

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 Tuesday, 1st July, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors B. Blakeley, S. Drew, K.N. Hawkins, N. Hugh-Jones, M.M. Jones and R. Ll. Williams

Representing the Denbighshire Teachers' Joint Negotiating Committee

I. Barros-Curtis, R. Evans (substitute for Sister Elizabeth Kelly) and M.B. Lloyd

Representing Religious Denominations

Parch. J. Owen (Chair), T. Bryer, H. Ellis, J. Gibson and S. Harris

Co-opted Members

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

Rev. P.J. Collinson, M. Colbert, M. Evans, J. Hannam, J. Kirkham and Councillor W. Roberts

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and extended a special welcome to Councillor B. Blakeley who was attending his first meeting of the Denbighshire SACRE and Rhian Ellis, substitute member for Sister Elizabeth Kelly. The Chair advised that Jennifer Gibson was attending her last meeting of the Denbighshire SACRE and thanked her for her valuable contribution over the past few years. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) would be represented by Peter Spiers at future meetings.

205 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February, 2003 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 3rd June, 2003 were submitted.

Matters Arising

Page 3 - Item No. 577 - The Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that he had raised the matter of guidelines being issued to registered inspectors (in relation to the content and completion of inspection reports) with HMI Paul Morgan but had not received a response to date. He confirmed that he would pursue this matter further and report back to members thereon.

Page 9 - Item 1103: Resolution (b) - The Inspector/Adviser RE reported that, despite reminders, only three secondary schools had responded to his letter seeking expressions of interest for a Young People's Faith Forum. However, these schools had responded positively and the feedback indicated that pupils themselves were interested in having a dialogue but that it should be based on open discussion. Members agreed that the Inspector/Adviser RE should continue to progress this issue as

appropriate. Councillor S. Drew advised that Garth Thomas, Denbighshire Youth Officer was in the process of setting up Youth Forums in the county's schools and she suggested this matter be considered by the Youth Forum at a future meeting. The Inspector/Adviser RE agreed to contact Mr. Thomas directly thereon.

RESOLVED that the minutes be received.

206 CHRISTIANITY EXPERIENCED - ST. ASAPH CATHEDRAL PUPIL DAYS

The Inspector/Adviser RE presented a verbal report, with the aid of a lap top computer and the use of presentation slides, on the Christianity Experience pupil days held at St. Asaph Cathedral on the 10th and 12th June, 2003.

The Inspector/Adviser RE was pleased to report that both days had proved very worthwhile, giving pupils positive experience of Christianity as well as helping them in their learning and he paid tribute all those involved with the event and ensuring its success. He proceeded to take members through the days events advising that the morning session had involved three stages: Exploring Christian Symbolism, Exploring Christian Worship and Exploring the Christian Bible. The afternoon session had involved six workshops based upon the Christian Journey, Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Healing, and Vocation following which a service of worship ended the day. The same delight and enjoyment in the event had been experienced by both primary and secondary school pupils.

In closing his presentation, the Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the letters and e-mails he had received from teachers commending the event and enquiring about the possibility of similar events in the future.

Members welcomed the report and expressed their delight that the pupil days had proved so successful. The Inspector/Adviser RE proceeded to respond to members' questions regarding the event, particularly referring to the pupils' discussions, thoughts and perceptions throughout the day. In receiving the report the Chair took the opportunity to thank the Inspector/Adviser RE and all those involved in making the event such a positive experience.

RESOLVED that the verbal report by the Inspector/Adviser RE be received and noted.

207 PRESENTATION: ACCAC - OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT MATERIALS FOR RE

The Inspector/Adviser RE delivered a power point presentation on Optional Assessment Materials (OAMs) for RE. The same presentation had been made to WASACRE by Denize Morris, Religious Education Officer for ACCAC. (A copy of the presentation slides together with two draft optional assessment materials on Celebrations - Easter (KS2) and Worship - Holy Communion (KS3) had been previously circulated to members with the agenda papers.)

The Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the review of the RE Syllabus and national exemplar level descriptions which were essential in producing OAMs. He explained that OAMs had been designed to support pupil assessment in Wales and provided resources, activities and educational strategies for teachers as well as examples of pupils' work with commentaries demonstrating how assessment related to the level descriptions. In order to develop OAMs for RE, representatives from each LEA had met to suggest appropriate topics for inclusion and as a result the following topics were being developed:-

- Key Stage 2: Worship - Shabbat; Natural World, Celebrations - Easter; Holy Books - Qur'an, and
- Key Stage 3: Worship - Holy Communion; Pilgrimage - Hajj; Celebrations - Easter; and Fundamental Questions

The OAMs could be used at any point within a key stage for different assessment purposes - learning, diagnostic purposes or for providing a summative snapshot, but it was important to note that individual pieces of work should not be used as the sole evidence for formal assessment.

In conclusion the Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that Denise Morris was anxious to distribute the OAMs to schools in the Autumn Term but this would very much depend upon her workload. He reminded members that, as agreed at their last meeting, he had written to John Valentine, Chief Executive of ACCAC asking him to consider increasing the post to a full time appointment or appointing a person to assist Mrs. Morris during projects such as this document. Mr. Valentine had responded that this matter would be given consideration when programmes of work were next reviewed.

During the ensuing discussion the Inspector/Adviser RE answered members' questions regarding the assessment of pupils' work and guidance provided in this respect together with the options available for RE study in the curriculum. The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for his interesting and informative presentation and it was:-

RESOLVED that the presentation by the Inspector/Adviser RE be received and noted.

208 ESTYN

(a) Excerpts of Chief Inspectors Annual Report

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted extracts from the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2001 - 2002 (previously circulated) which included aspects such as Cwricwlwm Cymreig; the quality of provision for learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and equal opportunities and respect for people's differences.

The Inspector/Adviser RE proceeded to highlight areas of the report for comparison with Denbighshire's schools and indicated that:-

- some of Denbighshire's schools had reduced the timetabled slot for RE from one hour to fifty minutes and schools needed to look at ways of delivering the full RE curriculum within these constraints;
- all Denbighshire's schools provided RE as a statutory requirement and it was only in the 6th form, when particular combinations of subjects were taken, that some pupils may not be able to attend RE;
- ACCAC were in the process of producing materials to help RE demonstrate Cwricwlwm Cymreig;
- the majority of Denbighshire's schools appeared to be addressing the quality of provision for learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well with schools often commended for this practice;
- acts of collective worship were sometimes not as spiritual as they could be with some teachers having difficulties in this area; when this was found to be an issue in Denbighshire the Inspector/Adviser RE had provided the necessary support to enable pupils' spiritual development to take place;
- in 35 out of 63 schools inspected in Wales over the past three years collective worship had been a key issue which needed to be addressed by ESTYN and the Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the difficulty and demanding nature in providing quality and spiritual development every day of the school year, and
- it was now a statutory requirement for schools to have a policy on promoting racial equality and Denbighshire's schools had been commended for this.

During consideration of the report, and in particular acts of collective worship, the Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the difficulties faced by schools in this area and reported upon the guidance, materials and resources provided to schools in that regard together with the in-house courses for form teachers in ways of delivering meaningful acts of worship in the form period. The Chair welcomed the positive ways to help schools overcome those difficulties detailed by the Inspector/Adviser RE and members

acknowledged the achievements of Denbighshire's schools in meeting the statutory requirements despite the difficult circumstances. Members also reiterated their previous concerns with regard to the inadequacies in the inspection process which did not accurately reflect those achievements in schools.

RESOLVED that the extracts from the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2001 - 2002 together with the verbal report of Denbighshire's position in relation to other schools in Wales be received and noted.

(b) New Inspection Draft Framework - Implications for RE and SACREs

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted his report (previously circulated) summarising the key changes arising from the draft guidance on the inspection of Secondary Schools - September, 2004 as follows:-

- the introduction of three types of inspection: Full, Standard and Short;
- the inclusion of 'peer assessors' to be assigned to each school inspection;
- the inclusion of 'nominees' whereby schools would be invited to select a member of staff to work with the inspection team;
- emphasis on the school's own self evaluation report focusing on standards, quality of education and leadership and management;
- listening to learners whereby schools would be expected to have arrangements in place for responding to pupils' views and concerns;
- responding to the report whereby schools would be invited to submit a response to the inspection report to be contained therein;
- details of the grading changes from the current delineations;
- feedback to teachers to be given during the inspection process;
- details of the seven key questions in the inspection framework, and
- recommendations as opposed to key issues for action including reference to any matters where the school's practice had not complied with legal requirements such as the daily act of worship.

