

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, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn on Tuesday, 11th October, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors R.E. Barton (observer), G.C. Evans, G.A. Jones, M.M. Jones, D. Owens and G.J. Pickering

Representing the Denbighshire Teachers' Joint Negotiating Committee

I. Barros-Curtis, M. Bradshaw and M.B. Lloyd

Representing Religious Denominations

M. Colbert, Rev. P.J. Collinson, H. Ellis, Major D. Evans, M. Evans, S. Harris, Rev. B.H. Jones, J. Kirkham and P. Speirs

Co-opted Members

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

ALSO PRESENT

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

The Head of Education Services attended for the first part of the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM

T. Bryer, J. Buckley-Jones, C. Thomas and Councillors K.N. Hawkins and N. Hugh-Jones

Apologies for absence had also been received from Huw Griffiths, Corporate Director Lifelong Learning and Tony Jones, Education Officer. With regard to the absence of Tony Jones, Mrs. M.B. Lloyd advised members that Mr. Jones had recently suffered a family bereavement and expressed her sympathy for his loss.

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

WELCOME

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome members and officers to the meeting and a warm welcome was also extended Mrs. Rhian Roberts from Ysgol Pen Barras who would be delivering a presentation to members during the meeting.

631 URGENT MATTERS

In accordance with the requirements of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair declared that she intended to include for discussion the following matter requiring urgent attention:-

Denbighshire SACRE Representatives on WASACRE

632 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th July, 2005 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 20th September, 2005 were submitted.

Matters Arising -

Page 9 - penultimate paragraph - Mrs. M.B. Lloyd advised members that she had attended the evening with the former hostage Terry Waite held at the John Ambrose Theatre, Ysgol Brynhyfryd School, Ruthin on 2nd September 2005. She advised that it had been a great evening and she had been pleased to see so many young people in the audience.

***RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.*

633 INAUGURATION OF NEW CHAIR

The retiring Chair, Councillor M.M. Jones, advised that she had greatly enjoyed her appointment as Chair over the last two years and took the opportunity to thank members for their support, loyalty and commitment to her and SACRE during that time. She also thanked Bryn Jones, the Council's Translator and Kath Jones, Clerk to SACRE for their hard work and special thanks were extended to Gavin Craigen, Inspector/Adviser RE for his excellent service and commitment to SACRE. Councillor M.M. Jones referred to her time as a teacher and the changes within Religious Education over the years and paid tribute to the valuable work undertaken in Denbighshire's schools. In accordance with the revised constitution of Denbighshire SACRE the current Vice-Chair, Mrs. M.B. Lloyd, was invested as Chair for 2005-2007 and the retiring Chair referred to the wealth of experience Mrs. Lloyd brought to the Chair and her active involvement in both SACRE and WASACRE. The Chair, Mrs. M.B. Lloyd thanked Councillor Jones for her guidance as Chair and for the hard work she had undertaken on behalf of SACRE during the past two years.

634 ELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for the appointment of Vice Chair for 2005-07 from the Religious Representatives in accordance with the revised Constitution of Denbighshire SACRE. It was proposed and seconded that Rev. B.H. Jones be appointed Vice Chair for the ensuing two years and upon being put to the vote it was:-

***RESOLVED** that Rev. B.H. Jones be appointed Vice-Chair for 2005-2007.*

635 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INFANT/PRIMARY SCHOOL - YSGOL PEN BARRAS, RUTHIN

The Chair introduced and welcomed to the meeting Mrs. Rhian Roberts from Ysgol Pen Barras, Ruthin who was in attendance to give a presentation on the provision and delivery of Religious Education in the school.

Throughout her presentation, Mrs. Roberts displayed photographs of activities undertaken by pupils together with current resource materials for members to peruse. She provided an overview of RE within the school; outlined her role as RE Co-ordinator; detailed the resources available, and provided examples of the work produced by pupils in RE. Members were advised that:-

- Ysgol Pen Barras was a Welsh Medium School opened in 1982 with 50 pupils and which now accommodated 250 pupils. Most of the pupils were from Welsh speaking backgrounds and the majority of parents were Christian. Many of the children did attend places of worship outside school
- Mrs. Roberts paid tribute to the guidance she had received from the Inspector/Adviser and the courses provided upon her appointment as RE Co-ordinator, the training had proved extremely helpful and she had been given the opportunity to discuss work plans with other RE teachers and examine work plans of RE within the school
- Approximately two years ago Mrs. Roberts had approached the RE Teaching Council in Wales for grant funding to cover three away days to revisit and review work plans and tasks. The restructured work plans had subsequently been put onto floppy disc and shared with teachers to seek their views. Last year had been the first year that the work plans had been followed from start to finish and monitored through a portfolio which included Christianity, Judaism (KS1) and Hinduism (KS2)

