
**S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
11.02.09**

Present:

**Councillor Pat Larsen – Chair
Councillor Huw Edwards – Vice-chair**

Gwynedd Council Members: Councillors Stephen Churchman, Aeron Jones.

Christians and Other Faiths: Mrs Ruth Davies (Welsh Baptist Union), Mrs Eirian Bradley-Roberts (Catholic Church), Mr Wyn Meredith (Methodist Church)

Teachers: Mr Paul Matthews Jones (SHA)

Officers: John Blake (Education Officer), Kenneth Robinson (Assistant Education Officer), Bethan James (Humanities Adviser), Glynda O'Brien (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Selwyn Griffiths and Dafydd W. Roberts, Mr Gwyn Hefin Jones (Welsh Presbyterian Church), Mr Noel Dyer (UCAC), Reverend Canon Tegid Roberts (Church in Wales), Mrs Carol Llewelyn (Advisory Teacher).

1. **PRAYER**

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Councillor Huw Edwards.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

Councillor Pat Larsen declared a connection with item 6 on the agenda, School Inspections as her son was Head teacher at Ysgol yr Eifl.

The member was of the view that it was not a prejudicial interest and therefore she did not withdraw from the meeting and took a full part in the discussion on this item.

3. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(a) The Chair referred to the fact that this was Mr John Blake's last meeting since he would be retiring from his post as Education Officer Meirionnydd /Dwyfor. His commitment and service as a SACRE Clerk for several years was recognised and best wishes were extended to him by all the members of the Committee and the officers for a happy retirement.

(b) Mr Kenneth Wyn Robinson, Assistant Education Officer, was welcomed to his first SACRE meeting as he would take on the role of SACRE Clerk following the retirement of Mr John Blake.

(c) The Chair referred to the death of Mr Jack Thomas a former member of Gwynedd Council from 1996 - 2000. Condolences were extended to his family in their bereavement and all were requested to stand for a minute silence as a sign of respect to the family in their loss.

4. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 8 October 2008.

Resolved: **To receive and approve the minutes as a correct record.**

5. **SCHOOL INSPECTIONS**

Submitted: (a) Information on the contents of school inspection reports under Section 28 of the Education Act 2005 in relation to Religious Education and pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

(b) A summary of the self-evaluations of the following primary schools:

- (i) Ysgol Bro Plennydd
- (ii) Ysgol Llanbedrog
- (iii) Ysgol Llidiardau, Rhoshirwaun
- (iv) Ysgol Manod
- (v) Ysgol Nefyn
- (vi) Ysgol Dolgellau

Reported: (a) Reported by the Humanities Adviser that four primary school in Gwynedd had been inspected since the previous meeting of this Committee and one of those schools had received an inspection in Religious Education as a specific subject. The remainder had been inspected on key question 2 that refers to "How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community"? It was noted that three of the schools had received grade 2 and one school had received a grade 1 from the Inspectors.

Reference was made to the reports received on the Schools Self-evaluations and the Heads were thanked for their cooperation and honesty in the way they had noted their targets for the coming year.

(b) By several members, that the self-evaluations were very useful as managerial tools and it was heartening to see Heads providing them. In addition, Ysgol Llanbedrog was congratulated on what appeared in the self-evaluation of the intention to develop the research skills of learners. It was felt that this was a way of developing the language skills of the learners as well as the religious connection through the medium of Welsh.

Resolved: **To receive and note the contents of the inspections and the self-evaluations and in accordance with procedure to request that the Education Officer sends a letter to the above schools congratulating them on their success and to note SACRE's appreciation of the efforts made by them in achieving the grades.**

6. **REPORT OF THE HUMANITIES ADVISER**

A presentation in slide format was given by the Humanities Adviser on the types of materials recently published for the primary sector together with some that had been discussed in teacher training courses.

Specific reference was made to a series of books prepared for the primary sector, published by the National Religious Education Centre, Bangor namely 'Exploring World Faiths'. Another series welcomed by teachers was by Gavin Craigen and his wife who focused on asking important questions about religion. These series offered many opportunities and learning experiences for pupils and set the questions within the current context.

