
**S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
02/11/16**

Present: Councillor Selwyn Griffiths - Chairman

Gwynedd Council Members: Councillors Annwen Daniels, Tom Ellis and Gweno Glyn

Christians and Other Faiths: Cynrig Hughes (Congregationalists), Dr Gwyn Lewis (Presbyterian Church of Wales), Mrs Elisabeth Roberts (Union of Welsh Baptists)

Teachers: Heledd Jones, Alwen Watkin

Officers: Glynda O'Brien (Member Support Officer)

GwE: Miss Bethan James (GwE Challenge Adviser)

Apologies: Cllrs Jean Forsyth, Eirian Bradley Roberts (The Catholic Church), Cathryn Davey (Teachers Union) and Mai Bere (Assistant Education Quality Improvement Officer).

1. PRAYER

The meeting commenced with a prayer from Councillor Selwyn Griffiths.

2. THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Reference was made to an email sent by Mr Rheinallt Thomas, Co-opted Member of SACRE Gwynedd, informing the committee of his intention to resign as Member. The Chairman paid tribute to Mr Thomas for his dedication and contribution to the work of SACRE for many years. Mr Thomas had been a Member of SACRE since its inception and it was noted that the committee had benefited from his experience and enthusiastic support of Religious Education.

(b) Best wishes for a speedy recovery were extended to Mrs Mai Bere, Assistant Education Quality Improvement Officer, following a recent operation.

Resolved: To request that the Member Support Officer write to Mr Rheinallt Thomas to thank him for his commendable service to SACRE and to wish him well for the future.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Gweno Glyn as vice-chair of this Committee for the year 2016/17.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

5. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 15 June 2016, as a true record.

6. GWYNEDD SACRE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Gwynedd SACRE Draft Annual Report for the 2015/16 academic year was submitted for the members' approval, prior to the publication of the final report.

(A) Miss Bethan James explained that the purpose of the Annual Report was to summarise the work undertaken by SACRE over the previous year, and the importance of bringing the recommendations in the report to the Cabinet's attention. Members were guided through the report and the following main points were highlighted:

- (i) Self-evaluations - Gwynedd SACRE was commended for its arrangement of receiving self evaluations by schools, and improvement was seen in the quality of self-evaluations. It was also noted that schools were appreciated for completing them. The number of self-evaluations received over five years was noted, and between eight and 14 were able to be scrutinised annually in Gwynedd. The Committee was reminded that agreement had been reached to name the schools. Reference was made to the issues that received attention.
- (ii) Teachers' assessments - the Committee's attention was drawn to the recommendations and it was noted that GCSE and A Level specifications were available on the WJEC website. It must be ensured that schools gain access to the subject guidelines of the WJEC examination board.
- (iii) In response to a member's enquiry with regard to raising the standard of results among boys, it was noted that the data did not reflect the nature of the cohort in every school. It was agreed that the recommendations for Gwynedd Council needed to include a reference to closing the gap between boys and girls. It was further noted that the AS material appealed more to boys.
- (iv) The ESTYN review reports were referred to, noting that unerringly in Gwynedd there was some reference to Religious Education and collective worship. In terms of Collective Worship this was acknowledged to be generally good and very good at some schools. It was noted that some schools collaborated well with local Chapels and Churches as pupils learnt about religion in the local area. During the ensuing discussion, Members were of the opinion that the table at point 2.3.3 should be removed and a letter sent to ESTYN to ensure correct use of terms with regard to collective worship, noting that they welcomed the references to the partnership work undertaken between schools and religious groups. It was further recommended that it would be beneficial to add a question to the self-evaluation form so that schools could note the partnership work undertaken with religious groups.
- (v) From a collective worship standpoint, it was hoped that SACRE members would be invited to schools to participate in collective worshipping sessions. It was noted that approximately three quarters of Môn SACRE members had attended sessions and had conducted useful discussion sessions at the SACRE meeting.

Resolved: (a) To accept, note and give thanks for the annual report along with the above mentioned observations.

(b) Send ESTYN a letter expressing Gwynedd SACRE's wish that the inspector ensure the correct use of terms with respect to collective worship and draw attention to and acknowledge the good partnership work undertaken between schools and religious groups in communities.

7. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP - QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire that was trialled by Môn SACRE members whilst attending collective worship sessions at schools was submitted.

Members were asked whether they would be prepared to attend sessions at schools in Gwynedd and whether they would be happy to trial this. It was emphasised that schools would not need to prepare specifically for visits by SACRE Members.

In response, individual Members made the following observations:

- That the preferred option would be for schools to invite SACRE Members to a session, be it a period of time during class or a collective session.
- That there was a very good relationship between schools and the chapel in some villages and Ysgol Bro Hedd Wyn, Trawsfynydd and Ysgol Cefn Coch, Penrhyndeudraeth were referred to specifically.

Resolved: The Assistant Education Officer was asked, in conjunction with the GwE Challenge Consultant, to ask schools to invite SACRE Members to attend collective worship sessions.

8. WALES ASSOCIATION of SACREs

(a) Minutes of the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the previous Association meeting, held on 23 June 2016 in Rhyl, were submitted.

The GwE Challenge Advisor drew attention to the lack of SACREs members' attendance and members were urged to attend if able.

A member noted that the minutes were not bilingual and that word should be sent to the Association noting that the translation process needed to be speeded up so that they could be submitted bilingually as part of the Gwynedd SACRE Agenda.

The GwE Challenge Advisor referred to the main issues discussed at the above meeting:

- Religious Education and its place in the new curriculum
- Guidelines on Managing the Religious Education Exemption Rule provided by Gill Vaisey

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(b) To note that the next Association meetings would be held on:

- 18 November 2016 in Carmarthen

- 3 March 2017 at Usk, Monmouthshire

Resolved: **To accept and note the above.**

9. UPDATE BY THE GwE CHALLENGE ADVISOR

Reported:

- (a) That the Region had identified lead Religious Education teachers who would work with teachers in Gwynedd and Anglesey to prepare a new GCSE specification.
- (b) With regard to the new Curriculum, no guidance had been given to date but officers had begun the preparatory work so that the principles and local leadership of "What constitutes good religious education" can be submitted.

Resolved: **To accept, note and thank the GwE Challenge Advisor for her work noting that her guidance was very valuable to SACRE members.**

The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm and concluded at 3:20 pm.

CHAIR