- The main aim was to ensure that RE was interesting for pupils and children had been involved in many types of activities including occasions such as Weddings; Baptisms; Lent, and Christmas where the children had been involved in Operation Christmas Child and collecting the boxes
- Resources had greatly improved over the years, particularly Welsh resources; parents had been asked to collect photographs of the town and pictures of places of worship which had proved useful and photographs had been laminated so could be used as a resource; in line with current technology videos had been created and used and photographs had been put onto CD ROM, and the Eisteddfod had proved an excellent source of Welsh language resources
- Examples of work produced by pupils had been displayed for members to illustrate the kind of work carried out within the school and the pupils' levels of contribution
- The Assembly Hall was shared with another school and classes were combined together for collective worship; different classes took responsibility for the services on Thursdays with active participation from the children.

The Chair thanked Mrs. Roberts for her interesting and informative presentation which had provided an insight into the excellent work undertaken at Ysgol Pen Barras in delivering Religious Education. The Chair had been particularly interested to hear how children and teachers had been creating their own resources through technologies rather than being dependant on other resources. Members echoed those sentiments and paid tribute to the quality and variety of activities undertaken within the school to ensure that RE was relevant and interesting for pupils.

The Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that Ysgol Pen Barras had been included in the monitoring report considered at SACRE's last meeting and he had had a very positive experience when visiting the school where much good work was being carried out. He also advised that he had observed an act of collective worship at the school and had been impressed with the confidence of the children involved.

RESOLVED that the presentation by Mrs. Rhian Roberts on RE in Ysgol Pen Barras, Ruthin be received and noted.

At this juncture (10.50 a.m.) the meeting was adjourned for ten minutes to allow members to peruse the resource materials and examples of children's work brought by Mrs. Roberts.

636 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF SACRE

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a draft of the Annual Report of the Denbighshire SACRE 2004 - 2005 (previously circulated) which summarised Denbighshire SACRE's activities during the year including the Agreed Syllabus; Standards in Religious Education; Collective Worship/SMSC Development; INSET Provision, together with various other issues.

The Inspector/Adviser RE advised that he had followed the existing guidance for producing the Annual Report except for a slight change where he had separated the monitoring process and the inspection process at (b)(i) and (b)(ii) respectively within the report. Adding both processes together showed that 96% of those schools in the monitoring and inspection process were satisfactory or better which was extremely encouraging. Overall the report reflected the work done by Denbighshire SACRE and the Inspector/Adviser RE asked members to approve the report for submission to ACCAC.

Councillor R.E. Barton pointed out one amendment needed on page 18 of the report advising that the cumulative total should read 69.5% and not 68.5% and the Inspector/Adviser RE agreed to incorporate that amendment before submission of the report to ACCAC.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for his hard work in producing the document and advised that ACCAC was exceptionally pleased with the work undertaken by the Inspector/adviser RE in the monitoring process.

RESOLVED that the Draft Annual Report of SACRE be approved.

637 MONITORING AND SUPPORTIVE REVIEW REPORT - DINAS BRAN HIGH SCHOOL CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOLS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) on the provision of Religious Education in the Dinas Bran Consortium of Schools which covered Dinas Bran High School and the following feeder schools: Ysgol Maes Hyfryd; Ysgol Llantysilio; Ysgol Llandrillo, Corwen; Ysgol Glyndyfrdwy; Ysgol Carrog; Ysgol Caer Drewyn, and Ysgol Bryn Collen.

Following visits by the Inspector/Adviser RE to each of the schools during the summer term, a report of the visit and issues and outcomes had been agreed with the school. The report provided details of the good features, shortcomings and recommendations for each school together with a general summary of the whole consortium. The Inspector/Adviser RE reminded members that the monitoring process was part of the self evaluation and supportive review agreed with schools before being submitted to SACRE, and schools had found it a positive experience and helpful process.

Members were advised that there was much to celebrate in terms of the good features in the schools of the consortium, in particular:-

- clear schemes of work for RE
- a good range of activities for teaching and learning in RE
- provision for and recording of acts of collective worship
- assessment procedures and recording arrangements
- good links with the local faith community for RE and collective worship
- good evidence of/process of self evaluation
- the good ethos/family atmosphere of the school

In considering the recommendations, the Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that schools were already reviewing their scheme of work and he had been in a position to help schools with that process. It was pleasing to be able to commend schools for their existing good practices and to recommend maintaining that existing good practice. It was not always possible to make or confirm judgements on standards in every school but discussions did take place with teachers and the Inspector/Adviser RE had detailed the emerging patterns within the report. The Inspector/Adviser RE advised that it may not be possible to include every feeder school within the consortium report but he assured members that any schools omitted would be included at a later date.

