

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, Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl on Tuesday, 3rd July, 2001 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors D. Jones (Chair), S. Drew and F. Shaw

Representing the Denbighshire Teachers' Joint Negotiating Committee

P. Bryer, Sister Elizabeth Kelly and M.B. Lloyd

Representing Religious Denominations

M. Colbert, Rev. P.J. Collinson, H. Ellis, J. Gibson, S. Harris and Parch. J. Owen

Co-opted Member

T. Ap Sion (substitute for the Rev. Prof. L.J. Francis)

ALSO PRESENT

Inspector/Adviser R.E. and Administrative Officer (K.E. Jones)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM

T. Bryer, M. Evans, N. Roberts, Rev. L.J. Francis and Councillors K.N. Hawkins, M.M. Jones and T.M. Parry

It was reported that Mr. Terry Bryer had been appointed as the Church in Wales Representative on the Council in place of the Rev. J.P. Williams but he had been unable to attend on this occasion and had submitted his apologies for absence from the meeting.

275. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Tania Ap Sion who was substituting for Co-opted Member Rev. Prof. L.J. Francis to her first meeting.

276. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th February, 2001 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 27th March, 2001 were submitted.

Ms. Jennifer Gibson asked members to note that her apologies for absence for the meeting held on 7th February, 2001 had not been recorded.

Matters Arising:-

Page 526 - Item No. 1068 (b) - Provision of Religious Education - In response to a member's question the Inspector/Adviser RE advised that the Agreed Syllabus would be sent to all Denbighshire schools the following week together with a letter reminding them of the statutory requirements in the provision of RE within their schools.

Page 527 - Item No. 1070 - Estyn: Aiming for Excellence in RE - The Inspector/Adviser RE informed members that in view of the commendations received from local SACRE's supporting the booklet, Estyn had sent the document to both primary and secondary schools. With regard to the Welsh translation of the document the HMI had acknowledged the preferred use of terminology as proposed by members at the last meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes be received.

277. 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 January, 2001 and March, 2001 and indicated that the inspection report contained a brief background history of each school as previously requested by members at their last meeting.

He proceeded to take Members through the report and confirmed that the positive comments within each school's inspection report had far outweighed the negative comments and provided a brief resume of the findings relating to each school.

During the ensuing discussion members took the opportunity to put questions to the Inspector/Adviser RE regarding the inspections and particularly referred to the availability and use of ICT with schools; the provision of training and resources; the production of school action plans to address the negative comments; and the scheduling of school inspections.

Members were pleased with the overall findings as contained within the report and were satisfied with the action being undertaken to address the negative comments as highlighted by the inspection.

RESOLVED that the report by the Inspector/Adviser RE be accepted, and the usual letters following such considerations be sent to schools.

278. ESTYN: CHIEF INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted the Chief Inspector's Annual Report (previously circulated) upon the standards and quality of Religious Education for 1999-2000 in primary and secondary sector schools together with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

He proceeded to take Members through the report and highlighted a number of issues for attention at each key stage including the best work in each key stage; other features that influence the quality of work and reported upon a number of suggestions for schools to improve the standard of work. Particular reference was also made to the Welsh dimension of the curriculum.

A teacher representative referred to the staffing and resources within those schools and was pleased that the report had highlighted the lack of specialist teachers in a quarter of the schools inspected. Members felt that the lack of expertise was an issue which should be addressed.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

279. ESTYN: NEW FRAMEWORK FOR INSPECTION

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted the new framework for inspection (previously circulated) detailing the characteristics of both good and unsatisfactory standards; pupils key skills; effective teaching in religious education and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The Inspector/Adviser RE outlined the changes to the framework including new points which were not included in the previous inspection framework and the subsequent impact of those changes on the inspection criteria for schools. He indicated that schools needed to familiarise themselves with the new framework to ensure they met the new requirements. Particular emphasise was placed on the key skills section and members were informed that ACCAC key skills were different than those contained in the ESTYN inspection framework.

