

## **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 Wednesday, 7th February, 2001 at 10.00 a.m.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Representing Denbighshire County Council**

Councillor S. Drew, K. Hawkins, D. Jones, M.M. Jones, T. Parry, F. Shaw and K.P. Stevens

#### **Representing the Denbighshire Teachers' Joint Negotiating Committee**

P. Bryer, M.B. Lloyd and N.C. Roberts

#### **Representing Religious Denominations**

M. Colbert, H. Ellis, M. Evans, S. Harris, J. Kirkham and Parch. J. Owen

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Inspector/Adviser R.E., Director of Lifelong Learning and Administrative Officer (K.E. Jones)

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM**

Sister Elizabeth, S. Flavell, Rev. Prof. L.J. Francis, C. Thomas, Rev. J.P. Williams and Councillor R.LI. Williams

### **TRANSLATION FACILITIES**

The Chair reported that the Council's translator had been delayed and it was agreed that as the presentation on the provision for RE from the Inspector/Adviser RE did not require translation facilities this item be brought forward on the Agenda.

### **1068. PRESENTATION - PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

(This item was brought forward on the Agenda with the consent of the Chair).

The Inspector/Adviser RE presented a verbal report, with the aid of a lap top computer and the use of presentation slides, on the provision for RE. Members were informed that the Inspector/Adviser RE and Ms. Gill Vaisey had jointly delivered the presentation to WASCARE at the lasting meeting which was held on 22nd November, 2000 and it was felt that it would be beneficial for local SACREs to also receive the presentation.

Members were appraised of the approaches to the organisation and provision of RE in both primary and secondary schools together with a number of issues for consideration at each Key Stage from 1 to 5. Attention was given to the problems of including RE in a topic based approach and of the need to ensure the connections between RE and National Curriculum Subject Links were appropriate and meaningful to enable RE to be developed and enhanced. It was emphasised that although curriculum provision was important, effective learning and achievement were dependent on good quality planning and teaching. Reference was made as to what constituted good RE and included the requirement for a structured scheme of work; the importance of appropriate planning in topics; resources for learning; assessment and recording and evaluation and development. In conclusion the Inspector/Adviser RE outlined how the aims to achieve good RE could be attained.

Councillor T.M. Parry referred to his role as Chair of the Council's Lifelong Learning Policy Review and Scrutiny Committee and felt that it would be beneficial to members of the Lifelong Learning Committee if the Inspector/Adviser RE would present a report to them at a future meeting. The Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that he would be willing to attend at a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee to address Members.

In response to questions from members the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that INSET training was provided to teaching staff in those schools where there was a lack of specialist RE staff; the role of SACRE was to encourage, support and advise and that the Headteachers and Governors were ultimately responsible for ensuring adequate provision of RE within schools.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for his interesting and informative presentation.

At this juncture (10.40 a.m.) the meeting was adjourned for five minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

Upon resuming the proceedings members discussed a number of considerations arising from the presentation and expressed concern that a number of schools within the County were not meeting the statutory requirements in the provision of RE within schools. It was agreed that a letter be sent to those schools who were not meeting the necessary requirements expressing the concern of the Denbighshire SACRE and to remind them of the legal requirement in the provision of RE within their schools.

Copies of the presentation slides referred to by the Inspector/Adviser RE were circulated to Members at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) *the Inspector/Adviser RE's verbal presentation be received and noted, and*
- (b) *a letter be sent to those schools who are not meeting the statutory requirements in the provision of RE to express the concern of the Denbighshire SACRE and to remind them of the legal requirement in the provision of RE within their schools.*

At this juncture the Chair welcomed Councillor F. Shaw to his first meeting of the Denbighshire SACRE and he informed Members that Councillor Shaw had replaced Councillor E.A. Owens as the LEA representative.

#### **1069. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October, 2000 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 28th November, 2000 were submitted.