During the ensuing discussion the Inspector/Adviser RE responded to members' questions regarding the monitoring process and detailed the assistance to schools in areas of shortcomings which was predominately provided by either himself and/or the link officer to provide help and support. It was not possible to provide INSET training except for specific subjects. Members also discussed the recommendation to devise ways to stimulate pupil motivation and Councillor D. Owens felt that more effort should be made in secondary schools. In response the Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that he had many ideas to share with schools and he would work with teachers and schools in addressing that issue. With regard to the report for Ysgol Dinas Bran, the Inspector/Adviser RE explained that the long term absence of the Head of RE had impacted upon that school in the areas identified within the report. However, that teacher was now back in work and was actively addressing those problems. Councillor G. Pickering felt that children should be actively encouraged to participate in RE outside of school, particularly as RE was not just for school life but all life. The Inspector/Adviser RE responded that, following discussion with teachers, there appeared to be an issue with pupils as they became older in that they viewed RE as less important and parents did not appreciate the value of RE either so the pupils' response to religion was not as strong as it once was. It was important to view the issue in that context and pupils had little contact with religion outside of the school. Major D. Evans felt that less collective worship was undertaken in secondary schools which could contribute to the problem. The Chair indicated that clergy or religious representatives could be invited into schools and although this area was outside SACRE's remit, the religious representatives on the Advisory Council could take the message back that they offer their services to schools.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for his hard work in the monitoring process which he had initiated as a way of monitoring RE within schools and she advised that there had been much interest in that process.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the report be received and noted, and*
- (b) *the Inspector/Adviser RE write to the schools inspected congratulating them on the positive features in their reports and offering any services in terms of addressing any shortcomings.*

638 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS ON SCHOOLS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) upon the positive and negative comments concerning Religious Education and the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) inspected at five schools between January 2005 and May 2005 together with a brief background history of each school. Inspections had been carried out at Ysgol Cyffylliog; Ysgol Twm o'r Nant, Denbigh; Ysgol Melyd, Meliden; Ysgol Rhewl, and Ysgol Pen Barras, Ruthin.

Members were advised that Religious Education had not been inspected at Ysgol Cyffylliog and Ysgol Pen Barras as it had not been one of the six designated subjects to be included within the report under the new inspection arrangements.

The Inspector/Adviser RE provided members with a brief resume of the findings relating to each school, explaining and clarifying specific issues in response to members questions thereon. He was pleased to report upon the high number of commendations with 91 positive comments for SMSC with each school having at least 14 individual comments. There had only been 16 negative comments for SMSC which were being addressed by the individual schools and it was noted none had been listed for Ysgol Pen Barras. The last negative comment referred to opportunities for pupils to develop a practical awareness of sustainable development being underdeveloped. The Inspector/Adviser RE stated this was more often raised because schools had to be operating in a sustainable way. Religious Education had only been inspected in the three schools with some 39 positive comments. It was pleasing to note that there were no major shortcomings in RE for two schools. The 4 negative comments were currently being addressed by the schools.

Members were delighted with the positive findings contained within the report and in accordance with the usual practice, members asked that the Inspector/Adviser RE write to the schools inspected congratulating them on their reports and offering any services in terms of addressing any shortcomings. The Chair felt it was heartening to see all the good work being undertaken in Denbighshire's schools.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the report be received and noted, and*
- (b) *the Inspector/Adviser RE write to the schools inspected congratulating them on their reports and offering any services in terms of addressing any shortcomings.*

639 CHAPLAINS IN SCHOOLS

At the request of the Head of Education Services, the Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a letter and report from the Presbyterian Church of Wales (previously circulated) commending the idea of appointing Christian Chaplains in community schools and asking SACREs to consider ways of implementing such professionally paid positions within their schools.

The Inspector/Adviser RE detailed the two sides of the argument of appointing such Chaplains. On the one hand there were very positive reasons why it was an extremely worthwhile proposal for having resident Chaplains in schools with benefits to the whole ethos of the school; the SMSC development of pupils; and links with Religious Education and the local faith community. On the other hand there was the question of the appointment of staff which was the school's responsibility which

would also affect the staffing structure, both of which were outside SACRE's remit. There would be financial implications for securing such appointments when there were already shortages of teachers and learning assistants at many schools. Other issues for consideration included legal responsibilities; appraisal and performance management reviews; and the possibility of other religious denominations wishing to take on that role.