During the ensuing debate members considered the difficulties involved in the inspection and evaluation of spiritual development. The Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that the report attempted to provide guidance in the assessment of spiritual development and referred to the need to encourage pupils to think for themselves and express their own opinions and beliefs, and to be given opportunities to reflect on their learning.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

280. ACCAC: DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF AGREED SYLLABUSES

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted ACCAC's Draft Guidance Document on the Review of RE Syllabuses 2001 (previously circulated) for members consideration. He explained that ACCAC had issued guidance to LEAs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences in 1996 regarding reviewing their local agreed syllabuses and advised that the guidance document had subsequently been revised in the light of changes to the legislation relating to Religious Education and the Wales Curriculum Review 2000.

The Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the consultation process of the draft document and indicated that he had responded to the consultation on behalf of Denbighshire SACRE. Mrs. M.B. Lloyd also confirmed that she was consulted regarding the draft guidance document in her capacity as Vice-Chair of WASACRE.

Members were informed that reference was made to the draft form of the document in compiling the draft revised Agreed Syllabus and those sections of the document which had been incorporated into the Agreed Syllabus as adopted by Denbighshire Agreed Syllabus Conference at the Joint Agreed Syllabus Conference held on 19th March, 2001 were identified.

RESOLVED that ACCAC's draft guidance document be received and noted.

281. LUKE PROJECT: PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a letter (previously circulated) from the Director of the Presbyterian Church of Wales Children and Youth Service on behalf of a Working Group regarding an Inter-denominational Project detailing the practical and financial implications of producing a modern Welsh language paraphrase of the Gospel of Luke for the youth of Wales.

The Inspector/Adviser RE advised members that the intention of the project was to present school children in years 6 and 7 with a full colour free copy of a paraphrased Gospel of Luke and the Working Group were seeking financial help for that project.

Members expressed their support for the project in principle and after examination of the project cost figures it was noted that the unit cost per Gospel would be approximately 97p. It was agreed that subject to members approval of the draft copy of the Gospel, the Inspector/Adviser RE approach the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning with request that the Authority purchase a copy of the Gospel for each pupil in Denbighshire's schools in years 6 & 7. A member referred to WASACRE's views on the project and the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that the matter could be raised at the annual general meeting of WASACRE to be held on 17th July, 2001.

RESOLVED that subject to the approval of the Gospel by WASACRE and Denbighshire SACRE the Inspector/Adviser RE approach the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning with request that the Authority purchase a copy of the Gospel for each pupil within the County in years 6 & 7.

282. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted the minutes of the Wales Association of SACREs held on 22nd November, 2000 in Newport (previously circulated) for members information and advised that Mrs. M.B. Lloyd had previously reported upon the minutes at the last meeting but copies had not been available to members at that time.

The Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the Annual General Meeting of WASACRE to be hosted by Denbighshire County Council which was scheduled to take place on 17th July, 2001 at the Monsanto Suite of the International Eisteddfod Pavilion in Llangollen. He indicated that the Clerk to the SACRE had written directly to members detailing the arrangements and requesting confirmation of members availability and emphasised the importance of members attendance at that meeting.

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted the bilingual publication of RE Directory for Wales (previously circulated) compiled and published by the Wales Association of SACREs. Members were advised that The RE Directory was developed by the Culham College Institute for the RE Council of England and Wales in 1999 and WASACRE had decided to publish a supplement for Wales in order to strengthen the Wales element.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the minutes of the Wales Association of SACREs held on 22nd November, 2000 in Newport be received, and*
- (b) *copies of the RE Directory for Wales as produced by WASACRE be distributed to Denbighshire's schools with the new Agreed Syllabus.*

283. RETIREMENT AND REPLACEMENT OF MEMBER

Mrs. M.B. Lloyd reported upon the retirement of Mrs. Phyllis Bryer as a teacher representative on SACRE and paid tribute to her service on the Council and her valuable contribution to debate. The Chair echoed those sentiments and extended the Council's appreciation and best wishes to Mrs. Bryer.

Mrs. Lloyd advised that Maria Isabel Barros-Curtis had been nominated to replace Mrs. Bryer on the Council to represent NUT (Special School) and members agreed that the handbook entitled 'So You're Joining your Local SACRE' produced by the Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee be distributed to Ms. Barros-Curtis and future new members.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for the work he had undertaken on behalf of the Council and thanked the Clerk to the SACRE and members for their attendance at the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11.15 a.m.
