
SACRE – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

12/06/19

Present:

Gwynedd Council Members: Councillors Menna Baines, Elin Walker Jones, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Mike Stevens and Paul Rowlinson.

Christians and Other Faiths: Eirian Bradley-Roberts (The Catholic Church), Tracy Ann Richardson Jones (Bangor Diocese), Edward Pari-Jones (Humanist),

Teachers: Miriam Amlyn (NASUWT), Heledd Medi Wyn Jones (NUT).

Officers: Mai Bere (Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk), Rhonwen Jones (Member Support Officer).

Also in attendance: In relation to item 10 on the agenda: Helen Bebb, (Temporary Professional Officer).

1. PRAYER:

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor Paul Rowlinson.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:

It was resolved to re-elect Councillor Paul Rowlinson as Chairman of this Committee for 2019/20.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR:

It was resolved to re-elect Councillor Elin Walker Jones as Vice-chair of this Committee for 2019/20.

4. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Edward Pari-Jones (Humanist) was welcomed by the Chairman, as a new member to the meeting.

5. APOLOGIES: Cllr. R. Medwyn Hughes, Judith Mary Humphreys, Anest Gray Frazer (Church in Wales), Alwen Watkin (ASCL), Cathryn Davey (UCAC).

6. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Menna Baines declared a personal interest in item eight (8) - Bangor University Offer - 'Re-connect', as her sister's partner worked in the Education Department of Bangor University. As this item was a general matter, she was not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and did not leave the meeting during the discussion on the item.

7. MINUTES: The Chairman signed the minutes of a previous meeting of this Committee that took place on 7th November 2018, as a true record.

8. URGENT ITEMS:**BANGOR UNIVERSITY OFFER - 'RE-CONNECT'**

Councillor Menna Baines declared an interest in the changes that were afoot at the Education Department of Bangor University. These matters caused concern in the County regarding the future of teacher training and teaching through the medium of Welsh and bilingually in Gwynedd.

The Chair responded that the information was now public and there were redundancies at the university, this would have a huge impact on Education in general, particularly through the medium of Welsh.

The Chair noted that at the previous meeting a request had been made for statistics on the number of pupils in the County who sit GCSE and A Level in Religious Education. It was possible to use these statistics to monitor and see the number of students who may move on to follow the subject and teach.

See the statistics below:

Coleg Meirion Dwyfor (Summer 2018)**A/AS level**

Pwllheli 3 (1 Wel) 5 (3 Wel)

Dolgellau 0 1 (Eng)

Coleg Menai 0 0

Gwynedd Schools (Summer 2018)**AS**

YSGOL Y BERWYN	8
YSGOL FRIARS	13
YSGOL TRYFAN	6
YSGOL DYFFRYN OGWEN	1
YSGOL SYR HUGH OWEN	8
YSGOL BRYNREFAIL	20
YSGOL DYFFRYN NANTLLE	0
Authority	56

A Level

YSGOL Y BERWYN	8	1 Eng
YSGOL FRIARS	7	7 Eng
YSGOL TRYFAN	9	
YSGOL DYFFRYN OGWEN	1	
YSGOL SYR HUGH OWEN	4	
YSGOL BRYNREFAIL	8	
YSGOL DYFFRYN NANTLLE	2	
Authority	39	

GCSE

YSGOL Y BERWYN	29
YSGOL FRIARS	112
YSGOL TRYFAN	6
YSGOL DYFFRYN OGWEN	9
YSGOL Y MOELWYN	19
YSGOL BOTWNNOG	11
YSGOL SYR HUGH OWEN	14
YSGOL BRO IDRIS	18

Short GCSE

YSGOL Y BERWYN	1
YSGOL FRIARS	71
YSGOL TRYFAN	0
YSGOL DYFFRYN OGWEN	0
YSGOL Y MOELWYN	0
YSGOL BOTWNNOG	0
YSGOL SYR HUGH OWEN	0
YSGOL BRO IDRIS	0

YSGOL ARDUDWY	0		YSGOL ARDUDWY	0	
YSGOL BRYNREFAIL	27		YSGOL BRYNREFAIL	0	
YSGOL DYFFFRYN NANTLLE	8		YSGOL DYFFFRYN NANTLLE	0	
YSGOL EIFIONYDD	11		YSGOL EIFIONYDD	34	
YSGOL GLAN Y MÔR	19		YSGOL GLAN Y MÔR	0	
YSGOL UWCHRADD TYWYN	0		YSGOL UWCHRADD TYWYN	0	
Authority	283		Authority	106	

The Chair requested that the Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk, sends these statistics to Members for information.