During the ensuing debate members discussed the merits of the proposal for appointing Chaplains in schools and concerns were raised over the financial implications that it would bring. It was generally felt that it should be the responsibility of the local faith community to build relationships with schools and it should be a personal decision of each school whether to progress this proposal rather than it being made a formal requirement. However, members felt that the local faith community should be actively encouraged to approach schools and offer their services and that schools also be encouraged to forge links with their faith community. The Chair referred to the report by Kathleen Wood (circulated with the agenda) and agreed with her conclusions that the invitations from schools to religious groups was important together with the willingness of the local faith community to actively seek openings for service to local schools.

RESOLVED that SACRE advise the Local Education Authority:-

- to pass on the letter and information to schools for their consideration;
- to remind schools that the appointment of staff was a school issue but suggest they may like to explore ways in which they could develop informal links with the local faith community, and
- SACRE representatives through their own denominations to encourage clergy to contact their local schools and offer support on a voluntary basis.

Miss. H. Ellis asked that the Inspector/Adviser RE seek feedback to SACRE's recommendations.

640 DENBIGHSHIRE SACRE REPRESENTATIVES ON WASACRE

(This item as considered as an urgent item, notice having been given by the Chair at the commencement of the meeting).

The Chair reminded members that it was the usual practice to appoint the Chair, Vice-Chair, the past Chair and the Inspector/Adviser RE as SACRE's representatives on WASACRE and she sought the Advisory Council's confirmation to those appointments.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Chair, Mrs. M.B. Lloyd, Vice-Chair, Rev B.H. Jones, past Chair, Councillor M.M. Jones and Mr. G. Craigen, Inspector/Adviser RE be appointed as SACRE's representatives on WASACRE, and
- (b) the Clerk to SACRE be asked to contact Susan Collingbourne, Secretary to WASACRE confirming those appointments.

In closing the Chair thanked the committee's translator and Clerk to SACRE for their hard work and extended a special thank you to the Inspector/Adviser RE for his valuable service. She reminded members that the next meeting would be held at 10.00 a.m. on 8th February, 2006 in County Hall, Ruthin. As the Advisory Council would not be meeting again until February, the Chair wished everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 noon.

DENBIGHSHIRE AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

Minutes of the meeting of the Denbighshire Agreed Syllabus Conference held in the Council Chamber, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn on Tuesday, 11th October, 2005 at 12.00 noon

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors G.C. Evans, G.A. Jones, M.M. Jones, D. Owens and G.J. Pickering

Representing the Denbighshire Teachers' Joint Negotiating Committee

I. Barros-Curtis, M. Bradshaw and M.B. Lloyd

Representing Religious Denominations

M. Colbert, Rev. P.J. Collinson, H. Ellis, Major D. Evans, M. Evans, S. Harris, Rev. B.H. Jones, J. Kirkham and P. Speirs

ALSO PRESENT

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

Observers: Co-opted SACRE Member T. Ap Sion (substitute for the Rev. Prof.L.J. Francis) and Councillor R.E. Barton

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM

T. Bryer, J. Buckley-Jones, C. Thomas and Councillors K.N. Hawkins and N. Hugh-Jones

641 RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE REVIEW OF THE AGREED SYLLABUS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted his report (previously circulated) seeking members' agreement to postpone any review of the Agreed Syllabus pending the outcomes of the National Curriculum Review currently being undertaken by ACCAC. The Inspector/Adviser RE explained that, if members agreed to this recommendation, the review of the Denbighshire Agreed Syllabus could be undertaken at a later date, in the full knowledge of the National Curriculum Review Recommendations and in tandem with other LEAs, SACRE's and advice and support that may be offered from ACCAC and WASACRE. In addition, Agreed Syllabuses in Wales would be working to the same time scale for subsequent Reviews and would enable ACCAC to offer appropriate and timely guidance and direction.

Members were also advised that, following discussions with the Council's Monitoring Officer, the Inspector/Adviser RE wished to clarify that, if the outcomes of ACCAC's National Curriculum Review had not been received by 2007 (when Denbighshire's Review of the Agreed Syllabus must be undertaken) it would be necessary to convene a meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference to formally readopt the existing Agreed Syllabus. Following the outcomes of ACCAC's Review of the National Curriculum, Denbighshire's Review of the Agreed Syllabus would then be undertaken.

After consideration it was:-

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the Review of the Agreed Syllabus for Denbighshire be postponed pending the outcomes of the National Curriculum Review currently being undertaken by ACCAC, and*

- (b) *in the event of the outcomes of the National Curriculum Review not being available during 2007 a meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference be convened to formally readopt the existing Agreed Syllabus pending those outcomes.*

The meeting concluded at 12.05 p.m.
