
**S.A.C.R.E. – STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
22.10.14**

Present:

Councillor Selwyn Griffiths - Chairman

Gwynedd Council Members: Councillors Tom Ellis, Jean Forsyth, Mair Rowlands.

Christians and Other Faiths: Mr Wyn Myles Meredith (Methodist Church), Mrs Ruth Davies (Welsh Baptists Union), Mrs Eirian Bradley-Roberts (Catholic Church).

Co-opted Member: **Mr Rheinallt Thomas**

Teachers: **Mrs Miriam Amlyn (NAS/UWT)**

Officers: Mr John Blake (Temporary SACRE Clerk) and Glynda O'Brien (Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer).

GwE: Miss Bethan James (GwE System Leader),

Apologies: Cllr. Llywarch Bowen Jones, Mr Noel Dyer (UCAC) and Mrs Alwen Watkin (ASCL).

1. PRAYER

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

2. WELCOME

The following were welcomed to the meeting:

- (i) Cllr. Mair Rowlands to her first and last SACRE meeting, as she had been appointed to the Council's Cabinet – she was congratulated and best wishes were extended to her.
- (ii) Mr John Blake in his role as temporary Gwynedd SACRE Clerk, following the retirement of Mr Ken Robinson

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 25 June 2014 as a true record.

5. DRAFT GWYNEDD SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

The Draft Gwynedd SACRE Annual Report for the 2013-14 academic year was presented for members' approval, prior to the publication of the final report.

(A) Miss Bethan James explained that the purpose of the Annual Report was to summarise the work undertaken by SACRE over the previous year and it was important that the recommendations within the report were drawn to the Cabinet's attention. Members were reminded of what had been agreed previously i.e. naming schools that submit self-evaluations as well as those schools who do not. Further attention was drawn to the main responsibilities of SACRE namely, to scrutinise school self-evaluations and it was seen that the quality of the self-evaluations had improved over the last year. Guidance was given to schools to submit self-evaluations and although requests and several telephone calls by the SACRE Clerk had to be made to schools to submit them, perhaps in future a specific structure to achieve this would have to be considered. In light of the changes to the ESTYN inspection framework, schools can receive 3 to 4 weeks' notice of inspection and therefore it is necessary for SACRE to determine a timetable and a self-evaluation system in order that every school is aware of the expectations and to facilitate opportunities for teachers to share good practice in the field of religious education and collective worship. It was suggested that one primary / one secondary school should be invited to share experiences / good practice with SACRE in order to learn from them and ensure that SACRE achieves its duties effectively. Miss Bethan James added that she could conduct hour surgeries for schools once a term if the authority's officers so wished, in order to facilitate arrangements to develop self-evaluations.

During the ensuing discussion on the above, the following points were highlighted:

- That receiving a presentation from schools following an inspection would be of benefit to SACRE in order that they could be aware of how schools respond to action points.
- It was important not to duplicate work for teachers bearing in mind that every Department Head filled in an on-line template with KS3/4 results, and would it be possible to attach the information for SACRE self-evaluations
- Was it possible to facilitate opportunities to share good practice in Religious Education through school to school partnership arrangements
- Concern regarding the last clause of the recommendations on page 9 of the report namely 'invite religious education co-ordinators to present their work to SACRE members'.

Miss Bethan James drew attention to the recommendations that appeared on page 14 of the annual report that referred to a suggestion for SACRE members to visit schools to attend collective worship sessions and to visit Religious Education Departments to discuss this with the coordinator. The suggestion was welcomed by several Members, and there had been a very positive response by Anglesey SACRE who had already adopted the system of schools inviting SACRE Members to attend collective worship sessions.

In response to a suggestion of formalising self-assessments and inviting SACRE members to attend collective worship sessions, concern was noted that the situation in secondary schools was totally different to the primary sector due to two aspects i.e. that Religious Education was considered as a subject on one hand, and collective worship was an assembly and it was not the Religious Education coordinator who would be responsible for the service. Miss Bethan James added that there was a statutory requirement regarding collective worship and that services vary in schools – some were collective and

daily and others at different times took place in classrooms and could occur at any time of the day. It was stressed that when SACRE members visit at the invitation of schools that the schools were not expected to prepare any specific service for them.

In response to a query by a Member regarding how many schools invite Ministers to hold services, it was explained that this depended on Head teachers and also the Ministers. There were areas where Ministers conduct services regularly.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the annual draft report for 2013/14.

(b) To approve the recommendations in the report and take note of the concern highlighted regarding the last clause of the recommendations on page 9 of the report.

6. SCHOOLS' SELF-EVALUATIONS

(a) The SACRE Clerk guided Members through the information submitted and the summary of school findings and it was seen that 5 primary schools had been inspected by ESTYN during the 2014 summer term. Further reference was made to extracts within ESTYN reports referring to Religious Education, collective worship, moral and spiritual development but also other aspects such as personal, cultural and social education.

(b) Attention was drawn to the English translation that the self-evaluation reports for Llanbedrog and Talsarnau schools had been received although they had not been ticked on the page.

(c) Members were guided through the following self-evaluations by referring to three questions, namely:

1. How good are outcomes in Religious Education?
2. How good is provision in Religious Education?
3. How good is provision for collective worship?

