

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June, 2015

- PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)
- The Education Authority**
- Councillor G.O.Jones, R.Llewelyn Jones, Alun Mummery
- The Religious Denominations**
- Mr Rheinallt Thomas (The Presbyterian Church in Wales)
Kirsty Williams (The Church in Wales)
Mrs Catherine Jones (The Baptist Union of Wales)
Prof.Euros Wyn Jones (Union of Welsh Independents)
- Teacher Representatives**
- Mrs Alison Jones (Ysgol Parch.Thomas Ellis)
Mrs Manon Morris Williams (Ysgol Gynradd Llangaffo)
Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Bodedern)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr D.Gareth Jones (Primary Education Officer) (Clerk to the SACRE)
Ann Holmes (Committee Officer)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor W.T.Hughes, Mr Christopher Thomas (Catholic Church)
Mrs Mefys Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones) Rev.Elwyn Jones (Co-optee)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Miss Bethan James (GwE Challenge Adviser), Mr Dafydd Griffiths (National Support Programme for Literacy and Numeracy) (Observer)
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1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2. MINUTES 24TH FEBRUARY, 2015 MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 24 February, 2015 were presented and confirmed as correct subject to noting the following –

- That the Open Book project referred to under item 3.1 is called the Open the Book project and presents Bible stories through drama.
- That the Schools Officer also referred to under item 3.1 is engaged by Gobaith Môn.
- With regard to item 4, the Primary Education Officer informed the SACRE that he intended to invite expressions of interest from schools in hosting a collective worship visit by members of the SACRE in the new school year in September.
- With regard to item 7, the Primary Education Officer confirmed that he had brought the recommendations to the attention of the Island's schools.
- In accordance with the request made at the previous meeting, a copy of the correspondence distributed to schools by the Church in Wales seeking their views on how the Church could support them was presented for the SACRE's information. Miss Kirsty Williams confirmed that a bilingual version had been circulated to schools and said that although a few responses had already been received some of which were positive in confirming an existing connection with a

church or chapel and an interest in accessing Church in Wales sourced educational support and resources, they were not sufficient in number to be able to draw a general conclusion. She said that she would report in greater detail to the next meeting of the SACRE.

3. SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

The following information was presented for the SACRE's consideration –

- Extracts from Estyn inspection reports in relation to Canolfan Addysg y Bont, Ysgol Llangoed, Ysgol Kingsland and Ysgol Bodorgan. The Primary Education Officer confirmed that there were no issues arising from the reports which needed to be brought to the SACRE's attention.

The Vice-Chair referred to guidance issued by Estyn to its registered inspectors regarding the expectation that they include an evaluative comment in every school inspection report (including those on Church schools) to the quality of provision with regard to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils as a statutory requirement. The Vice-Chair said that the matter had arisen as a result of concerns expressed that not all inspection reports covered this aspect. From the perspective of SACRE bodies, such a reference would be useful to the body in its monitoring role.

The GwE Challenge Adviser explained that one of the SACRE bodies had noticed the omission in some reports relating to schools in its local area and had subsequently highlighted with Estyn the need for the inspection reporting process to be consistent. Professionally, she did not believe the issue had arisen with regard to inspection reports in relation to schools locally in Anglesey.

- A Section 50 report in relation to Ysgol Parch. Thomas Ellis.

The Primary Education Officer confirmed that he had contacted the Island's three Church schools for their Section 50 inspection reports and that the report pertaining to Ysgol Parch. Thomas Ellis above had been received.

The SACRE noted the information and acknowledged the work of all the schools concerned to which the inspection reports testified.

It was agreed to accept and to note the information.

ACTION ARISING: Primary Education Officer to send a letter of acknowledgement to the schools on behalf of the SACRE

4. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP VISITS

Consideration was given by the SACRE to collective visits made by Members and to a proposed pro forma for recording those visits which the GwE Challenge Adviser presented in a visual presentation.

