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## S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 13/10/10

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**Present:** Councillor Huw Edwards (Chairman)

**Gwynedd Council Members:** Councillors Stephen Churchman, Pat Larsen and Selwyn Griffiths

**Christians and Other Faiths:** The Reverend Robert Townsend (Church in Wales, Bangor Diocese).

**Teachers:** Mr Noel Dyer, (UCAC)

**Officers:** Mr Ken Robinson (Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk), Miss Bethan James (Humanities Advisor), Mrs Eleri Parry (Committees Team Leader).

**Apologies:** Mrs. Ruth Davies (Union of Welsh Baptists), Mr Gwyn Hefin Jones (Presbyterian Church of Wales), Mr Wyn Myles Meredith (Methodist Church), Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member), Ms Eirian Bradley Roberts (The Catholic Church) and Mrs Leusa Jones (CYNNAL Part Time Advisory Teacher).

**Best Wishes:** Best wishes were conveyed to Mrs Leusa Jones and family who was absent from her work as Advisory Teacher due to the fact that her husband had suffered a serious accident and he was wished a speedy recovery.

**Speedy Recovery:** A speedy recovery was wished to Mrs Glynda O'Brien, Committee Officer, who was absent from the meeting due to illness and Mrs Eleri Parry, Committees Team Leader was thanked for stepping in her absence.

### 1. PRAYER

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Reverend Robert Townsend.

### 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

### 3. URGENT ITEM

The items concerning the "Changes to the Advisory Service" and "Celebrating Religious Education" had not been included on the committee's agenda but the Chairman agreed for them to be included under Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the matter had come to light after the agenda had been distributed and he was eager to draw members' attention to them.

### 4. CHANGES TO THE ADVISORY SERVICE

Submitted - the oral report of the Humanities Advisor on the changes to the Advisory Service.

The Humanities Advisor reported:-

- (a) that she would continue in her post as Humanities Advisor but that she would be supporting a thinking and assessment project for teaching also in future and Mr Derec Evans would support the work in the primary sector. She noted that she was pleased to confirm that she would also be continuing to support the work of SACRE.
- (b) that the advisory service had been transferring material from the CYNNAL website to the MOODLE website. She explained that the MOODLE site was available free of charge and that it enabled the service to share resources with primary and secondary schools. She provided examples on PowerPoint of the material which was available for Religious Education.

**RESOLVED to note and accept the information with thanks.**

## **5. CELEBRATING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Submitted - the oral report of the Humanities Advisor on Celebrating Religious Education.

The Humanities Advisor reported that Celebrating Religious Education would be held in March 2011 and that the Wales SACREs had established a competition for primary, secondary and special schools in order to encourage and promote celebration.

A leaflet was distributed by the Religious Education Council containing a series of ideas about ways that SACREs could contribute to the celebration.

In response to an enquiry, the officer confirmed that comprehensive information was available to schools regarding the celebration.

**RESOLVED to note and accept the information with thanks.**

## **6. MINUTES**

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 30 June as a true record.

## **7. DRAFT GWYNEDD SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10**

The Humanities Advisor presented the Draft Gwynedd SACRE Annual Report for the 2009-10 academic year for the members' approval prior to the publication of the final report.

The Humanities Advisor reported that the report was a summary of SACRE discussions during the previous year from September 2009 to August 2010 and that it was before the members in order to give them an opportunity to express an opinion

on the draft report prior to submitting the final report to the Assembly's Education Department.

It was explained that the function of SACRE was to advise the Education Authority on matters involving the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship and the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Members were guided through the report with reference to the methods used to give constant attention to monitoring the standards of Religious Education by reviewing school inspection reports (it was expected that the SACRE Annual Report would be a little different in future following the change in the ESTYN inspection framework in September 2010); receive a summary of school self assessments along with monitoring examination results.

The work of the advisory service in the field of Religious Education was summarised and the courses offered under the in-service training programme for the authority's primary and secondary teachers were outlined. The report stated a link with DCELLS and reference was made to SACRE's function in relation to Collective Worship.

- (a) The Reverend Robert Townsend referred to the positive response received from the county's secondary schools in response to an enquiry regarding the use made of religious leaders at the schools and it was agreed that the information should be included in the Annual Report.
- (b) In response to an enquiry the Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk confirmed that efforts continued to be made to seek representation from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers on the committee.

