

**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, 31st January, 2002 at 10.00 a.m.

**PRESENT**

**Representing Denbighshire County Council**

Councillors S. Drew, K.N. Hawkins, D. Jones, G. Jones (substitute for M.M. Jones), W. Roberts, R. Ll. Williams

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

Mrs. M.B. Lloyd (Chair) and M. Barros-Curtis

**Representing Religious Denominations**

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

**Co-opted Members**

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

**ALSO PRESENT**

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

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM**

T. Bryer, N. Roberts and Councillor F. Shaw

**1209. WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and reported that the Rev. R. Townsend had been co-opted onto the Council to represent the Christian Education Movement Wales and advised that Councillor W. Roberts had replaced Councillor K.P. Stevens as representative of the Local Education Authority.

**1210. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th October, 2001 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 27th November, 2001 were submitted.

**Matters Arising:-**

Item No. 653 - Minutes: Item No. 281 - Luke Project: Presbyterian Church of Wales - The Inspector/Adviser RE reported that he was still awaiting further details of the availability and cost of the paraphrased Gospel of Luke before progressing that matter with the Corporate Director. In response to a member's question the Inspector/Adviser RE advised that the intention of the project was to produce a modern Welsh language paraphrase of the Gospel of Luke for the youth of Wales.

Item No. 656 - Draft Annual Report of SACRE: Translation Issue - The Chair confirmed that a letter had been sent to Denbighshire's Acting Chief Executive with a copy to the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning expressing SACRE's concerns regarding Welsh translations. The Inspector/Adviser RE reported that the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning had expressed her regret over the delay in translation experienced by members which had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Bilingual

Working Group. She wished to assure members of the Council's definite commitment to translate documents in accordance with requirements.

Item No. 657 - Wales Association of SACREs: Early Years Curriculum - The Inspector/Adviser RE reported that he had written to ACCAC requesting the inclusion of RE and Spiritual Development within the early years curriculum but had yet to receive a response. He was aware that other SACREs had also responded to ACCAC regarding that issue which had resulted in further consultation with a view to the inclusion of RE and Spiritual Development in the early years framework. Reference was also made to Welsh Officer Circular 10/94 in consideration of Religious Education and Collective Worship.

In response to a member's request the Clerk to SACRE confirmed she would arrange for future minutes for consideration by the Council to be page numbered for ease of reference.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

#### **1211. EXAMINATION RESULTS 2000 & 2001**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted tables detailing examination results in Religious Studies for the years 2000 and 2001 within Denbighshire's school (previously circulated) for members consideration.

The Inspector/Adviser RE proceeded to take members through the results in detail and where available comparisons between each years results were made. He particularly referred to the following points:-

- GCSE Results All - Religious Studies 2000 & 2001 - although there were twenty eight additional candidates in 2001 the pass rate of A\* - C decreased by almost 10% on the previous year. Overall the results were disappointing and individual schools would be investigating the reasons for the lower performance rate.
- GCSE Results Boys - Religious Studies 2000 & 2001 - there was an 18% drop overall in boys performance in 2001 compared to the previous year.
- GCSE Results Girls - Religious Studies 2000 & 2001 - there was an increase of fifteen candidates and there was a mixture of both improving and decreasing results from individual schools on the previous year, however, overall there was a 5% reduction in the performance level.
- Religious Education All (Short Course) - the short course was relatively new and schools were having to adjust to new requirements; it was pleasing to note the popularity of the course and an uptake of 167 candidates; figures overall were 4% above the national average at A\* - C rate.
- A Level Results All - Religious Studies 2000 & 2001 - all four schools had increased performance significantly from previous years and the number of candidates had been maintained.
- Certificate of Educational Achievements - Religious Studies - showing very credible results for Rhyl High School; the data for Ysgol Tir Morfa was not currently available.

The Chair informed members that the Inspector/Adviser RE had co-written a book to assist schools with the Religious Studies Short Course which had been published and had been very highly praised. She took the opportunity to congratulate the Inspector/Adviser RE on that achievement and it was also acknowledged that the Inspector/Adviser RE was the Chief Examiner for the Religious Studies Short Course.

During consideration of the examination results members took the opportunity to put specific questions to the Inspector/Adviser RE particularly referring to the significant changes in the A Level syllabus and teaching implications; provision of RE within individual schools; the content of the RS short course; and the percentage of Christianity and other faiths in Religious Education.

In considering the GCSE results a member expressed his disappointment regarding the lower performance levels for 2001 in comparison with 2000 levels and referred to the possibility of offering INSET to help improve boys performance at that level. A member felt that the increase in the total number of pupils undertaking recognised qualifications in Religious Studies would counterbalance the decrease shown in performance attainment as she felt it was more important that many pupils progressed in Religious Studies at lower levels than a minority of pupils performing at a higher level.

In response to a member's question regarding specialist RE teachers within Denbighs hire's schools the Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that all the County's secondary schools employed RE specialists, however, shortage problems may be experienced when one specialist was required to teach at both GCSE and A Level. A member felt that SACRE should be aware if pupils were being disadvantaged because of a lack of specialist teachers.

Members were pleased with the increase in candidates for the short course and the interest the course had generated within schools and the Rev. R. Townsend congratulated Ysgol Dinas Bran on being able to offer both the short course and long course to pupils. At the request of a member the Inspector/Adviser RE agreed to make enquiries regarding whose responsibility it was to decide which courses were followed within individual schools.

Following a full and detailed discussion members expressed disappointment that some schools were not entering pupils for Religious Studies examinations but congratulated those schools who were and the Council felt that the tabulate did not always reflect the true ethos of the school. Overall the examination results reflected well on the County and members congratulated those schools on their results.

