
**S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
17.06.09**

Present:

Gwynedd Council Members: Councillors Huw Edwards, Selwyn Griffiths, Aeron Jones, Pat Larsen, Dafydd W. Roberts

Christians and Other Faiths: The Reverend Canon Tegid Roberts (Church in Wales), Mr Wyn Myles Meredith (The Methodist Church), Mrs Ruth Davies (Union of Welsh Baptists), Mr Gwyn Hefin Jones (Presbyterian Church of Wales).

Teachers: Mr Noel Dyer (UCAC) , Mr Paul Matthews Jones (SHA).

Officers: Ken Robinson (Assistant Education Officer and Clerk to SACRE), Bethan James (Humanities Adviser), Glynda O'Brien (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Mrs Eirian Bradley-Roberts (Catholic Church), Mrs Carol Llewelyn Jones (Advisory Teacher) and Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member).

1. **PRAYER**

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Reverend Canon Tegid Roberts.

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Pat Larsen as Chair of this committee for 2009/10.

3. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Huw Edwards as Vice-chair of this committee for 2009/10.

4. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(a) Mrs Ruth Davies was congratulated on recently becoming a grandmother to twins and best wishes were extended to the family.

(b) The Chair referred to bereavements suffered by the following two members and she expressed sincere condolences with them and their families in their loss.

Mrs Ruth Davies who had lost her mother in law.

Mr Wyn Meredith who had lost his sister.

(c) Best wishes were extended to Reverend Canon Tegid Roberts and his wife who would be moving to Patagonia in September this year as a result of the secondment of Canon Roberts to work as a priest in the region for a year.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION

No declarations of personal interest were received from any member present.

5. URGENT ITEM

(The following items had not been included on the Agenda however, the Chair agreed to consider them under Section 100 (4)(b), Local Government Act 1972).

(a) Mr Noel Dyer, UCAC representative, reported that he understood that Coleg Meirion Dwyfor, Pwllheli site do not propose to offer a full A Level in Religious Education for the prospective students who will commence their studies in September 2009, but rather to offer it as an Advanced Subsidiary (AS) subject only. It was understood that this already caused concern to some students and they were re-considering their options in the college for September. It was also evident that Year 9 pupils at Ysgol Glan y Môr, Pwllheli and their parents were aware of the situation as they had mentioned the matter when choosing their GCSE subjects. The member was not aware of what Coleg Meirion Dwyfor offered at the Dolgellau site.

(b) The Humanities Adviser confirmed that the Coleg Meirion Dwyfor website suggested that only AS level would be offered in Religious Education at Pwllheli and Dolgellau from September 2009. It was emphasised that SACRE was not responsible for the standards of Religious Education in further education colleges but naturally teachers in secondary schools in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor were anxious to see their pupils having an opportunity to continue with their studies in the subject if they so wished.

(c) Several members stated their concerns regarding the above situation and it was noted that the members of the Arfon Presbytery had also discussed the issue and were concerned that further education colleges did not offer choices for students in this field of study.

(ch) In response to the above, the teachers' representative stated that it was not required for any school or college of further education to offer religious studies to AS or A Level. However, the National Assembly had a new Bill that would be published which stated that if a subject was offered at AS level then that institution should commit and offer progression to A level, this may be via another avenue which was not necessarily through the same institution. It was understood that forums and curricular groups, which include further education colleges, were discussing such issues. It was recognised that it was a complex time for schools as a result of the post-16

arrangements and the extensive range of subjects they would have to offer pupils. Because of these changes it was felt that it would be unwise for SACRE to come to any specific conclusion regarding alternative arrangements such as use of modern technology etc without knowing what the implications of the post-16 arrangements would be.

Resolved: To request that the Assistant Education Officer sends a letter on behalf of SACRE to the Head of Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor to ascertain information regarding the provision offered by the College to students who wish to continue their studies in Religious Education up to A level.

6. MINUTES

Submitted: Minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 11 February 2009

Resolved: To accept and approve the minutes as a true record.

