

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 10th February, 2000 at 10.00a.m.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors K.N. Hawkins, D. Jones, M.M. Jones, T.M. Parry and R.LI. Williams.

Representing the Denbighshire Teachers' Joint Negotiating Committee

R. Brocklehurst, P. Bryer and C.J. Thomas.

Reperesenting Religious Denominations

M.L. Colbert, H.M. Ellis, M. Evans, J. Gibson, J.M. Kirkham, Parch. J. Owen, Rev. J.P. Williams.

Co-opted Members

M.B. Lloyd and Rh. A. Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT

Inspector/Adviser R.E. and Administration Officer (W.J. Harness).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM

S. Flavell, N.C. Roberts and Director of Education, Culture and Information.

PERSONAL

The Chairperson welcomed J. Gibson, the new Religious Society of Friends representative, to her first meeting of the Denbighshire SACRE.

838. URGENT MATTERS

The Chairperson gave notice of the following item which, in her opinion, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100(B)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 :-

Election of officers to WASACRE.

839. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October, 1999, as approved by the County Council on 18th January, 2000 were submitted.

Matters Arising

Annual Report for Denbighshire - the Inspector/Adviser RE apologised that the annual report was not ready for that meeting explaining that problems with translation and printing had been encountered. Copies would, however, be despatched to members when ready.

840. MILLENNIUM SERVICES - UPDATE

The Inspector/Adviser RE reported to Members on the millennium services recently held in the Wrexham area indicating that the services had been spectacular and memorable occasions with some 700 primary school and 500 secondary school children attending. The Inspector/Adviser said that the most moving experience in the service had been the lighting of candles and the lodging of prayers and hopes for the millennium which each of the schools had written.

The Inspector/Adviser reported that similar services were to be held at the St. Asaph Cathedral. To date some 400 primary children in Denbighshire would be attending a service at the Cathedral, invitations having been sent to each primary school inviting them to send 12 children to represent them. It was hoped that as many schools as possible would be represented at the service.

A varied programme was intended with individual schools and partnership schools taking part. The primary school service would be held on the 21st March with the secondary school service on the 22nd March and all members of the Denbighshire SACRE would receive an invitation to attend one of the services.

The Inspector/Adviser added that it was the intention to make a booklet containing all the prayers and hopes submitted by the Denbighshire school children.

In conclusion, Mr. Craigen suggested to members that Denbighshire SACRE may care to consider, as was done by St. Giles Church in Wrexham, giving to each child who attends the millennium service a copy of the millennium resolution printed on a small card as a memento of the occasion.

Members were in favour of this suggestion provided the card was in bilingual format. The Inspector/Adviser agreed to take the matter up with the Director of Education, Culture and Information and with the Design and Print Department at Mold. The Chairperson indicated that the Church in Wales should be involved in such negotiations as she thought that a Welsh version of the millennium prayer had already been prepared by them.

RESOLVED that the Inspector/Adviser's verbal report be accepted.

841. TRAINING/INSET FOR SACRE MEMBERS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) which provided members with some possibilities for training/inset for Denbighshire SACRE members.

During consideration of the report, it was proposed that a training session be organised to take place on the same day as and just prior to a meeting of SACRE with the following topics for consideration - (a) the role and function of SACRE, and (b) the statutory requirements for R.E. and Collective Worship.

Mr. Rheinallt Thomas informed members of a bilingual leaflet recently prepared by the Churches Joint Education Policy Committee for the UK on SACRE membership and suggested that this could form the basis for training.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the Inspector/Adviser RE organise a training session to take place on the same day as, and immediately prior to, a meeting of Denbighshire SACRE, and*
- (b) *the topics for consideration would be (i) the role and function of SACRE, and (ii) the statutory requirements for R.E. and Collective Worship.*

842. ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) which informed members of both the positive and negative comments concerning the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and religious education inspected at two schools between 13th September and 7th October, 1999.

Once again, the positive comments in each school's inspection report had outweighed the negative comments. Both schools inspected were quite small, rural, schools and members praised the results achieved bearing in mind the limited space and facilities each school had.

The Inspector/Adviser RE commented on the fact that inspection reports now contained the names of the inspectors responsible for each section. Mr. Rheinallt Thomas added that it was now the practice of Estyn to 'inspect' the inspectors undertaking school inspections.

The Inspector/Adviser said that the schools inspected would be written to congratulating them on their reports and offering any services in terms of addressing shortcomings and key issues.