Reference was made to minor amendments to the report and the Humanities Advisor promised that she would check the document carefully prior to submitting the final report.

The Humanities Advisor was thanked for preparing the Draft Annual Report.

**RESOLVED to accept with thanks the Draft SACRE Annual Report for 2009-10 and to ask the Humanities Advisor to include information in the Report regarding the enquiry concerning the use made of religious leaders at schools, along with any necessary editorial corrections and changes prior to publishing the final report.**

## **8 2010 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RESULTS**

Submitted – the report on the 2010 Religious Education Results.

The Humanities Advisor reported that the method of reporting back on results had changed. She explained that Teacher Assessments: Religious Education KS3, were submitted for information only and that it was not possible to reach any opinion regarding the results as there was no unity regarding the way teachers came to an opinion regarding the results. Two Gwynedd schools had been part of a pilot scheme and had submitted a portfolio of pupils' work for external accreditation. She emphasised that it was a year of experimentation and that DCELLS needed to give further guidance to teachers regarding their expectations and for secondary departments to have more time to familiarise themselves with the procedure. She

explained that there were three years until each school would have to submit the portfolios for the attention of external moderators and that she advised teachers to continue to experiment and delay reaching a significant decision in terms of the work plan and tasks.

In reference to GCSE Results: Religious Studies (full course), the Humanities Advisor explained that the way in which education was provided in the secondary sector was going through a process of change. She explained that secondary pupils were now given opportunities to follow a range of courses, some traditional GCSE courses, others vocational BTEC courses. Also, schools tried to be more flexible and allowed pupils to have more choice regarding when they would be sitting the examinations. Therefore, she explained that the system of reporting on results had changed and that new headings reflected the changes.

She added that some of the Religious Education courses were equivalent to half a GCSE whereas others were equivalent to two GCSEs and that this had made it more difficult to compare the Religious Education performance with other subjects. However, she explained that the results of the full course had been very good and that the pupils' performance had been a little better in Religious Education than in other subjects. The results were praiseworthy and showed the popularity of the course.

In response to a member's disappointment that pupils were now not thoroughly taught the Christian faith, the Humanities Advisor reported that the education system had moved away from the idea of introducing a specific religion. However, she emphasised that Religious Education was one of the WJEC's most popular subjects with a high percentage choosing to follow a short course in Religious Studies which showed young people's interest in the field.

As a result of the fact that so many pupils achieved high grades in the Religious Education short course, a member suggested that more schools should be encouraged to offer the subject and for pupils to follow the course. In response, the officers explained that schools were expected to offer a very broad range of subjects by now, and that it was more difficult to increase the numbers. It was added that schools and colleges would need to work together in future in order to share resources when offering a broad range of subjects.

The officer explained that the information regarding the advanced supplementary and advanced level examinations had not been available when the agenda had been distributed and that it had been intended to submit the information at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED to accept the report.**

## **9 SCHOOL INSPECTIONS**

Submitted:

- (i) 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, social and cultural development.

The Humanities Advisor guided Members through the inspections of the following schools:

- Ysgol Gynradd Rhosgadfan
- Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy
- Ysgol Bodfeurig
- Ysgol Penybryn, Tywyn
- Ysgol Garndolbenmaen
- Ysgol Glan y Môr

It was explained that the target was for schools to achieve Grade 1 or 2 in the inspections. It was noted that five of the schools had been inspected in Religious Educations and that the vast majority of them had gained either a grade 1 or 2 in KS1 and 2 in KS2 and that there was room to be proud that the standards were high with good features and no important shortcomings.

It was noted that one school had gained a grade 3 in both key stages and it was certain that the new head teacher and the school were pleased that very specific discussion points had been noted for this school as it drove the work programme of the school during the coming year.

In response to an enquiry regarding pupils' lack of awareness of world religions, the Humanities Advisor explained that the syllabus of the primary schools was expected to include at least one other religion other than Christianity and that the new exemplar framework required the comparison of religions.

In relation to key question 3 which refers to the spiritual and moral development of pupils, it was noted that the schools had also performed well.

Officers were thanked for preparing the reports as they were helpful to SACRE to monitor this element.

(ii) A summary of the self-evaluation of Ysgol y Clogau.

