

# **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2017**

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

### **The Education Authority**

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Robert Llewelyn Jones

### **The Religious Denominations**

Mrs Catherine Jones (The Baptist Union of Wales)  
Professor Euros Wyn Jones (Union of Welsh  
Independents)

### **Teacher Representatives**

Mrs Manon Morris Williams (Ysgol Gynradd Llangaffo)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Alun Mummery  
Mr Christopher Thomas (The Roman Catholic Church)  
Mrs Mefys Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones)  
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)  
Mr D Gareth Jones (Primary Education Officer) (Clerk to the  
SACRE)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Miss Bethan James (GwE Challenge Adviser)

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### **1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None received.

### **2. PRESENTATION BY LLANFAWR SCHOOL**

Due to the unavoidable absence of a representative from Llanfawr School, Holyhead, the item was deferred.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2016 MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 were presented and confirmed as correct.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair reported that Mr Rheinallt Thomas has accepted the role of representative of the Sunday Schools' Council on the SACRE.

The SACRE **resolved to formalise Mr Thomas' appointment as a co-opted member of the Committee.**

With regard to collective worship in schools, Councillor Gwilym O Jones reported that he has not yet visited Ysgol Pencarnisiog to observe the act of collective worship, and would be contacting the school's Head Teacher in due course to arrange a visit.

It was noted that a positive response has been received following a request for 27 schools to submit their RE self-evaluation reports, as further reports have been submitted.

#### **5. ESTYN REPORT – OCTOBER 2016**

Information from Estyn inspection reports undertaken at Ysgol Gynradd Bodedern and Ysgol Llanfawr in October, 2016 was presented before the SACRE.

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that Estyn rarely provide examples of the substance of the work undertaken in religious education in schools. It was noted however, that the Estyn report on Ysgol Llanfawr referred to specific examples of the work carried out in the classroom ie pupils studied Diwali; older pupils considered whether or not society needs leaders.

**It was agreed to note the information.**

#### **6. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATIONS**

A report was presented by Ysgol David Hughes on collective worship. Self-evaluation reports were presented by Ysgol Llanfawr, Ysgol Gymuned Rhosybol, Ysgol Cylch y Garn and Ysgol Caergeiliog for the SACRE's consideration.

The GwE Challenge Adviser referred to collective worship at Ysgol David Hughes, which follows Christian tradition, but is open to include other religions. Parents' rights are respected should they wish to withdraw their children from collective worship sessions at the school.

It was noted that no pupils have withdrawn from worship to date, and every learner feels comfortable attending service despite the religious variety at the school. It is felt that this inclusive aspect is a strength in school, and should be congratulated.

The following points were noted:-

- Three out of four schools reported that standards, provision and collective worship were good, whilst one school reported adequate outcomes.
- Phraseology has improved in relation to pupils' skills.
- Guidance circulated to schools suggested that schools provide information on the nature and substance of RE lessons.
- Some schools use teacher assessment software INCERTS to track pupils' progress and attainment in Religious Education. However, concerns were raised that incorrect level descriptions had been chosen as options by some of the schools using the INCERTS computer software.
- Inviting members of the community/Chapel/Church to participate in schools' collective worship sessions was welcomed.
- Positive results have been achieved in Ysgol Rhosybol. The school has acted upon Estyn's recommendations and improved provision in the Foundation Phase.
- The success of joint working between teachers at Ysgol Cylch y Garn and Ysgol Rhyd y Llan was highlighted in preparation for the new school.
- It was noted that Ysgol Caergeiliog's self-evaluation of standards in religious education places particular emphasis on the 'voice of the child'.

**Action:**

**Primary Education Officer to remind schools to use the correct options when using INCERTS computer software.**

**It was agreed to note the information.**

## **7. UPDATE BY THE GWE CHALLENGE ADVISER**

The GwE Challenge Adviser provided an update on the following:-

### **Standards in Religious Education**

Reference was made to GCSE, AS and A Level examination results in Religious Studies for the secondary sector on Anglesey in Summer, 2016 as follows:-

#### **GCSEs**

- 128 candidates from 5 schools in Anglesey;
- 45.3% of candidates were awarded grade A\*/A for the second year running;
- 84.3% of candidates achieved a qualification in Level 2 (A\*-C), an increase of +2.3% since 2015;
- 2 candidates failed to attain a Level 1 qualification (1.6%);
- Girls are more likely to choose RE as a subject than boys (B:34 : G:94);
- The difference between the performance of boys and girls at the higher levels is negligible, A\*/A (1.6%), L2 (1.7%). The boys' performance in Religious Studies does not match the girls' performance at L1 (-5.9%) for the first time in 6 years;
- Only 4 pupils sat the GCSE short course in Anglesey.