**Matters Arising:-**

Page 278 - Item No. 596 - Review of Agreed Syllabus - The Inspector/Adviser RE informed Members that the English version of the draft Agreed Syllabus had been sent to schools the previous week and the Welsh version would be forwarded to schools that week due to a delay with the translation. The draft Agreed Syllabus had been accompanied by a reply slip for schools to complete and return. The layout of the draft version had imitated other national curriculum subjects and a designer had been commissioned to design the front cover of the Agreed Syllabus for Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham Local Education Authorities.

Page 279 - Item No. 599 - Wales Association of SACREs - The Chair reported that at the last meeting he had been selected together with Mrs. S. Harris and Mrs. M.B. Lloyd to attend the meeting of WASACRE which was held on 22nd November, 2000. Unfortunately he had not received any further details of this meeting and therefore had not attended. Mrs. S. Harris also confirmed that she was unaware that she had been nominated to attend at the meeting. Members requested that they be reminded of their required attendance at any future meetings of WASACRE.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

#### **1070. INSPECTION REPORTS: ESTYN - AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE IN RE**

The Inspector/Adviser R.E. submitted a booklet (previously circulated) for members consideration entitled 'Aiming for Excellence in Religious Education' produced by Estyn which highlighted aspects of

excellence in the teaching of RE. He confirmed that the document had been sent to all primary schools and contained plenty of useful information regarding the approaches and value of RE based on the Agreed Syllabus in Wales. He briefly took Members through the booklet and referred to the main themes arising therefrom including standards in RE; excellence in teaching RE; other factors contributing to excellence in RE; key skills and Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and indicated that the standards in RE had improved.

A member referred to the use of QCA material obtained from the internet being used by many schools and the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that good example material could be obtained from this source however QCA model requirements were based on the English requirements and schools needed to be aware of the requirements as they were in Wales and select appropriate material accordingly. He particularly referred to the absence of the Welsh dimension/Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

In response to a question from the vice chair regarding the age remit for pupils being taught RE in schools the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that all pupils registered at school, including nursery school, should be taught RE from the age of 3 to the age of 18. Consequently those pupils registered at school from the age of 3 should be introduced to RE as part of their learning experience. He confirmed that it would be the responsibility of the individual school to address the issue of the pupils age range to ensure they met those requirements. With regard to Collective Worship for early years he advised that NAPfRE were awaiting a response from ACCAC and the Welsh Assembly and he would also seek clarification on this issue. In view of the legal requirement of teaching RE to pupils from the age of 3 the vice chair requested that the matter be brought to the attention of schools to ensure compliance in accordance with the condition.

A member referred to the term used in the Welsh version of the document as “credwr/credwyr” meaning believer(s) and expressed his preference that the term used be “crediniwr/crediwyr”. Members agreed that a letter be sent to Estyn commending the contents of the document and pointing out the preferred term as proposed by members.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) *the document produced by Estyn entitled “Aiming for Excellence in Religious Education” be received and noted, and*
- (b) *a letter be sent to Estyn on behalf of the Denbighshire SACRE commending the document together with the preferred term proposed by members as referred to above.*

#### **1071. INSPECTION REPORTS: ANALYSIS OF REPORTS ON SCHOOLS**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) upon the positive and negative comments concerning the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and RE inspected at three schools between May, 2000 and October, 2000.

He took Members through the report and confirmed that the positive comments within each school’s inspection report had far outweighed the negative comments.

A Member indicated that the comments on page one of the report contradicted the comments made on page five of the report and queried the inconsistency. The Inspector/Adviser RE responded that such conflicts had been noted in previous reports and referred to the difficulty of evaluating SMSC to form a final conclusion. He noted the comments of the Member and agreed that the inspection reports needed to be consistent regarding the comments made.

An LEA representative felt that a background of the inspected schools should be included within the reports providing such details as whether the school was from the primary or secondary sector; the number of pupils registered at the school and who had undertaken each inspection. The Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that it was possible to arrange for future school inspection reports to provide that information.

