

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

GWYNEDD ANNUAL REPORT

September 2023 - August 2024

Head of the Education Department

Mr Gwern ap Rhisiart

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**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

Councillor Menna Baines
Chairman, 2023/2024

SECTION 2: ADVICE to GWYNEDD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

2.1 SACRE's function in relation to Religion, Values and Ethics

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. From September 2022 to August 2023 ESTYN did not undertake a full inspection programme, although some schools volunteered to pilot revised inspection arrangements. The revised inspection programme resumed in September 2023. Gwynedd schools were not asked to provide self-evaluations for the Gwynedd SACRE as a result of these changes.

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 2023-2024.

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.

Both Primary and some Secondary schools implemented 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.

Following a further discussion with GwE it was agreed that Bethan James, and advisor with GwE, would re-start supporting Gwynedd SACRE from the Autumn 2023 term. The sad news came about the sudden death of Bethan James at the beginning of 2024 before she was able to fully undertake the role.

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 Religion, Values and Ethics and the Welsh Government

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 Religion, Values and Ethics 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 2023-2024 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

a) 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

b) The Constitution of Gwynedd SACRE was reviewed in April 2019 to include:

- **Christianity and other religions-** keep at 6 Propose to invite one representative from the Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and the Humanist beliefs
- **Representation of Teachers and Headteachers** - keep at 5
- **Elected Members** - keep at 7
- **Co-opted** - SACRE Committee to retain the right to co-opt members
- there are 3 votes, namely 1 for each Group - the Co-opted members do not have a vote

c) The Constitution was further reviewed in September 2022 to amend the Teacher group as follows:

- Representation of Teachers and Headteachers – retain at 5

The seats to be allocated as follows:

3 seats to be shared between the recognised Teachers' Unions (NAS/UWT; UCAC; NEU; ASCL and NAHT) – to be decided by the Gwynedd Teachers' Union Forum.

1 seat to be filled by the Primary and Special Catchment Areas Consultative Group (GYDCA)

1 seat to be filled by the Gwynedd Secondary Headteachers Group (GSCU)

3.2 SACRE membership of Gwynedd 2023-24

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
Judaism
Islam
Hinduism

Parch Nick Sissons
Eurfryn Davies
Gwawr Maelor Williams
Naomi Wood
Bethan Davies Jones
Eirian Bradley Roberts
Patrycja Bielak Smith
Edward Parri-Jones
Nathan Abrams
Mr Mohamed Arabi
Dr Sibani Roy

Teachers' representatives

UCAC
NASUWT
NEU

Emmá Roberts (Ysgol Botwnnog)
Miriam Amlyn (Ysgol Eifionydd)
Heledd Owen (Ysgol Friars)

Secondary Headteachers group (GSCU)
Primary Headteachers group (GYDCA)

Eleri Moss (Ysgol y Moelwyn)
Amaiog Iwan
Mrs Miriam Amlyn
Mr Euron Hughes
awaiting nomination

Local Members

Councillor Paul Rowlinson
Councillor Meryl Roberts
Councillor Elin Walker Jones
Councillor Menna Baines
Councillor Jina Gwyrfa
Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones
Councillor John Pughe Roberts

Plaid Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Independent
Independent

Co-opted members (non voting)

Officers

Gwern ap Rhisiart
Mair Huws

Head of Education Department
Assistant education resources officer and
SACRE clerk

Rhodri Jones

Democratic Services officer

3.3 SACRE meetings 2023-24

Dates of meetings may be obtained by contacting the SACRE Clerk. During 2023-2024 Gwynedd SACRE met twice through Zoom:

21 November 2023
2 July 2024

Due to circumstances, the meeting to be held on 6th of February 2024 was cancelled.

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

a) 21 November 2023

- It was confirmed that the then Head of Education has been in discussions with GwE to restore support and it has been confirmed that Bethan James would be returning to that role. It was reported that the support will not be at the same level as previously, but that Bethan James will attend SACRE meetings and give a further half day of support, and as a starting point she would give a presentation at the next meeting.
- The Reverend Nick Sissons reported on the current Collective Worship Guidelines. He felt that the current guidelines were outdated and needed significant Work. He suggested there was no value in going through and modifying the existing document as wider issues needed attention, particularly the need to review the legislation on collective worship. Following discussion it was decided that SACRE Gwynedd write a letter to WASCRE and the national bodies of all churches in Wales to enquire how they could be able to help move the matter forward.

b) 4 July 2023

- Councillor Menna Baines was re-elected as Chair and Cllr Meryl Roberts as Vice-Chair.
- Nia Elain Roberts, Llan Project School Pilgrimage Engagement Officer, reported. It has been reported that the project receives the support of the Church in Wales Evangelism Fund for the development of pilgrimage within the Diocese and the learning of the Welsh language. The project had been funded for 7 years. One of the main aims of the project is to motivate teachers to use the theme of 'pilgrimage' within their classwork as well as to promote religious history and the Welsh language. It was stressed that this project was available to all schools, not just church schools and all schools would have access to lesson packs, visits and presentations.

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:

Gwern ap Rhisiart	Head of Education Department
Mair Huws	Assistant education improvement officer and SACRE clerk
Rhodri Jones	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

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