The Chair and Councillor Menna Baines, noted that they had visited Joshua Andrews and his colleague at the University in Bangor in December 2018. Work on providing materials on training courses for teachers in Religious Education had been completed in Welsh and English, they were also about to launch a website with all the details. They had contacted the Headteachers of secondary schools with this information, in order to pass on the materials to the teachers.

RESOLVED:

Keep an eye on this matter and report back to the committee in November 2019.

KIRSTY WILLIAMS, LETTER OF RESPONSE:

The letter was discussed from Kirsty Williams, the Minister for Education, in response to the letter from the Chair and the Head of Education, regarding concerns about the lack of Welsh medium revision materials for the new GCSE Religious Studies course.

Comments raised:

Members noted that the letter caused concern, and highlighted three main points:

- Publishing lesson books from English into Welsh is a commercial enterprise.
- The decision to venture to create a resource or not is a matter for the publishers.
- I have committed to improving the provision of relevant and timely resources in Welsh and English for our learners.

The above points were not a robust response to the original letter sent by Garem Jackson to Kirsty Williams. The impression given to Members from the above points was that the choice and timing of printing Welsh language materials was a decision for the publishers.

RESOLVED:

To write back to Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education in Wales and the Shadow Minister Siân Gwenllian (Assembly Member for Arfon). The Committee requested that the Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk writes to them conveying our concern as a statutory committee about the reply received.

It was added that the letter should be returned to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee noting the concerns raised at this committee meeting.

9. REPORT TO CABINET ON CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION 02/04/19:

The matter was originally raised in response to a letter received from Bangor Humanists to join as a member(s) of Group A on the Gwynedd SACRE Committee.

Gwynedd SACRE needs to be more inclusive by including a wider variety of traditional religions than we currently have, and the advantages of having a broader diversity when developing the religious education curriculum that prepares our young people to become ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.

Recommendation: for the Education Department and the Gwynedd SACRE Committee to change the membership of Group A, as noted:

- Group A - Christianity - keep at 6
Propose to invite one (1) representative from the beliefs of Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and Humanists.
- Group B - representation of Teachers and Headteachers - keep at 5.
- Group C - Elected Members - keep at 7.
- Co-opted - SACRE Committee to retain the right to co-opt members.
- There are 3 votes, which is 1 for each Group. Co-opted members do not have a vote.

The Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk noted that an invitation had been given in April 2019, by writing to the belief groups to welcome them to be members of the committee, but no response had been received.

Councillor Dr Elin Walker Jones offered to contact the Mosque in Bangor.

Heledd Jones (Teacher Member) offered to contact Nathan Abrams at Bangor University, in the hope that interest could be generated in the committee to have Jewish members.

RESOLVED:

To accept the proposals.

10. PRESENTATION ON THE CURRICULUM FOR WALES 2022:

The following discussion was presented by Helen Bebb, (Temporary Professional Officer), giving an input on how Religious Education within the new curriculum can be implemented (the curriculum had been prepared by Professor Donaldson).

Humanities encompasses geography, history, religious education, business studies and social studies. These disciplines share many common themes, concepts and transferable skills, while also having their own body of knowledge and skills. Likewise, learners and teachers may reference other complementary disciplines, such as classics, economics, law, philosophy, politics, psychology and sociology, if and where appropriate.

The rationale in favour of change:

- Autonomy, flexibility and creativity lead to valid learning.
- An interdisciplinary approach supports the development of knowledge and skills.
- Linking experiences, knowledge and skills lead to enrichment opportunities.
- It incorporates business studies and social studies.
- Religious education in the curriculum allows for equality.

How is it different?

- Holistic and interdisciplinary.
- Disciplines are more visible from Progression Step 4.
- More importance to valid experiences.
- Focusing on global citizenship and participation in social action.
- Dealing with business studies and social studies earlier in education.
- Balance between local, Welsh/British and worldwide studies.
- Includes religious education and make it statutory for learners from 3 to 16 years old.

It was noted that the most important elements to remember when teaching the subject are the four purposes including the 12 curriculum educational principles to try and ensure that children and young people develop as:

- Ambitious, capable learners who are prepared to learn throughout their lives.
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.
- Ethical, informed citizens ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.

The 12 educational principles:

General purpose of the curriculum	Continuous effort: Challenge to aim high	Blended Learning	Developing the mind: Critical and creative
Developing on previous knowledge and attracting interest	Meaningful and valid - bring everything alive	Assessment for learning	Create links within and across Areas of Learning and Experience
Crosscurricular	Independent learning	Positive relationship	Collaboration

It was noted that Ysgol David Hughes had trialled the Humanities course over last year on the themes of:

Religious Education within the units: 'Hotel Wales'

- Wales as a country that appreciates and sees the value in diversity.
- Exploring the different religions.
- How has religion changed in Wales?

Themes linked to Humanities:

- Refugees - Why me?
- Raising awareness about the problem with plastic.

