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

15/06/16

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**Present:**

**Gwynedd Council Members:** Councillors Annwen Daniels, Jean Forsyth, Selwyn Griffiths

**Christians and Other Faiths:** Eirian Bradley-Roberts (The Catholic Church)

**Teachers:** Heledd Jones, Alwen Watkin

**Officers:** Mrs Mai Bere (Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk) and Glynda O'Brien (Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer).

**GwE:** Miss Bethan James (GwE Challenge Advisor)

**Apologies:** Cllrs Tom Ellis, Gweno Glyn, Mrs Elizabeth Roberts (Undeb Bedyddwyr Cymru), Dr. Gwyn Lewis (Presbyterian Church of Wales), Cathryn Davey, Miriam Amlyn (Teachers' Union).

**1. PRAYER**

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor Selwyn Griffiths.

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

**Resolved:** To re-elect Councillor Selwyn Griffiths as Chair of this Committee for the year 2016/17.

**3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

**Resolved:** In light of the fact that many members had sent their apologies for the meeting, it was felt that it would be better to defer the election of Vice-chair until the next meeting.

**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 10 February 2016, as a true record.

## 6. SCHOOLS' SELF-EVALUATIONS

- (a) The GwE Challenge Advisor guided Members through the sheet submitted giving a summary of school findings and attention was drawn to the fact that four primary schools had been inspected by ESTYN during the 2015 Autumn term, along with 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school during the Spring Term 2016. Attention was drawn to the fact that ESTYN's "Good" conclusion included more than just Religious Education.
- (b) Members were guided through the self-evaluations of the schools of Morfa Nefyn, Cymerau, Foelgron, Manod, Nefyn and Pont y Gof noting that it was hoped that the schools had reached their opinions by scrutinising books and considering religious education data.

Attention was drawn to examples within the self-evaluations and it was noted that there was evidence of quantifying, lesson observations and the schools had deemed that the standards and provision was good. From the self-evaluations, the context of the type of work done at the schools was set.

**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. THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The GwE Challenge Advisor reminded members of the intention of Professor Graham Donaldson to amend the Wales Curriculum and explained that whilst the curriculum's subjects were the responsibility of Welsh Government that religious education was the responsibility of local SACREs and that they had adopted a national framework that had a similar status to that of other subjects.

She elaborated further on the four objectives at the core of the new proposed curriculum, namely supporting children and young people to be:

- ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The curriculum would be arranged into six learning and experience fields. It was noted that Professor Donaldson was eager for the curriculum to be implemented from the bottom upwards and that there would be a need to give teachers an opportunity to trial it. The GwE Challenge Advisor elaborated that she was a part of the Consultative Panel and that they had met to try and draw up guidance on "what is religious education" and hopefully another meeting would be held in the coming weeks so that information could be shared with the pioneering schools. In terms of pioneering schools in the Gwynedd SACRE area, it was noted that the leaders in the different fields had been identified through GwE for joint-planning but that very little guidance had been submitted to date.

In terms of primary schools, it was noted that Dellatec (Siwan Tecwyn) offered a course on the requirements of Professor Donaldson's recommendations.

In response to an enquiry regarding the pioneering schools, the GwE Challenge Advisor confirmed that she would share the list with SACRE Members.

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

## **8. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE BACCALAUREATE**

The GwE Challenge Advisor shared background information with Members and noted that there was a specification for introducing the Welsh Baccalaureate in schools since 2015, and that a number of SACREs had complained and highlighted concerns that this was detrimental to Religious Education. The Wales Association of SACRE had decided to draw up a questionnaire to send to schools in order to gain a better understanding of what was happening in reality. Eight primary schools from Gwynedd had completed the questionnaire and in the whole it was noted that Gwynedd schools had noted that not much change had been seen. Appreciation was shown and the schools were thanked for responding and it was noted that good teachers were protecting religious education.

It was noted that Ysgol Friars had started to offer two lessons a week and would continue with this until Christmas.

**Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above.**

**(b) To ask the SACRE Clerk to send a letter to the schools to express SACRE's gratitude and appreciation for the responses to the questionnaire.**

## **9. UPDATE BY THE GwE CHALLENGE ADVISOR**

The GwE Challenge Advisor reported:

(a) that concerns had been highlighted recently at the Wales Association of SACRE associated with INCERTS (implemented in primary schools to track pupils' attainment). Appropriate level descriptions within the programme were noted for subjects such as Welsh, English, Mathematics and Science. However, in terms religious education, there had been some confusion as there were two descriptions, namely "Original Framework" and "Exemplar Framework". It was noted that the correct description to use was the "Exemplar Framework". This reflected on SACRE regarding the lack of guidance to schools on which level description should be used.

It was suggested that a letter should be sent to all Gwynedd primary schools to inform them that they should check that the "Exemplar Framework" level descriptions were selected when recording Religious Education on INCERTS because this was the relevant level to Gwynedd and Anglesey's Agreed Syllabus.

(b) GCSE - it was suggested that Head Teachers should ensure that Religious Education teachers gained access to any courses and to collaborate with Mavis Jones, Head of Religious Education Department, Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch, who was the region's coordinator and she would be available to assist Gwynedd and Anglesey.

- (c) For information, it was noted that CYNNAL had been awarded a five year contract to develop an e-magazine for geography and that it would be a good model to copy for religious education. Two individuals from Gwynedd had been appointed as editors of the magazine namely Huw Dylan, Ysgol y Berwyn and Noel Dyer, former teacher at Ysgol Glan y Môr, Pwllheli. The first issue of the magazine would be published on HWB+ around the end of the Autumn term.

**Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above.**

**(b) To request that the SACRE Clerk sends a letter on behalf of SACRE:**

**(i) to all primary schools in Gwynedd drawing their attention to the guidance to select the "Exemplar Framework" for Religious Education within the INCERTS.**

**(ii) to express their appreciation of GwE's 'lead teachers' scheme to ensure that GCSE Religious Studies teachers received support and opportunities to collaborate when preparing the new GCSE specification.**

**(iii) to send best wishes to Mefys Edwards Jones, head of the religious education department, Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch, in her role as lead teacher.**

## **10. WALES ASSOCIATION of SACREs**

### **(a) Minutes of the previous meeting**

The draft minutes of the previous Association meeting, held on 8 March 2016 in Haverfordwest, were submitted.

The GwE Challenge Advisor drew attention to the following matters:

- That the WJEC course had been postponed
- That the Advisory Panel had prepared guidelines on the rights of a child/parents to withdraw from collective worship.

**(b) Nominations for the Wales Association of SACRE's Executive Committee were submitted.**

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

**(b) To note that the Association's next meeting would be held on 23 June 2016 in Rhyl.**

**(c) To request that the GwE Challenge Advisor votes on behalf of Gwynedd SACRE for the three individuals named below:**

**Mary Parry  
Huw Stephens  
Mathew Maidment**

The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm and concluded at 3:30 pm.

**CHAIR**