**RESOLVED** that the examination results for the years 2000 and 2001 be received and the verbal report by the Inspector/Adviser RE be accepted.

#### **1212. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES**

##### **(a) WASACRE - 8th November, 2001**

The Chair, one of Denbighshire SACRE representatives on WASACRE, verbally reported upon the last meeting held on 8th November, 2001 in Ebbw Vale (Blaenau Gwent County Borough) as follows:-

- (i) 'Religious Education and Personal and Social Education' (RE & PSE) - a joint presentation given at the meeting by Graham Davies; Eluned Jones; Vaughan Salisbury and Anthea Parker on the content of the PSE framework and guidance document; the ways that emotional, spiritual and moral aspects of PSE relate to RE; the relationship between RE and PSE and how PE and PSE could be effectively integrated. A video showing the effective use of circle time was also shown.
- (ii) 'Rainbows Document' - the document assisted youngsters regarding trauma and bereavement and it was agreed WASACRE should discuss the possibility of making the document available to members of the Association; it was agreed to invite Father Ieuan to a future meeting of the Association in that regard.
- (iii) Welsh Medium Provision: Trinity College, Carmarthen - RE and RS courses had not been offered through the medium of Welsh during the past academic year owing to a very small take-up; two new staff members had subsequently been appointed to the RS department and they were keen to offer Welsh medium provision.

Members expressed concern regarding the absence of Welsh medium provision highlighted at Trinity College, Carmarthen and thanked the Chair for her report on that meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the verbal report by the Chair be accepted.

**(b) Religious Education and Personal and Social Education Document (RE & PSE)**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted the Religious Education and Personal and Social Education (RE & PSE) Document (previously circulated) for members consideration. Members were advised that although the document was non statutory schools were required to address the issue of PSE and the document offered advice and support in that regard.

The Inspector/Adviser RE explained that the document detailed the relationship between RE and PSE and assisted teachers in examining the contribution that RE could make to PSE. He proceeded to take members through the PSE framework detailing the main contributory features; the aims of PSE; aspects which could be developed within the context of the school; and PSE learning outcomes at each Key Stage and the corresponding RE contexts. The document suggested the kind of contexts which RE could provide for in the acquisition of relevant knowledge, the promotion of attitudes and values and the development of skills identified in the PSE framework. Particular reference was made to the merits of 'circle time'.

In conclusion the Inspector/Adviser RE commended the document and felt that it would provide valuable advice to schools in the contribution of RE to the PSE framework and suggested members consider the distribution of the document to Denbighshire's schools.

Members fully endorsed the document and paid tribute to the excellent work undertaken by the officers in its preparation and production.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) *the Religious Education and Personal and Social Education Document be fully endorsed, and*
- (b) *copies of the document be distributed to Denbighshire's schools.*

**(c) Nomination of Representatives at WASACRE/ACCAC Symposium**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted letters received from WASACRE dated 7th October, 2001 and 20th December, 2001 (previously circulated) seeking nominations for representatives to serve on the Association's Executive Committee and nominations for representatives to attend a Symposium to be held in association with ACCAC on 27th April, 2002 at Llanidloes High School. In seeking the election of officers to the Association's Executive reference was made to the Code of Practice (previously circulated).

The Chair advised that the aim of the Symposium was to consider the role and status of RE Agreed Syllabuses and WASACRE had agreed that three delegates from each SACRE together with two teachers would be invited to attend. In considering the nominations of the two teachers the Chair referred to the membership of the Working Party for the Agreed Syllabus and suggested that two of the four teachers on the Working Party be nominated to attend at the Symposium as she felt their input would be representative of the Denbighshire SACRE.

Members concurred with the view of the Chair and it was suggested that, if possible, one teacher from the primary sector and one teacher from the secondary sector be nominated to attend the Symposium. Members requested that the Inspector/Adviser RE liaise directly with the four teachers concerned in the hope that two of those teachers would be in a position to attend the Symposium on 27th April, 2002 and it was:-

**RESOLVED ACCORDINGLY**

The Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the consideration of a Nationally Agreed Syllabus for Wales to increase the status of the subject and to increase funding. Members felt that it was important for RE to be overseen at local level and the Inspector/Adviser RE assured members that Religious Education would remain locally determined.

The Chair reminded members that she was currently Vice-Chair of WASACRE and would be invested as Chair in accordance with the usual practice. As Denbighshire SACRE would already have representation on the Executive Committee she proposed that no nomination be submitted to WASACRE and it was:-

**RESOLVED ACCORDINGLY.**

**(ch) Annual WASACRE Report 2000 - 2001**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted the Annual WASACRE Report 2000 - 2001 (previously circulated) detailing the activities of the Association. The Chair referred to item 6 on that report and advised that the Association were still awaiting a meeting with Miss. Jane Davidson, AM, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning in the National Assembly.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received and accepted.

At this point in the proceedings the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning arrived at the meeting and at the invitation of the Chair addressed the Council. The Corporate Director Lifelong Learning confirmed the Council's commitment to ensuring the provision of Welsh translations in accordance with the Council's requirements.

**1213. SILENT REFLECTION**

Councillor W. Roberts suggested that the Council consider beginning future meetings with a prayer. Members discussed the proposal and felt that it would be wrong to assume everyone in attendance at future meetings had practising faith and agreed that it would be more appropriate to allow individuals a few minutes silence.

**RESOLVED** that future meetings of the Denbighshire SACRE begin with silent reflection.

At this juncture the Inspector/Adviser RE advised that he had copies of the booklet 'Aiming for Excellence in RE' produced by Estyn containing the amendments to the Welsh translation as requested by Denbighshire SACRE at their meeting of 7th February, 2001. Copies of the booklet were available to members at the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.

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