Councillor Gwilym O. Jones gave an informative account of his visits to Ysgol y Fali and to Ysgol y Tywyn to observe the collective worship practices at those two schools which on the occasion of his visits, had been based on the themes of giving thanks and the worldwide family, and on friendship respectively.

The GwE Challenge Adviser referred to the collective worship context and to the SACRE's duties as the responsible body to monitor collective worship in those schools in its area to ensure that schools conform to the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all learners. She said that members of the SACRE have indicated their willingness to fulfil that duty by scrutinising schools' RE self-evaluation reports which contain a section on collective worship and by undertaking visits to schools and that they have been provided with guidance by WASACRE and by Estyn to assist them in that task. The purpose of the pro forma is to provide a consistent and systematic way in which the SACRE's members can record their visits and provide observations thereon. She proposed that the pro forma include provision by way of a tick box for recording the following aspects –

- The type of collective worship session observed;
- Those contributing to and leading the session;

- The length of the session;
- The theme(s) on which the session was based;
- Whether religious persons from the local community were invited to contribute;
- Whether prayer formed part of the session or whether Biblical or moral stories were told or whether hymns were sung;
- What 3 statements in the observer's view best describe the collective worship session observed (a series of statements to be provided)

The SACRE welcomed the pro forma as a means of providing an uncomplicated framework within which its Members can provide feedback on their collective worship visits in a uniform and non-judgemental way with the proviso that a section be added for "any other comments," and it was agreed that it be trialled on that basis. It was also suggested that the matter be raised with schools and that that be done via the primary and secondary strategic groups to obtain their support for the proposed reporting process. The Teachers' representatives on the SACRE confirmed that they were comfortable with the proposal on the understanding that schools are informed of the pro forma's purpose and how it is to be used.

The SACRE considered how the information on the completed pro forma should be shared and, following discussion, it was agreed as follows –

- That the information be made available to schools and that it is the responsibility of the SACRE member who has made the collective worship visit to provide the school with a copy of the completed pro forma.
- That in forwarding the pro forma to the Primary Education Officer (for submission to the SACRE body) the SACRE member should indicate whether or not the school has been made party to the information or alternatively he/she should arrange for the Primary Education to forward the information to the school.

It was agreed –

- **To accept the proposed pro forma for recording collective worship visits to schools as presented by the GwE Challenge Adviser with the addition of a section for any other comments.**
- **That the information be shared on the lines proposed.**

ACTIONS ARISING:

- **GwE Challenge Adviser to circulate the pro forma to the SACRE's Members**
- **Primary Education Officer to make schools aware via the primary and secondary strategic groups, of the purpose of the pro forma and how it will be used**

5. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION REPORTS

The RE self-evaluation reports of Ysgol Ffrwd Win, Ysgol Parc y Bont, Ysgol Henblas and Ysgol Carreglefn were presented for the SACRE's consideration.

The SACRE noted the information and expressed its appreciation of the fullness of the information provided.

It was agreed to note the information.

ACTION ARISING: Primary Education to thank the schools on behalf of the SACRE.

6. THE DONALDSON REVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN WALES

The GwE Challenge Adviser reported on the response to the Donaldson review of the Curriculum and Assessment in Wales.

The GwE Challenge Adviser said that both the WASACRE and the NAPfRE had responded to the consultation on the review and that she too had provided a response on behalf of the SACRE. In so doing she had highlighted a number of points including the following –