7. 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 schools:

- (i) Ysgol Gynradd Cae Top
- (ii) Ysgol Gynradd Bron y Foel
- (iii) Ysgol Gynradd Waunfawr

Reported: (a) By the Assistant Education Officer on the contents of the inspections before them which were especially good with three primary schools (Llidiardau, Manod, Bro Plenydd) and one secondary school (Syr Hugh Owen) had received a grade in the context of question 3 which asks "How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?" Ysgol Bro Tryweryn had been inspected on Religious Education and had received a Grade 1 in Key Stage 2. Members were proud of the grades given to all the above schools and they were all congratulated on their success.

(b) By the Humanities Adviser on the contents of the schools' self-evaluations noted in (i) to (iii) above. Attention was drawn to the special qualities of the schools that enrich the experiences of pupils. It was noted that 27% of the children at Ysgol Cae Top came from overseas and had different religions with 14 different countries being represented in the school as well as 17 different languages spoken at home. Members were

glad that Ysgol Bron y Foel shared the school's self-evaluation on Religious Education standard in an honest manner and there were several aspects that would receive attention in the reflection of what had been discussed by SACRE members at previous meetings. In the same manner, some of the themes of Ysgol Waunfawr had been discussed at SACRE meetings such as the great questions of the world and thinking skills strategies.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the inspections and self-evaluations and in accordance with procedure to request that the Assistant 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.

7. TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Mr Jano Owen, Head of Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Frongoch, Bala was welcomed to the meeting and she gave an outline of what had lead the school to receiving the excellent Grade 1 in Key Stage 2, following the inspection by ESTYN Inspectors in January 2008.

It was explained that approximately 26 pupils attended the school, that was located in an agricultural and cultural area, and two teachers were employed there.

The Head outlined the good features highlighted by the Inspectors namely that the children used their thinking skills and could express their views and feelings very well. The children were always very enthusiastic about the subject and responded well to all types of stimulus

It was noted that the school had a thorough plan of work with teachers who could get underneath the skin of the subject and who could lead the discussion skilfully and knowledgeably. The plan states the need for the children to investigate a range of religious sources such as pictures, books, interpretation of information by writing, create models, cooking, acting, singing etc.

Examples of the lessons given to the pupils were presented together with the resources used. Visits were undertaken by the school to local religious institutions such as Coleg y Bala to celebrate Easter, the Church in Bala and even farther away to churches in Liverpool.

Mrs Jano Owen was thanked for her extremely interesting presentation and it reinforced how important such schools are in Gwynedd. The Head, staff and pupils of the school were congratulated on the excellent result they had achieved.

8. **REPORT OF THE HUMANITIES ADVISER**

The Humanities Adviser reported that the secondment of Mrs Carol Llewelyn Jones as an Advisory Teacher was ending and she took the opportunity to thank her on behalf of SACRE and personally for the praiseworthy work she had undertaken during the last three years.

In her presentation the Humanities Adviser referred to a religious education document 'Guidance for 14 to 19 year olds' that included a series of studies to motivate and kindle the interest of young people in the twenty first century, in a flexible way to help implement Core Learning in schools. A taster was given of the types of activities that teachers can undertake in the classroom to develop children's spirituality, thinking skills, writing etc.

The Humanities Adviser was thanked for her presentation and interesting activities,

9. **WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACREs**

Submitted: (a) Draft minutes of a meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs held on 13 March 2009 at Bridgend.

Reported: By Councillor Aeron Jones that he intended to create a CD for SACRE members of the presentation received at the above meeting which was very useful, together with any information received at the meeting to be held on 24 June 2009 at Llangollen. It was suggested that it would be an idea to invite the Wales Association of SACREs to Gwynedd sometime in the future and to arrange a visit for the members to Clynnog Church.

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

(b) **To note that the next meeting of the Association will take place on 24 June 2009 in Llangollen and Councillor Aeron Jones, Mr Wyn Myles Meredith and Miss Bethan James would attend.**

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.40 pm.

CHAIRMAN