
S.A.C.R.E - STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

04/07/2023

Present:

Councillors: Menna Baines, Anne Lloyd Jones, Meryl Roberts and Paul Rowlinson

Others:

Christians and Other Faiths and Non-religious Philosophical Convictions: Nathan Abrams (Judaism), Eurfryn Davies (The Baptist Union of Wales), Bethan Davies Jones (The Union of Welsh Independents), Reverend Nick Sissons (The Methodist Church) and Gwawr M Williams (Presbyterian Church of Wales)

Teachers: Miriam Amlyn (NAS/UWT), Heledd W Jones (NEU) and Eleri Moss (Headteachers' Representative)

Officers: Garem P Jackson (Head of the Education Department) Einir Rh Davies, Ffion E Evans and M Eirian Roberts (Member Support Officers), B Mair Huws (Assistant Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk and Glesni M Foulkes (Translator)

1. PRAYER OR QUIET REFLECTION

The meeting was opened with some words from Councillor Menna Baines and an opportunity for reflection.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Menna Baines was re-elected as Chair of the Committee for the 2023/2024 period

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Meryl Roberts was re-elected as Vice-chair of the Committee for the 2023/2024 period

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Elin Walker Jones, John P Roberts, Angela Russell, Beca Brown and Eirian Bradley-Roberts (The Catholic Church)

5. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

6. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of a meeting of this Committee held on 14 March 2023 as a true record, and they were signed by the Chair.

8. DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Thanks was expressed for the draft report, and the following was noted:

3.1 – Membership - addition of the details of the Cabinet decision (2019 meeting) to amend the constitution to extend representation of other religions as this was an important constitutional addition, and check the names of the Teaching Unions

Attention was drawn to a typing error in the English version, and the use of the term "Determination" in the Report. It was confirmed that "Determination" was used in relation to collective worship, which was broadly a Christian service, although it could vary from school to school, but no schools had requested to vary this during the period of the Report

It was confirmed that Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet had accepted Welsh Government Guidelines as an agreed Syllabus in a previous meeting, but that Gwynedd needed to create its own Plan, based on the Guidelines. Once the Plan was approved by SACRE it became the Final Plan. It was noted that it was hoped that schools had the essential resources, especially in Welsh, in order for the Plan to succeed.

The Group approved the Annual Report, subject to the above additions.

RESOLVED: To accept the Draft SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022 subject to Revising 3.1 to include a reference to the Cabinet's decision in 2019 to amend the constitution to expand the representation of religions on SACRE and to reflect the changes in the names of Teaching Unions.

9. UPDATE: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDANCE

The Chair referred to a discussion held on the guidance at the previous meeting, when it was concluded that it required updating as it only referred to Christianity, and that the language was no longer inclusive. At the meeting, SACRE agreed to form a Working Group to examine the existing Guidance. It was reported that, despite a request, only two names had been proposed for this task, and consequently the Working Group had not been convened, and nobody had been appointed to lead this work.

It was reported there were relatively frequent requests for the document, although it was dated, and it was not considered to be a live document. It was noted that the Legislation remained the same, that it was the language of the document that had dated, and that information about religions apart from Christianity needed to be added.

Reverend Nick Sissons offered to examine the document and to contact the other Member who had volunteered for the task, and report back with initial ideas at the next meeting. An enquiry was made about whether it would be possible to contact experts in this field, outside SACRE, to provide input to this work?

RESOLVED: To accept Reverend Sissons' offer to examine the guidelines and report back at the next meeting. As another name had been proposed at the last meeting to sit on the Working Group, it was agreed to contact that Member as she was not present.

10. SPECIALIST SUPPORT FOR SACRE

Everyone was reminded that the GwE Officer's specialist support had been withdrawn in 2018, which had been a source of concern and had highlighted a lack of expertise in this field.

The Head of the Education Department reported that he had been seeking a resolution and that he was now in discussions regarding the possibility of commissioning specialist support for SACRE through GwE, in order to make progress, subject to GwE's approval.

RESOLVED: To give approval for the Head of Education Department to discuss the possibility of commissioning specialist support for the SACRE through GwE, and to progress the matter as soon as possible.

11. WASACRE Matters

- i. **Guidelines for Visiting Schools**
- ii. **New Professional Teaching Opportunities for Religion, Values and Ethics**
- iii. **WASACRE Draft Minutes 21 March 2023**
- iv. **Qualifications Wales Consultation: The Full Proposal of Qualifications 14-16**

It was noted that the Guidelines for Visiting Schools was a very comprehensive and useful document.

In relation to the New Professional Teaching Opportunities for Religion, Values and Ethics, it was noted that it was desirable for the English and Welsh language materials to arrive at the same time. The Head of the Education Department reported that this was an important step, and that SACRE had an important contribution to make, and that there were many opportunities to teach Religious Education within the humanities. He also referred to a presentation by Lea Crimes on curriculum development, which was a good example of how to develop the curriculum.

It was noted that different presentation methods must be offered, by focusing on initial teacher training, and that it was crucial to keep an eye on the situation. The need to consider what would happen with GCSE was noted. There may be more than one platform to voice an opinion.

It was felt that it would be beneficial to ask GwE to hold a discussion regarding the new model and its suitability for giving Religion, Values and Ethics due attention, whilst considering the provision of resources through the medium of Welsh. It was also decided to write a letter regarding the provision of Welsh Language Resources (to ensure that they were available the same time as the English resources) in the name of SACRE, the Head of Education and the Cabinet Member for Education to the WJEC, the Education Minister and the Welsh Sub-committee.

It was noted that it may be possible in due course to use the force of the words in the White Paper as a further opportunity to voice an opinion.

In relation to WASACRE Draft Minutes 21 March, 2023 and the relevant papers, it was reported that WASACRE had work to update a number of documents, including changing the format of reports as the guidance had dated.

In relation to the Qualifications Wales Consultation: The Full Proposal of Qualifications 14-16, it was confirmed that WASACRE had submitted strong arguments, and had received the support of SACRE.

RESOLVED:

- i. Guidelines for Visiting Schools : a very comprehensive and useful document

- ii. New Professional Teaching Opportunities for Religion, Values and Ethics : ask GwE to hold a discussion regarding the new model and its suitability for giving Religion, Values and Ethics due attention, whilst considering the provision of resources through the medium of Welsh. It was also decided to write a letter regarding the provision of Welsh Language Resources (to ensure that they would be available the same time as the English resources) in the name of SACRE, the Head of Education and the Cabinet Member for Education to WJEC's Chief Executive, Head of WJEC Resource Department, the Education Minister and the Welsh Sub-committee
- iii. Draft Minutes: note that WASACRE had work to update documents
- iv. Qualifications Wales Consultation: support WASACRE's response

The meeting commenced at 3.30 p.m. and concluded at 16:45 p.m.

CHAIR