

1.1 Introduction from the Chairman

Once again, the Covid 19 pandemic cast a deep shadow over our schools in the 2020-21 academic year. The schools had to close their doors for part of the year and there were other times when large numbers of pupils had to learn remotely. Throughout the year the main priority of the authority and schools was the wellbeing of our pupils and staff and we spent time in our first meeting after the start of the pandemic, which we were able to hold in November 2020, discussing this vitally important issue. We were able to hear from the teachers about the challenges they faced and express our appreciation of their efforts in a very difficult period and the fact that Religious Education continued to be delivered during the lockdown.

The SACRE was not able to carry out its normal duties of monitoring the standards of Religious Education because the system of schools' self-evaluations, Estyn inspections and external examinations was suspended during the year. Similarly, it was not possible for SACRE members to visit schools to see their acts of collective worship.

Despite that, I am grateful to the members of the Gwynedd SACRE for their work during the year, which is described in the report below. It included a response to the Welsh Government's consultation on " Guidance on the design and delivery of mandatory Religion, Values and Ethics", expressing our satisfaction with the content of the consultation and noting that Religious Education subject skills are key to the specialist element of teaching the new curriculum.

Finally, I would like to thank our teachers for their care and commitment in delivering Religious Education and conducting acts of collective worship, which are a valuable part of school life and help to promote the wellbeing of our pupils, spiritually, socially and emotionally.

Councillor Paul Rowlinson
Chair Gwynedd SACRE, 2020/2021