

## **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, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin on Wednesday, 8th February, 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

### **PRESENT**

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

Councillors R.E. Barton (observer), G.C. Evans, K.N. Hawkins, C.L. Hughes, N. Hugh-Jones, G.A. Jones and M.M. Jones

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

M.B. Lloyd (Chair), I. Barros-Curtis and J. Buckley Jones

#### **Representing Religious Denominations**

T. Bryer, H. Ellis, M. Evans, S. Harris, M. Hatch, B.H. Jones, J. Kirkham, P. Speirs and Mrs. C. Thomas

### **ALSO PRESENT**

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

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

M. Bradshaw, Rev. P.J. Collinson, Rev. Prof. L.J. Frances, T. Ap Sion (substitute for Rev. Prof. L.J. Francis) and Councillors D. Owens and G.J. Pickering

The Corporate Director Lifelong Learning also submitted apologies for absence.

### **SILENT REFLECTION**

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

### **WELCOME**

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome everyone to the meeting and she extended a particularly warm welcome to Mrs. C. Thomas representing the Presbyterian Church (English) and Mrs. J. Buckley Jones representing the National Association of Headteachers who were both new members on SACRE.

#### **1. PRESENTATION - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PENMORFA CP SCHOOL, PRESTATYN**

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

The Chair introduced and welcomed to the meeting Ann Boarman and Claire Boardman, teachers from Penmorfa CP School, Prestatyn who were in attendance to give a presentation on the provision and delivery of Religious Education within the school.

The teachers jointly delivered a power point presentation to members and provided an overview of approaches that worked within the school from the Foundation Phase to Year 6 with particular emphasis on the following areas:-

**Relating RE to the children's experience of everyday life** - Caring and Sharing (the Badger Scheme was used to support RE within the school and thinking time books had been developed with much work being done through stories in reception classes, children were encouraged to develop a caring attitude and to take care of the environment); Belonging (to a family, to a class, to the school, to a club, to a church, using displays to record and show the work undertaken), and Special Things (children were encouraged to bring in special things and reflect upon those with circle time teddy being very special to all the class and the importance of friends)

**Making full use of the local community** - Visiting local places of worship e.g. Parish Church, Catholic Church, Rehoboth Chapel, Synagogue (in Liverpool), the local Mosque and inviting visitors to the school e.g. minister, priest, charity workers, and parents

**Working with relevant artefacts** - Christianity: Holy Bible, crucifix; Islam: Qur'an and stand, prayer mat; and Judaism: Menorah, Torah, yad

**Celebrating our multi cultural status** - Our Welsh Heritage; Different Christian Denominations; Local Muslim families and traditions; Other faiths and beliefs e.g. Hindu, Buddhist

**Utilising Information Technology** - Cross-curricular exercises involving IT e.g. word processing, using e-mail, digital photography and RE related internet sites for information e.g. virtual tours of church and synagogue, viewing religious artefacts

**Making the most of Collective Worship** - Celebrating special events e.g. Christmas, Harvest Festival, St. David's Day; monthly speakers, and class services.

Throughout the presentation, the teachers used photographs to illustrate activities undertaken within the schools. Materials had also been displayed for members including examples of children's work and resources used.

Members thoroughly enjoyed the presentation and took the opportunity to raise questions regarding various aspects of RE provision within Ysgol Penmorfa, particularly referring to the participation of pupils from different religions; historical aspects of churches and chapels within Prestatyn and cross working with other subjects, and the different activities undertaken by the pupils. Councillor G.A. Jones, the local ward member for Prestatyn, advised that pupils from Ysgol Penmorfa were very much involved with local community events such as carol services etc. and he hoped that this would also be encouraged within other schools.

The Chair thanked the teachers for their informative and interesting presentation which had provided an insight into the excellent work undertaken in Ysgol Penmorfa in delivering Religious Education.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation on RE in Penmorfa CP School, Prestatyn be received and noted and a letter of thanks be sent directly to the school on behalf of SACRE.

At this juncture the meeting was adjourned for a few minutes to allow members to peruse the materials provided by the school as part of the presentation.

## **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th October, 2005 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 24th January, 2005 were submitted.