- That the specific reference to RE within the review report is welcomed and that the Anglesey SACRE is agreed that the national curriculum along with Religious Education need to reflect the needs of children and young people in Wales in a digital age.
- That the SACRE endorses the view taken regarding the importance of RE within the 6 new areas of learning and experience which Professor Donaldson proposes but is concerned that RE could be “lost” or marginalised within the Humanities and the other areas of learning and experience.
- That the review advocates a process of assessment that supports improved learning and educational continuity from the Foundation Phase right through to when the child leaves school so that the child makes steady progress at his/her own pace across the continuum. The SACRE agrees that the purpose of assessment is to ensure that learners make good progress in their learning. However a new assessment process may pose challenges to the SACRE in terms of its fulfilling its statutory responsibility to monitor RE standards.
- That the review proposes that schools and teachers are given greater freedom to shape the curriculum. The SACRE is agreed that whilst teachers should provide RE experiences that are relevant and stimulating, children and young people should also learn about the local and national religious communities that contribute to life in Wales i.e. the “Cwricwlwm Cymreig.”
- That the SACRE is keen to continue to contribute to the process of developing a new national curriculum. Maintaining high standards of RE is a priority to the body. It is hoped that the Welsh Government recognises the experience, knowledge and leadership vested in WASACRE and the NAPfRE on which the SACRE is represented and the Wales RE Movement to whose work the SACRE contributes.

The Vice-Chair said that he had formulated a response to the Donaldson Review on behalf of the Free Churches and the Presbyterian Church of Wales in which he had expressed their concerns about the role of the education consortia which undermines the support for RE within schools and had put forward a request that on the basis that responsibility for RE sits locally with SACRE bodies, the support service to the SACRE be re-instated and local education authorities provided with the resources to enable that to happen.

It was agreed to note the information.

NO FURTHER ACTION ARISING

7. EXEMPLAR MATERIALS TO DEVELOP LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN KS3 RE

The GwE Challenge Adviser gave a visual presentation on a module of work developed by the RE Adviser in Carmarthen which is specifically geared towards better engaging boys in Years 7 and 8 with RE. The module is based on the experiences of prominent Muslim footballers in the Premier League in actively maintaining and observing their religious faith within the context of their professional lives.

The GwE Challenge Adviser proceeded to show how the module promotes literacy skills as well as enhancing learners’ knowledge and understanding of the Muslim faith by setting tasks that explore aspects of the faith as they relate to the footballers’ professional lives and which require the learner to complete writing exercises. The module includes a unit on prayer, a unit on Ramadan, and a unit on food and drink and these look at the challenges facing Muslim footballers in the Premier League in incorporating observance of their faith within the requirements of their professional lives and then links those to specific writing tasks. The Officer said that CD copies of the module are available.

The SACRE welcomed the material as a creative and challenging resource which its members endorsed for circulation to the Island’s secondary schools.

It was agreed to support the distribution of the resource to the Island’s secondary schools and to thank Mrs Mary Parry, RE Advisor in Carmarthen for her willingness to share the material.

ACTIONS ARISING:

- **Mrs Heledd Hearn (Secondary Teacher Representative) and Mr Dafydd Griffiths (National Support Programme for Literacy and Numeracy) to distribute the resource to the Island's secondary schools, the former to Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern and Ysgol David Hughes and the latter to Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Ysgol Gyfun Llangeferni and Holyhead High School.**
- **Primary Education Officer to thank Mrs Mary Parry by letter on behalf of the SACRE.**

8. DEVELOPING THE WORK OF THE SACRE

A copy of a presentation made at the WASACRE meeting in Torfaen in relation to SACREs and consortia arrangements on ways of facilitating the work of SACRE bodies in that context, was presented for the SACRE's information.

The GwE Challenge Adviser said that many of the suggestions made in the presentation have already been adopted by the SACRE in its Action Plan.

It was agreed to note the information.

ACTION ARISING: Committee Officer to include the SACRE's Action Plan on the agenda for the next meeting.

9. WASACRE

The minutes of the meeting of the WASACRE held in Neath and Port Talbot on 6 March, 2015 were tabled at the meeting and were noted.

The SACRE considered its representation at the upcoming WASACRE meeting in Mold, Flintshire on 25th June. The Vice-Chair and the GwE Challenge Adviser confirmed their intention to attend the meeting and it was noted that an invitation to attend also remained open for any of the SACRE's members as a third representative.

With regard to nominations for the WASACRE Executive Committee it was noted that Councillor Michael Gray of Caerphilly had withdrawn following his retirement, and that Phil Lord had been nominated for the position of WASACRE Vice-Chair.

**Councillor Dylan Rees
Chair**