

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

GWYNEDD ANNUAL REPORT

September 2022 - August 2023

Head of the Education Department

Mr Garem Jackson

CONTENT

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction by SACRE Chairman: Councillor Menna Baines

SECTION 2: ADVICE TO ANGLESEY COUNCIL

2.1 SACRE's function in relation to Religious Education

2.2 The Locally Agreed Syllabus

2.3 How good are standards?

2.4 The response of Gwynedd Council

2.5 Religious Education and the Welsh Government

2.6 Religious Education and ESTYN

2.7 SACRE's function in relation to Collective Worship

SECTION 3: ANNEXES

3.1 General information about the composition of SACRE

3.2 Membership of Gwynedd SACRE 2020-21

3.3 SACRE meetings held during the reporting period

3.4 Guidance provided by Gwynedd SACRE to members who attend collective worship in schools

**SECTION 1:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

SACRE's function in relation to Religious Education

A clear outline of SACRE's function is given in the Welsh Office Circular 10/94

SACRE advises the LEA on matters relating to the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship, and is responsible for the establishment of an ad hoc body, the Agreed Syllabus Conference, to produce or consider amendments to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

1.1 Introduction by the Chairman

It is fair to say that factors outside of our control have made it difficult for us to achieve our duties during this year.

Our context for one of our main duties, namely monitoring standards within Gwynedd schools, has recently changed. As a result of Covid, ESTYN school inspections came to an end temporarily (until May 2022), and since then, a new inspection method was presented. The nature of ESTYN's inspection reports now makes it more difficult for SACRE to monitor standards and the old method of asking for self-appraisals through a questionnaire is unsuitable. We also heard that work was underway on a national level to establish a report and evaluate system for schools which complies with the New Curriculum for Wales. Faced with our uncertainty in terms of how we could continue to monitor standards as a result of changes like these, it was appropriate that we asked for guidance from the national body, WASACRE.

In terms of SACRE's other main duty, namely consulting on worship in schools, there was an opportunity to look at the 'Collective Worship Guidance'. It was agreed that the document needed to be updated to correct imbalance between the religions that they referred to and in terms of comments and wording to make the document more inclusive. It is good to report that work in that direction is now underway, thanks to the willingness of two of the members to examine the document in more detail as a starting point.

It was disappointing that there was a delay before releasing the agreed syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics within the New Curriculum for Wales to the county's schools. This resulted from the need that emerged for the Cabinet to approve it first. Since the two syllabuses were recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference held mid-February 2022, we had to wait until the October term of that year to have the Cabinet's seal of approval on them and that meant that many schools started the new term without guidance. The authority's apology was noted for this delay and it was good to be able to approve the agreed syllabus, once the Cabinet had adopted it.

A discussion was held about the Gwynedd SACRE membership as it had several empty seats. The committee was very eager to continue with the good work previously made to try and elect the membership and make it more representative in terms of religions, denominations and the teachers' unions.

Another concern that continued this year was the lack of specialist support to SACRE since support from GwE was pulled back in 2018, but the officers' efforts to try and make an alternative arrangement were welcomed.

Despite all the challenges, I am very grateful to the Gwynedd SACRE members for their time and commitment to the committee. I would also like to thank the county's Religious Studies teachers for their commitment in presenting the subject during a period of great curricular change.

Councillor Menna Baines
Chairman, 2022/2023

DRAFT

SECTION 2: ADVICE to GWYNEDD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

2.1 SACRE's function in relation to Religious Education

A clear outline of SACRE's function is given in the Welsh Office Circular 10/94.

SACRE advises the LEA on matters relating to the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship, and is responsible for the establishment of an ad hoc body, the Agreed Syllabus Conference, to produce or consider amendments to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

2.2 The Locally Agreed Syllabus

Gwynedd and Anglesey SACREs have adopted the 'National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education for 5-19 year old learners' as the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Gwynedd and Anglesey (2008).

A SACRE's main function is '*...to advise the authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit.*'

Education Reform Act 1988 s.11 (1) (a)

As a result of the emergence of the Curriculum and Assessment Act (Wales) 2022 and the establishment of the Curriculum for Wales, the Agreed Syllabus Conference was held for Gwynedd SACRE on 15 February 2023. The unanimous decision of the Conference was to recommend the adoption of the Welsh Government's Guidelines on Religion, Values and Ethics.

On the 13 September 2022 the Gwynedd Council Cabinet approved Agreed Syllabus Conference' recommendation and the the Welsh Government's Guidelines on Religion, Values and Ethics was adopted as the Agreed Syllabus for Gwynedd schools.

2.3 How good are standards?

In previous years Gwynedd SACRE has monitorod religious education and collective worship by:

- receiving a summary of a school's self-evaluation report in response to the key questions of ESTYN's Inspection Framework;
- analysing the Local Authority's teacher assessments and secondary examination results;
- reviewing ESTYN inspection reports for references to 'religious education' or 'collective worship';
- inviting teachers and head teachers to share their good practices with members in the termly meetings, and by,
- accepting schools' invitations to attend a collective worship session.