A very beneficial day was held in Meirionnydd when all the teachers came together to discuss the Agreed Syllabus and they looked through books and worked together to develop specimen plans.

As part of the training the book exploring the Orthodox Church was used and the teachers and the Humanities Adviser were welcomed by Father Deiniol on a visit to the Orthodox Church in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Reference was made to the types of themes discussed in the books and the types of questions that teachers can formulate in order to seek clarification as well as to seek the views of pupils stemming from having to find evidence for their answers. It was discussed how pupils can research whilst they visit places of worship etc bearing in mind ways of undertaking enquiries.

In response to a comment by a member regarding if it would be useful for teachers to produce a game with a religious education element for pupils. The Humanities Adviser explained that it was easy to produce a game when factual questions are discussed but it was difficult for many teachers especially for those without any religious education background.

A member noted that the use of a video would be beneficial to have a visual record of the pupils' discussion. In response, the Humanities Adviser and the teachers representative acknowledged that it would be a challenge for teachers in the future if they are to permit pupils to use modern technology such as mobile phones in the class to film in order to input the information onto the school's site. Schools tended to be very strict with the use of mobile phones by pupils but some schools in England had ventured to tackle this challenge for pupils to use modern technology in the classroom.

Resolved: To receive, note and thank the officer for the interesting presentation.

7. WALES SACRE ASSOCIATION

Submitted: (a) Draft minutes of a meeting of the Wales SACRE Association held on 7 November 2008 in Cwmbrân.

(b) Information that the next meeting of the Association would take place on Friday, 13 March 2009 at Bridgend.

(c) A Code of Practice for elections in June 2009 for the two seats on the Executive Committee of the Wales SACRE Association with a request for nominations from representatives from Gwynedd SACRE.

Reported: By the teachers' representative in relation to the disappointment stated in the minutes of the Wales SACRE Association regarding representation

from schools and colleges in the conference held on 4 October 2008, that it was unreasonable to expect members of school staff to attend conferences on a Saturday. It was necessary to look at the possibility of holding them during the week and it would then be a matter for the school to consider releasing staff if funding allowed.

In addition, the need to nominate representatives from amongst the Gwynedd SACRE members was discussed to attend meetings of the Wales SACRE Association and the Humanities Adviser stressed that there was a right to nominate one representative from each faction of the membership.

Resolved: (a) To receive and note the contents of the minutes.

(b) To note the date of the next meeting of Wales SACRE Association.

(c) To nominate Mr Rheinallt Thomas for the empty seat on the Executive Committee of the Wales SACRE Association.

(d) To nominate the following members to represent Gwynedd SACRE on the Wales SACRE Association:

- (i) Councillor Aeron Jones to represent elected members**
- (ii) Mr Wyn Myles Meredith to represent Christians and Other Faiths**
- (iii) Mr Noel Dyer to represent teachers (dependent on his acceptance of the nomination and the school's agreement to release him for this duty).**

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Considered: (a) A joint letter for information, dated 18 June 2008 from the Head of the Education and Lifelong Learning School Bangor University and the Director of PGCE Secondary Religious Education, Trinity College, Carmarthen regarding the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education.

(b) A letter for information, dated 12 January 2009 from the Director, St Mary's Centre regarding the establishment of the St Mary's Centre, Hawarden, Flintshire.

Reported: (a) By the Education Officer that letter (a) above referred to the continuation of the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education at Bangor University and that the centre would continue to work with the bilingual Religious Education community throughout Wales and it will continue to build upon its recognised good name.

(b) Letter (b) above referred to the establishment of the St Mary's Centre at Hawarden, Flintshire to promote excellence in Religious Education in Wales and to represent Wales in this field internationally as well as in Britain.

Resolved: To receive and note the contents of the correspondence submitted.

9. **GWYNEDD SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

Submitted: For information, the final Gwynedd SACRE Annual Report for the year 2007/08.

Members considered the final Gwynedd SACRE annual report for 2007-08. The committee had already expressed their views on the draft report and it was confirmed that the report was now final.

Resolved: To receive the report and thank the Humanities Adviser for her work organising and completing the final report.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.20 p.m.

CHAIRMAN