In response to an LEA representative’s question regarding the programming of the inspection of schools the Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that Estyn dealt with the scheduling of school inspections across

Wales and the programme of inspection was ongoing with each individual school being inspected every five years. He informed Members that Estyn was considering changing the inspection process in the future.

During the ensuing discussion Members felt that the school inspection report reflected very well on the County and were happy to receive the report and overall were pleased with the findings as contained within the report. In accordance with the usual practice the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed 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.

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

#### **1072. REVIEW OF AGREED SYLLABUS**

The Inspector/Adviser R.E. addressed members and informed them that the Joint Agreed Syllabus Conference was scheduled to take place on 19th March, 2001 commencing at 10.00 a.m. at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold and emphasised the importance that adequate members from each representative group on SACRE be in attendance. He confirmed that a presentation would be made to Members regarding the proposed changes to the current syllabus whereupon each individual SACRE would meet separately to make a final decision. The implementation date for those agreed changes would commence September, 2001. The Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that the Clerk to the SACRE would write to members in due course detailing the arrangements of the Joint Agreed Syllabus Conference and members would be requested to confirm their availability to attend at the meeting.

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

#### **1073. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a booklet (previously circulated) for members attention entitled 'So You're Joining your Local SACRE' produced by Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee, a co-ordinating group of CYTUN and Churches Together in England, in detailed consultation with the Society of Education Officers and the Wales Association of SACRES. The booklet was designed as a guide for SACRE members to enable members to work within SACRE to support and encourage local schools to ensure high standards in RE. The guide also refers to the appropriate legal documentation and identifies support material for members.

The Inspector/Adviser RE commended the booklet which he felt would be beneficial to members in the undertaking of their role and confirmed that he had obtained additional copies of the booklet which would be distributed to new members.

Mrs. M.B. Lloyd, one of the Denbighshire SACRE representatives on WASACRE, reported on the last meeting held on 22nd November, 2000 in Newport as follows:-

- (i) a presentation given at the meeting by the Inspector/Adviser RE and Gill Vaisey on the provision of RE highlighting the problems of presenting RE within schools; the presentation was found to be thought provoking and had subsequently resulted in a detailed discussion thereon;
- (ii) a presentation given at the meeting by Ms. Helen Arthur of the Training and Leadership Division of the National Assembly who had informed members that the official statistics showed no shortage of RE staff but she had acknowledged that the reality was different; she also confirmed that as many as 50% of students who complete their training to be primary school RE specialists do not proceed to teaching posts, and
- (iii) a presentation given at the meeting by Ms. Tina Renshaw from RETRI who had informed members that a web site had been set up that schools could access and obtain information regarding RE and it was also used to advertise details of teaching vacancies in RE.

The Inspector/Adviser RE advised members that he had not received copies of the minutes of the WASACRE in time to circulate them at the meeting but confirmed that the minutes would be forwarded to them in due course. He informed members that the Christian Education Movement had requested

that they be represented at the Wrexham SACRE and members agreed that an invitation be extended to the Christian Education Movement for a nomination to be co-opted onto the Denbighshire SACRE.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) *the verbal report by the Denbighshire SACRE representative on WASACRE be accepted, and*
- (b) *an invitation be extended to the Christian Education Movement to nominate a representative to be co-opted onto the Denbighshire SACRE*

**1074. INTRODUCTION OF DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

The Chair introduced and welcomed to the meeting Mrs. Sioned Bowen the Corporate Director of Lifelong Learning who had recently taken up her appointment with the Council.

The Director of Lifelong Learning addressed members and thanked them for the warm welcome and apologised for her late arrival. She advised members that she first encountered SACRE when she moved from London to Powys in 1984 and confirmed that she had a great deal of interest in the work of SACRE.

The Chair extended the best wishes of the Denbighshire SACRE to the Director in her new post.

At this juncture the Chair thanked members for their attendance and interest shown at the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*