2.3.1 Schools' self-evaluation reports

SACRE members resolved at their meeting on 9 February 2011, to continue to receive copies of schools' self-evaluation of religious education and collective worship and asked head teachers to use a revised template. Gwynedd SACRE, Anglesey head teachers and members of the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE) have approved the new template which was redrafted in response to the new ESTYN Inspection Framework (Appendix 3.5). The SACRE clerk, who is an assistant education quality improvement officer with Gwynedd Council is responsible for distributing the template and collating the self-evaluation reports. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic ESTYN visits ceased during March 2020 and did not re-start during the 2020 -2022 school year. From September 2022 to August 2023 ESTYN did not undertake a full inspection programme, although some schools volunteered to pilot revised inspection arrangements. Consequently no inspection reports were published

for individual schools during the year. Gwynedd schools were not asked to provide self-evaluations for the Gwynedd SACRE as a result of this.

2.3.2 Teacher assessment and external examination results in the secondary sector

KS3 teacher assessments and KS4 and KS5 external examination results were not discussed during the SACRE meetings held in 2022-2023.

2.4 Response of Local Authority

Mair Huws, Assistant Education Resources Officer for Gwynedd Council ensures that any guidance or recommendations made by Gwynedd SACRE is communicated directly to the primary and secondary head teachers.

Up until April 2018, Gwynedd Council commissioned GwE (School Effectiveness and Improvement Service) to support Gwynedd SACRE meetings and to represent Gwynedd SACRE in regional and national meetings. In March 2018, the Gwynedd SACRE clerk was notified that GwE would no longer be providing professional support to Gwynedd SACRE.

During the year from September 2022 – August 2023 schools continued rebuilding in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. It was also a year where both Primary and Secondary schools worked towards implementing the Curriculum for Wales from September 2022 (and September 2023 in the case of some Secondary schools). Education is therefore in the midst of a period of great change, which made it impossible to monitor standards within Religious Education during the year.

What are SACRE's recommendations to Gwynedd Council?

- Ensure that Gwynedd SACRE receives appropriate support and strategic leadership to discharge its duties as a statutory committee

2.5 Religious Education and the Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has published and distributed guidance documents to support RE teachers:

- <http://wales.gov.uk> > search for Religious Education
- The National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education in Wales (2008)
- Religious Education: Guidance for KS2 and KS3 (2011)
- Exemplar Pupils Profiles at KS2 and KS3 in Religious Education: Supplementary Guidance (2011)
- Religious Education: Guidance for 14-19 year old learners (2009)
- People, Questions and Beliefs: Religious Education in the Foundation Phase (2013)
- Religious Education: Chief Moderator's Report 2012 (<http://cbac.co.uk>)

Curriculum for Wales

- During 2014-15, Professor Graham Donaldson was commissioned to undertake an independent review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales.
- The Wales Association of SACRES (WASACRE) is represented on the Welsh Government's Strategic Stakeholders Group and representatives from the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPFRE) have attended meetings during the year with representatives from the Welsh Government's Curriculum Department as they support the pioneer schools and develop a Curriculum for Wales.
- The Curriculum and Assessment Act (Wales) 2022 established the Curriculum for Wales under the law, replacing the Basic Curriculum (that includes, for example, national and local curricula noted in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002).

- The Curriculum and Assessment Act (Wales) 2022 notes the four purposes of the curriculum under the law. It also notes the mandatory elements (which includes religion, values and ethics) that encompass the 3 to 16 years old learning continuum:
- Religion, values and ethics (RVE) is, therefore a statutory requirement of the Curriculum for Wales and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. RVE forms part of the Humanities Area.
- The guidance on RVE ([Religion, values and ethics guidance](#)) contained within the Humanities Area is statutory and published under section 71 of the Act and designed to assist those responsible under the Act for designing the RVE syllabus as part of the school curriculum

2.6 Religious Education and ESTYN

Gwynedd SACRE recommends the following resources to RE teachers and head teachers:

- www.estyn.org.uk;
- Religious Education in Secondary Schools (ESTYN, June 2013);
- Supplementary Guidance: collective worship in non-denominational schools (ESTYN, October 2017);
- Religious Education in Key stage 2 and Key stage 3 (ESTYN, June 2018)

SACRE's recommendations to Gwynedd Council

- Ensure that schools and secondary RE teachers are aware of the findings of the ESTYN report and act on the recommendations.

2.7 SACRE's function in relation to collective worship

Welsh Office Circular 10/94 notes that the LEA should work with SACRE to keep an eye on the daily collective worship provision, and should consider with it any steps which may be taken to improve such provision.

The collective worship must be "of a broadly Christian character". The "determination" procedure permits the suspension of these requirements in relation to some or all of the pupils in a school where they are deemed inappropriate. .

