
**S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
18.06.08**

Present:

Members of Gwynedd Council: Councillors Huw Edwards, Stephen Churchman, Selwyn Griffiths, Dafydd W. Roberts.

Christians and Other Faiths: The Rev. Canon Tegid Roberts (Church in Wales), Mr Wyn Myles Meredith (The Methodist Church)

Teachers: Mr Noel Dyer (UCAC), Mr Paul Matthews Jones (SHA),

Officers: John Blake (Education Officer), Bethan James (Humanities Adviser), Glynda O'Brien (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Anwen Davies, Pat Larsen, Carol Llewelyn (Advisory Teacher), Mrs Ruth Davies (Union of Welsh Baptists), Mr Gwyn Hefin Jones (Presbyterian Church of Wales), Mrs Eirian Bradley Roberts (Catholic Church), Mr Euron Hughes (NUT), Mr Rheinallt Thomas (co-opted member).

1. **PRAYER**

The meeting was commenced with a prayer by Canon Tegid Roberts.

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To elect Councillor Pat Larsen as Chairman of this committee for the year 2008/09.

3. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To elect Councillor Huw Edwards as Vice-Chairman of this committee for the year 2008/09.

In the absence of Councillor Pat Larsen, the Vice-Chairman was requested to take the Chair this time.

4. **MINUTES**

Submitted: The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 6 February 2008.

Resolved: To receive and approve the minutes as a correct record.

5. **SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON INSPECTING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN NON-DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS**

Submitted: For information, ESTYN's guidance on inspecting collective worship in non-denominational schools.

Reported: (i) By the Humanities Adviser that the document before them was a guidance for Inspectors and as SACRE had a responsibility to monitor Religious Education standards and the spiritual and moral development of pupils, she felt that it was appropriate for Members to receive a copy of the above guidance for information. The guidance stated the legal requirements for collective worship, a description was given of what collective worship was, together with how Inspectors inspect and report back on collective worship

(ii) By members, that it would be useful to share the guidance with the Head of every school.

Resolved: (a) **To receive and note the contents of the above guidance.**

(b) **To request that the Education Officer, on behalf of the SACRE committee, forwards the guidance to every school.**

6. **SCHOOL INSPECTIONS**

Submitted: (a) Information on the contents of the school inspection reports under Section 28 Education Act 2005 in relation to Religious Education and the Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

(b) A summary of the self-evaluation of the following schools:

- (i) Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir
- (ii) Ysgol Gynradd Brynchrug
- (iii) Ysgol Gynradd Edern
- (iv) Ysgol Gynradd Bro Lleu

Reported: (a) By the Humanities Adviser on the previous inspection procedure when religious education was inspected in every subject, however by now the regulations had changed with the Inspection Teams choosing 6 subjects for inspection. She proceeded to explain the key questions regarding the standard of education of religious education as a subject. It was explained that religious education was a statutory subject in the national curriculum and this entailed that every child had to study it. In the context of older children in school it was explained that some chose to study GCSE's / AS's in religious education. It was explained that under the existing inspection procedure every school would not be inspected in religious education, however, the inspectors would observe the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The Humanities Advisor guided Members through the excellent reports before them. Five primary schools (Friog, Brithdir, Brynchrug, Ganllwyd and Bron y Foel) had received a grade in the context of question 3 that asked "How well do learning experiences meet the needs and interests of

learners and the wider community”? Ysgol Bro Lleu had been inspected on the subject of religious education with the school receiving a Grade 2 in Key Stage 1, and a Grade 1 in Key Stage 2. It was also noted that Ysgol Uwchradd y Moelwyn had been inspected in religious education and had excelled in the inspection by being awarded a Grade 1 in KS 3 and 4. Members’ attention was drawn to the report of a Church in Wales voluntary aided primary school inspected under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005. It was noted that the school in question maintained especially good standards.

(b) Since fewer schools were inspected specifically on religious education, SACRE resolved to invite schools to submit a summary of the self-evaluation submitted to the Inspection Teams in order to check the understanding of school standards.

Resolved: To receive and note the contents of the inspections and the self-evaluations and to request, in accordance with procedure, that the 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 the schools to attain the grades.

7. TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

A presentation was given by Mrs Stella Gruffydd, Teacher at Ysgol Bro Lleu, when an outline was given to Members of what had led to the school receiving a Grade 1 in KS2 following an ESTYN inspection in January 2008. The teacher outlined those good features highlighted by the Inspectors namely, discussing principles with pupils such as friendship, tolerance and responsibility for others and safeguarding the world. The school conducted visits to different places of worship and gave pupils an opportunity to see different ceremonies and understand their significance. The Inspectors noted that the pupils identified the Bible as a sacred book and they had good knowledge of the stories and characters of both the Old and New Testament.

The Inspectors recognised the school’s speciality that the pupils knew of the World’s Great Religions such as Hinduism and they respected that different rites were important to other religions.