(i) Ysgol Llanbedrog

The school noted that the following matters had received attention in connection with the above key questions:

1. Continue to develop the children's knowledge, awareness and understanding of religions and religious customs.
2. Introduce more numeracy work via Religious Education.
Organise more visits e.g. to see various places of worship and Coleg y Bala.
3. Children to take more of a part in daily worship e.g. create impromptu prayers, perform a short play etc.

(ii) Ysgol Crud y Werin

The school noted that the following matters had received attention in connection to the 3 key questions:

1. Foundation Phase
 - Continue to develop vocabulary and the ability of pupils to question, offering them opportunities to express a view by the top of the Foundation Phase

- Develop an understanding of the impact of religion on the lives of believers by the end of the Foundation Phase

KS2

- Ensure that the tasks provided for the more able group are challenging when working through the basic religious and human questions

2. Foundation Phase

- Continue to offer a wide range of interesting and valuable experiences within the plans
- Teachers to continue to jointly-discuss and be aware of new resources available e.g., in ICT
- Continue to encourage children to develop thinking skills

KS2

- Continue to develop challenging and extensive tasks for the more able pupils in each class
- Continue to set Success Criteria and give children an opportunity to reflect on the learning
- Need to develop links with further religious communities e.g. visit a mosque

3. Emulate excellent practice in every service
Ensure that class/department (FP) Collective Worship conforms to the regulations and requirements.
Ensure that responsibilities have been shared and all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to Collective Worship.

(iii) **Ysgol Edern**

The school noted that the following issues received attention in connection with the key questions:

1. Continue to present assessment aspect for learning in the lessons
2. Ensure the finance and current expertise are in place in order to continue Good provision here needs to be retained
Continue to present aspects of Assessing in Learning in the lessons in accordance with the school's SDP
3. Following evaluation by the children, the older pupils want more of a part in the assembly services (this commenced in Easter 2014)
Many of the children (30%) thought that the collective assemblies were too long - this has been adapted since Easter 2014
Create celebration and success exhibitions in the hall.

(iv) **Ysgol Talsarnau**

The school noted that the following issues received attention in connection to the key questions:

1. Develop more opportunities for extended writing for older KS2 pupils in order to ensure the depth of their understanding
2. Ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to discuss other religions apart from Christianity

3. Ensure more opportunities for the pupils to participate and contribute to whole school assemblies.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the inspections and the self-evaluations.

7. TEACHER ASSESSMENTS AND RESULTS OF EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS IN THE SECONDARY SECTOR

(a) Miss Bethan James, GwE System Leader, submitted the assessments of Departments regarding pupils' attainment on the basis of the year's work, specific assessment tasks and tests using the findings of the national moderation programme and Welsh Government guidance to verify their judgements.

(b) It was noted that via the above data it was possible to compare the performance of Gwynedd schools with that of schools in Anglesey and Conwy.

(c) From the assessment, the main messages seen were:

- 94.2% of Gwynedd KS3 pupils attained Level 5+ in Religious Education
- 61.9% of Gwynedd's KS3 pupils attained Level 6+ in Religious Education, 6.6% fewer than in 2013.
- 21.1% of Gwynedd's KS3 pupils attained Level 7+ in Religious Education, 3.8% fewer than in 2013.
- Level 3 or lower was awarded to pupils in 5 schools.
- 4 pupils in Gwynedd were awarded Level 8 in Religious Education.

(ch) It was noted by a Member in response to the above data, that the data systems were not easy and varied with some levels being inputted in a different format.

(d) In terms of Religious Education GCSE results, it was noted that the results were good and it was proposed to re-visit the data during next term.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the report.

8. DRAFT SACRE ACTION PLAN 2014-15

(a) The draft Gwynedd SACRE action plan for 2014-15 was submitted and it was explained that the Welsh Government was expecting every SACRE in Wales to present annual reports. One of the recommendations was that the SACREs should self-evaluate themselves by asking to what extent they have an impact on:

1. Developing good leadership in Religious Education and collective worship
2. Closing the gap between standards attained by boys and girls at GCSE
3. Updating Religious Education teachers' knowledge e.g. Welsh government guidance documents, ESTYN
4. Facilitating good quality collective worship

(b) Within the action plan there were practical steps to be taken and Members were asked in pairs to discuss the outcomes - and the following points were noted that correspond to the above matters:

1. The need to share good practice in SACRE meetings inviting schools to present their best practices
2. That Religious Education teachers feel isolated and do not get opportunities to go on courses/training as in the past; are not aware of changes; cases where good practice cannot be shared as no Religious Education twin is available.
3. That so many e-mail reach schools; many changes by ESTYN
4. The importance of visiting schools to see the quality of collective worship and for SACRE Members to gain a better understanding

(c) It was noted that the action plan would be submitted to every meeting in the future in order that it was possible to reach an opinion on the effectiveness of SACRE Members.

Resolved: To accept and approve the action plan and ensure that it is presented in every future SACRE meeting.

9. WALES ASSOCIATION of SACREs

(a) Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of a meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs that took place on 2 July 2014 in Llandrindod Wells were submitted.

Stemming from the minutes:

- (a) A reference was made that representation at the meeting was disappointing;
- (b) That there was no Religious Education Adviser operating in Wales now;
- (c) That Gwynedd Council needed to re-join and pay the membership fee in accordance with the usual procedure;
- (ch) Vicky Thomas and Gill Vaisey were elected as members of the Executive Committee.

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

(b) That Gwynedd Council re-joins the Wales SACRE Association and pays the membership fee in accordance with the usual procedure.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.50 pm.

CHAIRMAN