Anglesey performed well in GCSEs in comparison with the 6 other authorities in North Wales.

### **A Level Results**

- 54 candidates from 4 schools in Anglesey;
- 13.0% of candidates were awarded grade A\*/A;
- 74.1% of candidates achieved grade A-C.

A Level results and performance in Anglesey was similar to rest of North Wales.

### **AS Results**

- 11 applicants from 5 Anglesey schools;
- 9.1% of candidates were awarded grade A\*/A;
- 36.4% of candidates achieved a qualification A-C.

The percentage of pupils gaining grades A-E in North Wales was 78.9%, which raises the question whether pupils are receiving the right guidance prior to returning to school to take the AS course, or whether they have the right aptitude for the course.

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that Cynnal are presently developing an RE e-magazine for children in Key Stage 3 through the medium of Welsh. The articles are being prepared each season by three authors from an RE background. Miss Bethan James and Mrs Mary Parry, RE Advisor in Carmarthen, are external consultants. The theme of the first edition, launched in Autumn 2016, was 'Organ Donation', and the theme of the second Spring issue will be 'Refugees'.

### **Religious Education and the Lifelong Curriculum**

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that the National Panel for Religious Education (Wales) (NAPfRE) is working on defining 'what is good RE?' A series of statements have been compiled as part of the draft working document in preparation for the new National Curriculum. It was noted that Welsh Government has accepted Professor Donaldson's recommendations, 'Successful Futures'. The present National Curriculum is coming to an end, and will have an effect on the Agreed Syllabus in Anglesey. The Syllabus is reviewed every five years, but at the present time, the review has been postponed to await further information on the new 'Curriculum for Wales'. The NAPfRE has attempted to draw a series of statements that will be clear and easy to understand for people who are not specialists in the subject of RE.

It was noted that the NAPfRE statements are working documents which are open to change, and not set in stone.

The GwE Challenge Adviser questioned how Religious Education can contribute to the following four purposes within well planned activities for the new National Curriculum, which seeks to develop:

- Ambitious capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Ethical informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world;
- Healthy confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

It was noted that all schools should work together towards the same goal.

### **Religious Studies and GCSE/Higher Level**

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported that Mrs Mefys Edwards is the Lead Regional Practitioner for RE Departments in North Wales, and will be working with other secondary RE teachers across the region to create resources to support the implementation of the new GCSE RE specification. The WJEC will provide training for teachers on the specification. Mrs Edwards and her team have arranged to meet on the 29<sup>th</sup> March to work together.

### **Anglesey SACRE's Action Plan**

This item was deferred to obtain a copy of the Action Plan for the next meeting.

#### **Action:**

**To include the Anglesey SACRE's Action Plan on the agenda for the next meeting.**

**It was agreed to note the update by the GwE Challenge Adviser.**

## **8. THE COMMITTEE'S CONSTITUTION**

The above item has been deferred until the next meeting of the SACRE.

**The SACRE noted the Committee's Constitution for information purposes.**

#### **Action:**

**The Primary Education Officer to confirm whether the SACRE's Constitution is to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.**

## **9. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACREs**

The GwE Challenge Advisor referred to the WASACRE's minutes from the meeting held in Carmarthen on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2016. The following main points were noted:-

- The Head Teacher of Ysgol Gymraeg, Bro Myrddin gave a presentation on collective worship at the secondary school. The school had received recognition from Estyn for the quality of its delivery of collective worship.
- Reference was made to the teacher assessment software INCERTS. Schools are mistakenly using the level descriptors entitled 'original' (as developed for Catholic schools some time ago) as opposed to the descriptors entitled 'exemplar'. The 'exemplar' level descriptors come from the National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education in Wales and have been adopted or adapted by all 22 SACREs in Wales.
- Concern was expressed that statutory RE within the schools' curriculum is being squeezed. Some schools mistakenly believe that an unit of RE within the Welsh Baccalaureate is sufficient to meet the statutory requirements, when it is not.
- A presentation was given on how schools work together in delivering the new specification for RE, similar to the work Mrs Mefys Edwards carries out in the six local authorities of North Wales.

**The Committee noted the draft minutes of the WASACRE.**

- 10. The SACRE noted that the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2017.**

The meeting concluded at 3.15 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES  
CHAIR**