a sustained period of time using tutorial periods, drop-down days, the Centre for RE for conferences. He stated that he has emailed the Headteachers and hopes to continue the secondary network next year.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

8. ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The SAC's Independent RVE Advisor gave an analysis of recent Estyn inspection reports. The Chair questioned why Estyn had not commented on some schools in their reports. The RVE Advisor reported that Estyn only report on schools when there is a negative element in relation to collective worship or Religion Values and Ethics. He stated that the positive comments have been included in the report and are to be welcomed. It was noted that Estyn has provided less comments in its reporting on schools, which is reflected in the SAC's Annual Report process.

This year is the first year for Estyn to use the new Inspection Framework, with reports being incorporated into one narrative for each subject, whereas previously a systematic approach was in place.

RESOLVED: -

- **To note the information presented.**
- **That the Senior Manager, Primary Sector will consult with the Local Authority's Estyn Local Inspector on RVE consideration and reporting within the new Estyn Framework.**

9. ANY ISSUES SPECIFIC TO THE SAC

- The RVE Advisor reported that he will be preparing the SAC's Annual Report for 2024/25 over the summer. He stated that he has raised the issue of annual reports in the last WASACRE meeting, when it was decided that WASACRE were considering lobbying Welsh Government on the content of annual reports. He explained that annual reports need to include information that the SAC and schools can utilise to improve RVE across the island. He stated that when annual reports are viewed, they are reflected over the last 12 months, rather than looking forward.

The RVE Advisor reported that he has suggested that WASACRE propose to Welsh Government (WG) that its method of viewing annual reports be updated. He suggested that the SAC work on 2 or 3 bullet points to project the Committee's work in moving forward. He stated that in 12 months' time the SAC could have its own development plan to look back on with any action points included. It was noted that this plan could be in place by September, driven by the local authority.

The Director of Learning, Skills and Young People reported that he agreed with the proposal, and would continue discussion with the RVE Advisor in due course.

- Mr Edward Morus Jones reported that he will be retiring from the SAC after 40 years' service as a Welsh Independents representative. He stated that he has enjoyed being involved in the SAC's work and wished the members of the Committee well for the future.

The Chair thanked Mr Jones for his valued contribution to the SAC over a long

period. She stated that he will be greatly missed due to his vast experience and wished him well for the future.

10. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the SAC's next meeting will be convened on 16 October 2025.

The meeting concluded at 3:35 pm

**COUNCILLOR NON DAFYDD
CHAIR**