During his presentation of the above changes the Inspector/Adviser RE detailed the implications for SACREs, ESTYN Inspectors and schools together with his concerns regarding particular aspects of the proposed changes to the inspection process. He advised members that SACRE's own work in terms of monitoring standards of provision via inspection reports would be severely impaired under the new inspection process as RE may only feature in the inspection reports of one or two schools in any one year. Other areas of concern included the grading changes to the current delineations; the potential detrimental effect of providing detailed feedback to teachers during the inspection process and time constraints on inspectors during that process; and the complex sub divisions of the seven key questions. Members fully supported the views of the Inspector/Adviser RE and expressed further concerns regarding the position of teacher nominees in schools. The Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that he had already expressed his own concerns to HMI Paul Morgan and members agreed that the Inspector/Adviser RE respond to the draft guidance document on behalf of Denbighshire SACRE formally registering these concerns. Following a full and detailed debate, during which members took the opportunity to raise questions with the Inspector/Adviser RE regarding various aspects of the inspection process and subsequent implications, Councillor N. Hugh-Jones proposed that ESTYN be requested to arrange a conference to enable SACRE representatives from each of the Welsh Authorities to meet and discuss their concerns regarding the draft guidance document. Members unanimously agreed with that proposal and it was:-

RESOLVED ACCORDINGLY.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for bringing this important issue to members' attention, particularly as the document had not been circulated for consultation by Estyn.

209 **WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES**

WASACRE - 27th June, 2003

The Inspector/Adviser RE verbally reported that WASACRE had received a presentation on ways of delivering RE effectively in the early years from Mrs. Mary Parry and Gill Vaisey entitled 'The Early Years' which had proved a very enjoyable interactive session. Mrs. M.B. Lloyd, Chair of WASACRE and Councillor M.M. Jones had represented Denbighshire SACRE at that meeting.

Mrs. M.B. Lloyd subsequently informed members of the second presentation made on the 27th June by Mr. Dick Powell, RETRI and referred to a pamphlet she had circulated at the meeting in this regard entitled 'Teach RE - Teaching Religious Education'. She also apprised members of the activities of the Association and Executive Committee since the last meeting as follows:-

- a meeting between representatives from the Executive Committee and Ms. Jane Davidson, A.M. for Education and Lifelong Learning when she had indicated that RE would remain a statutory requirement;
- a delegation from the Executive Committee having met with a representative from the Welsh Local Government Agency to raise the profile of RE and address the lack of resources;
- in her capacity as Chair of WASACRE, she had met with a representative from ELWa to discuss the funding of post-16 RE, and
- on the Minister's recommendation discussions had been opened between the Association and the National Grid for Learning as well as ACCAC and NAPfRE regarding the development of teaching and learning resources.

Finally, Mrs. Lloyd advised members that Denize Morris had informed WASACRE that she wished to arrange a meeting in September with SACRE representatives to review the guidelines of writing the Annual Report for SACRE and she sought members' support for this proposal. Mrs. Lloyd explained that ACCAC would be contacting SACRE's seeking representatives to attend the September meeting and she proposed that the Inspector/Adviser RE be nominated to represent Denbighshire SACRE at that meeting. Members agreed with that proposal and it was **RESOLVED ACCORDINGLY.**

Councillor M.M. Jones had been pleased to attend the last WASACRE meeting and she paid tribute to the achievements and work undertaken by WASACRE and Mrs. Lloyd in her role as Chair of WASACRE.

RESOLVED that the verbal reports by the Inspector/Adviser RE and Mrs. M.B. Lloyd be accepted.

210 **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair reminded members that the next meeting of Denbighshire SACRE would be held at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, 16th October, 2003 in the Council Chamber, Ty Nant, Prestatyn.

In closing the meeting the Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for the work he had undertaken on behalf of the council and thanked those present for their attendance and positive contributions to debate.

The meeting concluded at 12.05 p.m.