Assessment for Learning on each unit:

- Enrichment tasks
- Success Criteria
- Effective feedback

It continues to be statutory to report on levels at the end of KS3 up to 2021.

RESOLVED:

The presentation was accepted and the officer was thanked for the information.

11. RESPONSES FOR THE CONSULTATION TO THE CURRICULUM FOR WALES 2022:

Concerns were raised by committee Members on the possibility of losing religious education within the new curriculum, justification was required to address this. It was stated that it was necessary to look at how many religious education lessons are currently presented in key stages 3 and 4, in order that we can keep an eye on the balance and raise awareness on monitoring religious education lesson hours within Gwynedd schools.

It was stated that a model was required on how to split lessons within the subject without losing teachers' expertise.

It was noted that there were no firm guidelines on teaching Humanities as a subject, the school had to come to a decision on how to model this and to work without discrimination.

It was noted that it was easier to address the subject in primary schools, it was added that it was more challenging to teach in the secondary sector, due to the holistic changes within the document.

The member of the Humanists stated how much attention was given to religious education:

- Was there more emphasis on teaching religions rather than non-religion?
- It was questioned if it was a reflection of society?
- Someone needed to represent non-religious persons.

The Chair requested Members to respond to the consultation on the draft guidance for the Curriculum for Wales 2022. The feedback period ends on 19th July 2019. The information will be used to further fine-tune the draft guidance, before publication in January 2020.

RESOLVED:

- There was agreement on the concerns about teaching religious education in schools.
- Need to look into how many lessons and hours are set-aside for religious education in key stages 3 and 4 in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk to look into this.

12. OVERVIEW OF THE SELF-EVALUATION - SPRING TERM 2019:

The item was presented by the Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk.

Estyn Inspection refers to religious education as a subject, collective worship, spiritual and moral development and also other aspects such as personal, cultural and social education.

NAME OF SCHOOL	ESTYN COMMENTS - Care, Support and Guidance
Dolbadarn	Outstanding
Yr Hendre	Good
Bro Llifon	Good
Edmwnd Prys	Good
Llangybi	Good
Arduwy Harlech	Adequate and needs improvement

A paragraph of the report on Ysgol Dolbadarn was read, evaluation on the primary element was excellent:

"The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to have their say through various forums, especially to contribute ideas about what they would like to learn. By doing so, staff encourage pupils to be conscientious learners who take responsibility for their own learning. They place great store on developing learners that are responsible citizens by encouraging them to develop their awareness of the needs of others and raising money for charity regularly."

It is noted that moral and spiritual elements appear to be strong in the primary schools.

The Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk added her thanks for the two self-evaluations received from Ysgol Edmwnd Prys and Ysgol Dolbadarn.

13. OVERVIEW OF THE SELF-EVALUATION - SUMMER TERM 2019:

All school reports had not been completed, however the reports of three schools that have been evaluated can be seen.

NAME OF SCHOOL	ESTYN COMMENTS - Care, Support and Guidance
Y Faenol	Good
Brynaerau	Outstanding
Maesincla	Outstanding

In addressing the ESTYN observations, it was expressed that the committee would extend an invitation to the Headteacher of Ysgol Brynaerau to the next meeting to elaborate on their work.

Observations were raised on:

Three Church in Wales schools and since Christmas 2018, one school had received an inspection under section 50 already and the other two will receive this before Summer 2019.

RESOLVED:

The Chair expressed his thanks for the thorough work and he asked the Assistant Education Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk to send an invitation to the Headteacher of Brynaerau or Maesincla to attend the next SACRE meeting, as they had received 'excellent' by ESTYN.

14. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18 (DRAFT)

Bethan James, the former SACRE support Professional Officer, was thanked for collating the report - a summary of the committees and the presentations received last year.

It was added that it was important to read the action plan in the programme on page 170.

Some points on the New Curriculum for Wales 2022 plan were elaborated upon by Helen Bebb (Temporary Professional Officer) and comments were also received by the Members.

- It should be ensured that the Headteachers, Teachers, governors and SACRE members are informed about the requirements of the curriculum.
- There was a need to raise the question if sufficient training was available for teachers?
- Many schools had lost their Heads of Humanities, therefore it was certain that all Humanities teachers could not attend the courses. Currently, the changes by Professor Donaldson in terms of staffing was happening in the schools, this was a matter to be looked at in the next committee.
- Consider that the Religious Education document is supported by SACRE Gwynedd, need to contact GwE to have provision for this?

- A Professional Officer is needed across the North to receive correct information to promote Members' information.

RESOLVED:

To accept the report.

15. HIGHLIGHT ISSUES FOR INFORMATION:

No observations were added to the matters submitted for information.

The meeting commenced at 13:20 and concluded at 14:55

CHAIR