In conclusion, the Inspector/Adviser reminded members that the current practice adopted was for him to undertake an analysis of inspection reports and subsequently to put together excerpts of those reports. In view of the great amount of work required to do this, members were asked if it were acceptable to them for the Inspector/Adviser to undertake a detailed analysis of inspection reports but not to prepare excerpts from the reports. Members were informed that, if required, a copy of the detailed inspection reports could be made available for their perusal at meetings of SACRE.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the report by the Inspector/Adviser be accepted, and*
- (b) *in future, the Inspector/Adviser prepare detailed analysis of inspection reports but cease the practice of preparing excerpts from those reports.*

843. MEETING WITH ESTYN CHIEF INSPECTOR AND NEWSBRIEF

The Inspector/Adviser RE reported that the National Advisory Panel for RE in Wales had requested a meeting with the Estyn Chief Inspector. A meeting had, in fact, taken place in November, 1999 with Mr. Rheinallt Thomas, the Inspector/Adviser RE together with the Minute Secretary representing the Advisory Panel. A very frank and fruitful discussion had taken place concerning the whole matter of inspection of schools' R.E. and Collective Worship. The Inspector/Adviser said that they had been very encouraged by the way in which Estyn had been listening to SACRES, referring to the Newsbrief which had been circulated to members with their agenda. This particular newsbrief had offered guidance and advice to Registered Inspectors and SACRES highlighting important principles and issues in Section 10 inspections of religious education in maintained schools in an endeavour to ensure that Inspectors were focussed in their comments.

The Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the following matters which Estyn were undertaking in response to concerns expressed by SACRES:-

- (i) those officers inspecting secondary schools and reporting on more than one subject were being invited to attend training in RE in order to ensure their suitability as qualified team members in inspection bids;
- (ii) School inspection reports were now being scrutinised on a weekly basis, each one being analysed in detail in RE in particular;
- (iii) every registered inspector undertaking an inspection in this current round had been asked to specifically report on a number of issues on RE and to focus on the extent that there was a balance between christianity and world religion, and

- (iv) secondary schools were being asked to comment on the impact of the new short course on standards in RE.

In conclusion Mr. Rheinallt Thomas referred to the confusion that had existed in the Welsh translation of 'Collective Worship' and reported that registered inspectors were now requested to ensure that 'addoli ar y cyd' was used when referring to 'collective worship' in inspection reports.

RESOLVED - that the verbal report by the Inspector./Adviser RE be accepted.

844. 1999 EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) which provided members with statistical information concerning the 1999 examination results.

RESOLVED that the report by the Inspector/Adviser RE be accepted.

845. ELECTION OF OFFICERS TO WASACRE

(This item was considered as a matter of urgency, notice having been given by the Chair).

The Inspector/Adviser RE circulated to members letters dated 15th, 16th and 17th November, 1999 received from WASACRE concerning election of officers and amendments to the WASACRE Constitution.

Members considered the two suggested amendments to the Constitution and agreed to support them as follows:-

That the Vice-Chair should normally succeed to the Chairmanship of the Association and that an Assistant Secretary be included in the list of Officers.

That members of the Executive be appointed for a three year period, and that representatives be drawn from SACRES on a rotational basis.

Having regard to attendance at WASACRE meetings, it was agreed that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Mrs. M.B. Lloyd (Co-opted Member) endeavour to attend. In the event of any of them being unable to attend, that an alternative be asked to substitute.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the two suggested amendments to the Constitution as above be supported, and
- (b) the Chair, Vice-Chair and Mrs. M.B. Lloyd endeavour to attend meetings of WASACRE. In the event of any of them being unable to attend, that an alternative be asked to substitute.

846. RETIREMENT OF MR. RHEINALLT THOMAS

The Inspector/Adviser RE extended hearty congratulations to Mr. Rheinallt Thomas who would be retiring at the end of March as Director of the Welsh National Centre for RE. The Inspector/Adviser praised Mr. Thomas for the excellent level of support he had given to schools and to teachers alike and expressed the hope that a similar level of support would be forthcoming from the new Director Professor Leslie J. Francis. The Inspector/Adviser expressed thanks to Mr. Thomas for his support and helpful suggestions in SACRE and through the Centre to all Denbighshire schools and wished him well in his retirement. It was agreed that Professor Leslie J. Francis be invited to attend meetings of the Denbighshire SACRE as a Co-opted Member.

847. CONFERENCE FOR SACRE MEMBERS

- (i) The Inspector/Adviser informed members that he had received notice of a Conference to be held on 6th and 7th April at the Honnerton College, Cambridge which was being organised by the National Association of SACRES in England and the RE Centre of East Anglia. Whilst the content of the Conference on the 6th April was likely to be more England orientated, the Inspector/Adviser informed Members that the 7th April would be of value to members in Wales as RE in the Curriculum was being considered. The Inspector/Adviser informed members that if they were interested in attending he had details of the conference adding that the organisers would welcome the attendance of Welsh representatives.

- (ii) Mr. Rheinallt Thomas informed members of the annual Education Conference organised by the Free Churches in Wales to be held on 25th May in the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Cardiff, adding that the ACCAC Chief Executive would be the main speaker.

The meeting closed at 11.20a.m.