The teacher outlined the excellent features seen by the Inspectors at the top of the school with Year 5 pupils. They could discuss ideas such as peace, harmony and could show a feeling of what the words meant to them. The maturity of the pupils was noted when discussing symbolism and an example was given of lesson outcomes together with the activities that Year 5 undertook by studying a Jewish Holiday, Tu B’Shvat celebrating the New Tree Year.

Mrs Stella Gruffydd was thanked for her extremely interesting presentation given in a light and understandable format to the committee. The SACRE members felt that the presentation had been a good exercise to show the school’s excellence and it would be good to have a similar presentation from a representative from Ysgol y Moelwyn bearing in mind the excellent grade received by the school following inspection. In

response, the Humanities Adviser confirmed that it was intended to invite the Head of Religious Education to a SACRE meeting in October.

8. GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY AGREED SYLLABUS

Submitted: To members during the meeting, a final draft document on the Gwynedd and Anglesey Agreed syllabus.

The Humanities Adviser noted that Religious Education was not a national subject and therefore in accordance with the relevant Act, it was the responsibility of the local SACREs to provide a syllabus for schools. In this regard, it was noted that Gwynedd and Anglesey SACREs had worked jointly to plan and provide a syllabus that would be acceptable for primary and secondary pupils.

It was explained that negotiations had been undertaken for a decade regarding a national agreed syllabus. The Gwynedd and Anglesey SACREs had discussed the APADGOS consultative framework since January 2007. It was necessary for each local SACRE to decide if they wished to adopt the framework or not, and the decision of Gwynedd and Anglesey SACREs was to welcome and adopt the model framework.

A Working Group was established comprising experienced teachers in the field to formulate an appendix to the framework that would give guidance to schools and the Humanities Adviser took the opportunity to guide members through the document drawing attention to:

- the general presentation
- planning guidelines
- teaching and learning guidelines
- model plans and pathways

By adopting the document Religious Education would have equal status to other subjects with the responsibility on schools to ensure that there was progression and continuation in the subject. Senior school management teams were requested to give sufficient time, suitable staff and sufficient resources in order to do the subject justice.

The appendix noted the need for schools to take advantage of opportunities, in the context of World Religions and it was expected that every pupil:

- (i) by the end of their primary career would have studied some of the world's main religions
- (ii) by the end of their secondary career (Year 11 in Dwyfor/Meirionnydd and Year 13 in Arfon) would have studied all the World's Religions, namely 6 faiths.

The Humanities Adviser proceeded to list the documentation that would be influential together with the considerations that teachers should bear in mind when planning learning experiences. Teachers would have the freedom to plan Religious Education in several ways such as:

- using the range as a focus
- using RE skills as a focus
- using a theme as a focus
- using a skills framework as a focus

and several examples were seen in the appendix of basic questions to be used and for the assistance of teachers.

Attention was drawn to guidelines and planning papers in the appendix for teaching Religious Education to 16 - 18 year olds. Many schools had not provided statutory Religious Education and within the appendix to the Agreed Syllabus schools could offer Religious Education to pupils within the above age range in several ways:

- formal course leading to accreditation
- attending a series of conferences
- accreditation of key skills
- Wales, Europe and the World which is a requirement of the Welsh Baccalaureate
- Individual study
- Link with the world of work

In conclusion, the Humanities Adviser explained that following the approval of the Gwynedd and Anglesey SACREs of the final draft report that arrangements would be made to print the document with the intention of presenting it to schools in September 2008. It was trusted that an official launch would be made during the autumn term with an invitation given to a representative from SACRE members to attend.

During the ensuing discussion, it was felt that it was important for pupils to respect various world religions and that parents should receive the message that the intention was to expand the pupils' knowledge of different religions and not teach a pupil to follow any specific faith or belief.

Resolved: (a) To receive, note and thank the officers for the presentation and to also thank the Working Group of Teachers and SACRE officers for their contributions and support when formulating the draft document for the Agreed syllabus.

(b) To adopt the final draft document as an appendix to the Agreed syllabus and to approve:

- (i) That pupils have an opportunity to study the World's Religions as noted in (i) and (ii) above.**
- (ii) the documentation included in the planning guidelines for the curriculum together with suggestions for teachers as guidance and assistance to enable them to teach Religious Education in the classroom.**

9. WELSH ASSOCIATION OF SACREs

Submitted: (a) Draft minutes of a meeting of the Welsh Association of SACREs held on 14 March 2008 in Carmarthen.

Reported: By a member his disappointment that more pupils from Wales had not taken up the opportunity of the Holocaust Education Trust's offer to visit Auschwitz. In response, the Humanities Adviser explained that information had been circulated to schools in Anglesey and Gwynedd but unfortunately pupils were in the middle of their external examinations. However, she was aware that two pupils and a teacher from Ysgol David Hughes, Anglesey had taken advantage of the offer. It was noted that the organisers would check examination timetables in future when organising a similar event.

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

(b) **To nominate Mr Wyn Meredith to attend the Annual Meeting of the Welsh SACRE Association in Flintshire on 26 June 2008.**

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and ended at 4.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN