
**S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
08/02/12**

Present: Councillor Huw Edwards (Chairman)

Gwynedd Council Members: Councillors Aeron Jones, Pat Larsen and Stephen Churchman.

Christians and Other Faiths: Mrs Ruth Davies (Union of Welsh Baptists), Mr Wyn Myles Meredith (Methodist Church), Reverend Deian Evans (Presbyterian Church of Wales), Mr Cynrig Hughes (Independents).

Teachers: Mr Noel Dyer, (UCAC), Mrs Miriam Amlyn (NAS/UWT).

Officers: Mr Ken Robinson (Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk), Miss Bethan James (Humanities Adviser), Mrs Glynda O'Brien (Committee Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Selwyn Griffiths, Mrs Alwen Watkins (ASCL) and Mrs Leusa Jones (Part-time Advisory Teacher CYNNAL), Mrs Eirian Bradley-Roberts (The Catholic Church).

1. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) Reverend Deian Evans was welcomed to his first SACRE meeting as Mr Gwyn Hefin Jones' successor, representing the Presbyterian Church of Wales.
- (b) Mrs Miriam Amlyn was congratulated on her recent marriage, and she and her spouse received best wishes for the future.

2. PRAYER

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Reverend Deian Evans.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any member present.

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 12 October 2011 as a true record.

5. SELF-EVALUATIONS

Submitted: A summary of the self-evaluations by the following schools:

- (i) Ysgol Llanllechid
- (ii) Ysgol Treforthyr
- (iii) Ysgol Llanllyfni
- (iv) Ysgol Llanbedr
- (v) Ysgol Bro Hedd Wyn

(A) The Humanities Adviser guided Members through the self-evaluations noted above, reminding them of the current arrangements for schools to submit self-evaluations to SACRE within the inspection year. It was noted that SACRE had a responsibility to monitor the standard of Religious Education and it was felt that the procedure was successful and that receiving Self-Evaluations was a means of monitoring the standards of schools. Schools were asked to respond to the following three key questions:

- (a) How good are outcomes in Religious Education?
- (b) How good is provision in Religious Education?
- (c) How good is provision for collective worship?

The schools were congratulated on their efforts to complete the self-evaluations with all schools awarding themselves a Grade 2. Numerous examples of good practice were noted in all schools, and they had been successful in responding to SACRE's requirements by demonstrating:

- A good understanding of the importance of worship and the importance of significant locations and artefacts to people of different religions
- Valuable experiences such as visits to places of worship, holding mass worship and encouraging children to identify the values which are important in their everyday lives, holding special services, e.g. Thanksgiving, St David's Day, etc.
- Setting challenging targets for the pupils, observing and evaluating
- Developing pupils' philosophy skills by developing ideas and reflecting
- Encouraging pupils to work independently, in addition to pair and group work
- Dealing with Major questions e.g. "Is death inevitable?"

In response to a Member's question on how much sharing of ideas happens between Heads as part of the self-evaluation, and whether copies could be sent to each school, the Humanities Adviser said that she could disseminate the ideas and share them on school visits. The Assistant Education Officer and SACRE Clerk added that the authority had strived to share good practice with Heads / teachers in training courses in all subjects.

It was suggested that a draft sample self-evaluation form could be produced for consideration at the next SACRE meeting, drawing on the highlights of various self-evaluations, and that Members could contribute examples of good practice from the schools that they represent as Governors. The sample could then be posted on CYNNAL's website, for the future use and benefit of Headteachers.

A Member asked whether the proposed changes to establish a regional education service for North Wales would impact on SACRE's work and responsibilities.

In response, the Humanities Adviser explained that there was pressure on the six North Wales education authorities to collaborate, i.e. Conwy, Anglesey, Gwynedd, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham Councils. It was noted that CYNNAL already provide a service to schools in Conwy, Anglesey and Gwynedd authorities. As there were changes on the horizon, it was noted that SACRE had a statutory responsibility to advise schools, and that no challenges to SACRE were envisaged.

Resolved: **(a) To accept and note the contents of the self-evaluations and request that the Assistant Education Officer, on behalf of SACRE, 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.**

(b) To discuss, in SACRE's next meeting in June, producing a sample self-evaluation form noting ideas and good practice to be posted on CYNNAL's website for the use and benefit of Headteachers.

(B) The Humanities Adviser took the opportunity to update SACRE with the following news:

(i) Mrs Leusa Jones, Religious Education Advisory Teacher, had been supporting the Humanities Adviser, mainly in the secondary sector. During the previous term, she provided support in training courses and assisted with Key Stage 3 Portfolios for the attention of external examiners. She also played a key supporting role in a training programme to develop writing skills in the Religious Education subject area.

Three Religious Education teachers had recently qualified, and Mrs Leusa Jones had been observing and supporting them at the beginning of their careers.

(ii) Likewise, Ms Debbie Humphreys, a teacher at Ysgol Eifion Wyn had been providing support to primary schools. She shadowed the Humanities Adviser on training courses and held 'Right and Merit' courses for teachers. She also provided sample work plans that were now on CYNNAL's website for use in primary schools, and updated sample timetables, including examples of materials for collective worship. She referred teachers to a list of up-to-date websites for the preparation of materials to assist in the classroom.

(iii) Ms Nia Wyn Jones, a former teacher at Ysgol Gynradd Llanfairpwll had also assisted the Humanities Adviser, particularly with the preparations of a conference for primary school children held in the Cathedral in Bangor, as part of the Religious Education celebrations. A special day was held at the end of November for schools in Gwynedd and Anglesey to respond to the question "What is Christmas?". The children were given an opportunity to attend a number of interesting workshops, and this celebration will be the subject of an article in the next edition of Religious Education News.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the positive news noted above.

(b) To request that SACRE Assistant Officer and Clerk sends a letter of thanks, on behalf of SACRE, to Mrs Leusa Jones, Ms Debbie Humphreys and Ms Nia Wyn Jones for their assistance and support with the above mentioned developments in Religious Education.

5. WALES ASSOCIATION of SACREs.

Reported: The Humanities Adviser attended a meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs in Cardiff on 24 November 2011, where the chief examiner gave a presentation and reminded the Wales SACREs that this was the last opportunity for Religious Education departments to submit the portfolios of Key Stage 3 Religious Education pupils. It had been hoped that Religious Education would be given three years to submit their portfolios, but it had been decided that pupils can only submit their portfolios this year. During the meeting, one of the SACRE members proposed that a letter of complaint be sent to the Welsh Government requesting that it reconsiders the decision to decrease the period from three to two years. The Humanities Adviser stated that she had voted, on behalf of Gwynedd SACRE, to support the proposal to send the letter, particularly to ensure that Religious Education received the same treatment as other subjects.

Councillor Wyn Meredith was also present at the meeting, and added that local primary school pupils gave an impressive presentation.

(ii) The next meeting of the Association would take place in April in Ceredigion.

RESOLVED: (a) To accept and note the above.

(b) To note that the next meeting of the Association of SACREs would be held on 30 April 2012 in Ceredigion.

6. GWYNEDD SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

The final Gwynedd SACRE Annual Report for the 2010-11 academic year was presented to Members for information.

Resolved: To accept the report and thank the Humanities Adviser for her work in coordinating and preparing the annual report.

7 CORRESPONDENCE

Submitted:

(i) Religious Education News

Attention was drawn to some articles in The Religious Education News magazine:

- The creation of a Faith Garden by the Head of St Andrews Church in Wales Primary School
- Christian Aid Resources – it was noted that a collective worship service was being developed, often based on a contemporary story. These were distributed electronically to all secondary and primary schools in the County.
- REflections – guidance to assist Key Stage 2 and 3 teachers in preparing portfolios

RESOLVED: To accept and express gratitude for the copy of the Religious Education News magazine.

(i) Subscription letter to the Religious Education Movement Wales

The CYSAG Assistant Education Officer and Clerk reported that the above letter had been received in relation to subscription of a sum of around £1400 to the Wales Religious Education Movement, noting that Gwynedd SACRE normally do this on an annual basis.

RESOLVED: To approve to a subscription of £1400 to the Wales Religious Education Movement again this year.

(iii) Resignation

During the meeting a letter of resignation was presented by Mr Cynrig Hughes, from representing SACRE on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee. Mr Hughes explained that he found it difficult to attend these meetings due to other personal commitments. He felt that in the past he hadn't been able to do the committee justice due to his inability to attend and contribute, and felt that in future it would be beneficial to elect a member for a period of two years to avoid placing a burden on an individual for too long a period.

The members were requested to nominate another representative, but unfortunately no nominations were forthcoming. Following a discussion it was suggested that this would be left for the time being, and that the Chairman and officers would hold further discussions with the aim of bringing forward a name to the next SACRE meeting in June. Consideration would also be given to specifying a specific period, e.g. two years, for the nominated person to serve on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: (a) To accept Mr Cynrig Hughes's letter of resignation, and thank him for representing SACRE and for serving on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee for such a long period of time.

(b) To allow the Chair and officers to hold further discussions with a view of presenting a nomination to serve on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee to the next SACRE meeting in June, and at the same time discuss the possibility of specifying a time period for the appointment.

8. BEST WISHES

It was noted with sadness that Councillor Pat Larsen had decided not to stand as a Councillor in the next elections in May. The Chairman paid tribute to her for her praiseworthy and untiring work on to this Committee over many years. She received heartfelt thanks and was wished every happiness in her retirement.

The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm and concluded at 3:10 pm

CHAIRMAN