- SACRE members and Gwynedd schools have received collective worship guidance documents:
 - 'Supplementary guidance for inspecting collective worship in non-denominational schools' (ESTYN, October 2017);
 - Guidance on Collective Worship (WASACRE, June 2013).
- Gwynedd SACRE monitors standard of collective worship in schools by reviewing schools' self-evaluation reports;
- No self-evaluation reports were received in 2020-2022 as no school was asked to prepare one.

Determinations

There was no request from any school for a determination in relation to collective worship

SACRE's Recommendations to Gwynedd Council

- Ensure that schools conform to the statutory requirement for collective worship and provide quality collective worship sessions;
- Encourage schools to invite Gwynedd SACRE Member to attend collective worship within schools

SECTION 3: ANNEXES

3.1 Administrative matters in relation to SACRE

SACRE was established by Gwynedd Education Committee in 1996 to include:

Christians and Other Faiths, namely,

- The Methodist Church
- The Union of Welsh Baptists
- The Presbyterian Church of Wales
- The Church in Wales
- Union of Welsh Independents
- The Catholic Church

Teachers, namely;

- The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- National Union of Teachers in Wales (UCAC)
- National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- National Union of Teachers (NUT)
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
- National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)

Elected members

3.2 SACRE membership of Gwynedd 2022-23

Christians and Other Religions

The Methodist Church
Union of Welsh Baptists
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Church in Wales
Union of Welsh Independents
The Catholic Church
Buddism
Humanists

Awaiting nomination
Elizabeth Roberts
Dr. W Gwyn Lewis
Anest Grey Frazer
Cynrig Hughes
Eirian Bradley Roberts
Dashu (Scott Smith)
Edward Parri-Jones

Teachers' representatives

ASCL
UCAC
NASUWT
NUT
ATL

Awaiting nomination
Mrs Helen Watkin (Ysgol Eifionydd)
Catherine Davey (Ysgol Llanystumdwy)
Miriam Amlyn (Ysgol Eifionydd)
Heledd Owen (Ysgol Friars)
Awaiting nomination
Mr Noel Dyer
Mrs Miriam Amlyn
Mr Euron Hughes
awaiting nomination

Local Members

Councillor Paul Rowlinson
Councillor E Selwyn Griffiths
Councillor Elin Walker
Councillor Menna Baines
Councillor Judith Humphreys
Councillor Medwyn Hughes
Councillor Dewi Wyn Roberts
Councillor Mike Stevens

Plaid Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Plaid CYmru
Independent
Independent
Independent

Co-opted members (non voting)

Gwyn Rhydderch
Rev Aled Davies

Officers

Garem Jackson
Mair Huws

Head of Education Department
Assistant education resources officer and
SACRE clerk

Einir Davies

Democratic Services officer

3.3 SACRE meetings 2022-23

Dates of meetings may be obtained by contacting the SACRE Clerk. During 2019-, Gwynedd SACRE met once only:

29 November 2022
14 March 2023
4 July 2023

The following matters were discussed and further details are provided in the minutes and the main body of the report:

a) 29 November 2022

- An introduction and an insight into the work of SACRE was given by Cllr Paul Rowlinson, the past Chairman. A discussion paper on the possible way forward as regards to how SACRE can monitor relevant standards within Gwynedd schools was received. It was decided to write to WASACRE for guidance

b) 10 February 2023

- An update regarding the Gwynedd Council Plan in relation to the agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics was received. The Plan was approved and it was confirmed that the plan would be shared with Gwynedd schools.
- The present Collective Worship guidelines were discussed. It was agreed that the Guidance needed to be updated and a working group be created to look at the task in hand.

c) 4 July 2023

- Councillor Menna Baines was re-elected as Chair.
- An update was given on the task of updating the Collective Worship guidelines. As the working group did not have enough volunteers, the Reverend Nick Sissons offered to look at the guidance and report back to the next meeting.
- The need to commission specialist support for the SACRE was discussed and the Head of Education was given the go-ahead to discuss the possibility of commissioning specialist support for the SACRE through GwE, moving the matter forward as soon as possible

3.3.1 Gwynedd SACRE has affiliated with the Wales Association of SACREs and its members regularly attend meetings held by WASACRE.

3.3.2 The following provide SACRE with professional support:

Garem Jackson	Head of Education Department
Mair Huws	Assistant education improvement officer and SACRE clerk
Einir Davies	Democratic Services Officer

Enquiries should be sent to the SACRE Clerk at the Education Department, Gwynedd Council, Caernarfon, Gwynedd. LL55 1SH

3.3.3 The SACRE report was sent to the following organisations:

Electronic copies of the annual report were distributed to the following:

- Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government
- Head of Gwynedd's Education Department
- Gwynedd Council Leader
- Wales Association of SACREs
- Gwynedd schools

A copy was distributed to:

- Members of Gwynedd SACRE

DRAFT

DRAFT