Members were reminded of the procedure for schools to present Self-evaluations namely, if a school was not inspected in the subject of Religious Education that school was requested within a year of the inspection to present a Self-Evaluation of the subject of Religious Education and of the element regarding the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. It was noted that SACRE had a responsibility to monitor the standard of Religious Education and it was felt that the procedure was successful and that receiving Self-Evaluations was a means of monitoring the standards of schools.

**RESOLVED to accept and note the contents of the inspections and the self-evaluations.**

## 10 WALES ASSOCIATION of SACREs.

Submitted:

- (i) Minutes of the Wales Association of SACREs meeting held on 24 June 2010 in Wrexham;
- (ii) To note that the next meeting of the Association would take place on 26 November 2010 in Caerphilly.

The Humanities Advisor reported that she had been the only representative from Gwynedd at the last meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs and members were reminded that she did not have a vote at those meetings.

The officer referred to correspondence which had been received from Mr Wyn Myles Meredith, a faithful and active representative on Gwynedd SACRE and the Wales Association of SACREs. She noted that the correspondence had expressed his concern that he had failed to attend or apologise for his absence at the last meeting of the Association on 24 June 2010 as he had not received any papers regarding the meeting.

Further reference was made to the fact that Councillor Aeron Maldwyn Jones had not been present at the last meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs either and that it was possible that he had not received the papers either.

Members expressed disappointment and concern regarding the weak representation from Gwynedd. It was noted that Gwynedd SACRE had nominated a representative to represent each group of the membership and that it was important to have strong representation from Gwynedd. Officers were asked to investigate the situation and to ensure that the full details of Gwynedd SACRE representatives were given to the Secretariat of Wales SACREs.

A member added that a deputy should be sent if an official representative could not be present along with giving permission to the Humanities Advisor to vote on behalf of the representatives if they were unable to attend a meeting of Wales SACREs.

Attention was drawn to a recommendation in the minutes of the meeting that SACREs should pay a subscription of £393 for 2010/11.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) **To accept and note the contents of the minutes of the Wales Association of SACREs meeting held on 24 June 2010 in Wrexham;**
- (ii) **To note disappointment that no representative from Gwynedd, other than the Humanities Advisor, attended the recent meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs and to ask the Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk to investigate the situation and to ensure that the full details of Gwynedd SACRE representatives are given to the Secretariat of the Wales SACREs;**
- (iii) **That the representatives on Wales SACREs ask a representative to deputise for them at the Association's meetings if they are unable to attend;**
- (iv) **That the Humanities Advisor is allowed to vote on behalf of Gwynedd SACRE if a representative is unable to attend;**
- (v) **To approve the re-membership of the Wales Association of SACREs by paying a subscription of £393 for the year 2010/11.**

#### **11 CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Submitted – the Annual Report of the Religious Education Movement Wales.

The Assistant Education Officer (SACRE Clerk) reported that there was a tribute to the late Dafydd Whittall by the Reverend Dr Alwyn Roberts in the Annual Report of the Religious Education Movement Wales and he quoted extensively from the fitting tribute.

The Chairman noted that the late Dafydd Whittall was a very special man, that his contribution was extensive in the field of language, education and culture in Gwynedd and Wales and that he was sorely missed.

**RESOLVED to thank the Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk for bringing the tribute to the late Dafydd Whittall to their attention.**

- (b) Submitted – a statement by the Bishop of Bangor, the Right Reverend Andrew John announcing the appointment of the Reverend Townsend as the Education Director of the Bangor Diocese.

The Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk reported on the responsibilities of the post and explained that the Reverend Townsend represented the Church in Wales on SACRE.

He explained that he succeeded the Reverend Canon Tegid Roberts in the post and as representative of the Church in Wales on SACRE.

Reference was made to the valuable contribution made by the Reverend Canon Tegid Roberts to the work of SACRE for many years.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) **To congratulate the Reverend Townsend on his appointment as Education Director of the Bangor Diocese and to thank him for serving on SACRE.**
- (ii) **That the Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk will write to the Reverend Canon Tegid Roberts to thank him for his valuable contribution to the work of SACRE for many years and to congratulate him and wish him well in his appointment as Resident Canon of the Bangor Cathedral.**

**The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm and concluded at 3:35 pm.**

**CHAIRMAN**