### **Matters Arising**

Page No. 497 - Item No. 636: Draft Annual Report - The Inspector/Adviser RE apologised that copies of the final document had not been made available to members at the meeting due to a delay in the printing process. However, copies would be posted to all members as soon as possible. He also confirmed that schools had already received electronic copies of the final document.

Page No. 498 - Item No. 637: Monitoring and Supportive Review Report - The Inspector/Adviser RE advised that there was no Monitoring and Supportive Review Report on today's agenda. The school subject to the next report was Blessed Edward Jones, Rhyl and a visit had been delayed pending discussion with the Roman Catholic Diocese as to the way the monitoring should be undertaken.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

The minutes of the Agreed Syllabus Conference held on 11th October, 2005 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 24th January, 2005 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

## **3. EXAMINATION RESULTS 2005**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted tables (previously circulated) detailing examination results in Religious Studies for 2005 as compared with 2004 within Denbighshire's secondary schools for members' consideration. The tables provided a breakdown of results for GCSE in Religious Studies; Religious Studies Short Course; GCE Advanced Level Religious Studies, and the Certificate of Educational Achievement (COEA) in Religious Studies.

The Inspector/Adviser RE proceeded to take members through the results in detail and verbally reported upon comparisons between the 2005 and 2004 examination results. He particularly referred to the following points:-

- GCSE Results All - Religious Studies 2005 - overall there was an increase of 56 candidates but the results showed a 6.9% drop in performance which was 6.5% below the national average
- GCSE Results Boys - Religious Studies 2005 - similar decrease with 5 less candidates overall with a decrease in performance of 3.5% which was 7.7% below the national average
- GCSE Results Girls - Religious Studies 2005 - there was an increase of 61 candidates on the previous year but a decrease in performance of 6.4% which was 6.3% below the national figure
- Religious Education All (Short Course) - overall there was an additional 126 candidates and the results improved by 4.4% compared to the previous year but that was still 6.3% below the national figure;
- Religious Education Boys (Short Course) - overall there was an increase of 65 candidates with the A\* - C rate being equal to the previous year which was quite an achievement considering the large increase in candidates and no loss of performance but the result was still 14.3% below the national figure;
- Religious Education Girls (Short Course) - overall there were 2 additional candidates with an A\* - C rate having improved 7.9% on the previous year but the result was still 3.7% below the national figure;
- GCE Advanced Level All - Religious Studies - there was an increase of 8 candidates but a drop in performance of 18.8% resulting in 5.4% below the national figure compared to 8.9% above the national figure the previous year, and
- Certificate of Educational Achievement - there was an increase of 2 candidates compared to the previous year with a 0.4% increase above the pass grade percentage on the previous year but still below the national level.

In closing the Inspector/Adviser RE responded to members' questions regarding the examination results and confirmed that the results would appear in SACRE's annual report for next year. In response to questions raised by Councillor N. Hugh-Jones, the Chair reported upon ELWa's funding formula for post 16 education and the statutory requirement for RE for all pupils registered in a school, including 16 - 19 year olds.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for the statistical information but was disappointed to note that most results were below the Wales national average. However it was pleasing to see an increase in the number of candidates taking examinations in RE. Members recognised that much hard work was undertaken within Denbighshire's schools and the Chair felt that, although the statistical information was useful, RE had much to do with school ethos and not just examination results.

**RESOLVED** that the examination results of Denbighshire's schools for 2005 be received and noted.

#### **4. 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 two schools between September 2005 and November 2005 together with a brief background history of each school. Inspections had been carried out at Ysgol Tir Morfa, Rhyl and Ysgol Prion Church in Wales VC.

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 confirmed that SACRE had previously received a Section 10 report for Ysgol Prion and this Section 50 report had been received at a later date. The Inspector/Adviser RE was pleased to report upon the 37 positive comments for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) from just two schools which had been almost equal in their praise. It was equally pleasing that only three negative comments had been received. With regard to Religious Education there were 21 positive comments for Ysgol Tir Morfa and although RE had not been inspected specifically for Ysgol Prion a mention had been made to a positive comment found elsewhere within the Inspector's report. There were no significant shortcomings.

Members paid tribute to the schools' achievements, particularly as Ysgol Prion was a very small school and Ysgol Tir Morfa was a special needs school and extended their congratulations to both schools on the positive findings. The Chair asked that, in accordance with the usual practice, the schools inspected be congratulated on their reports.

**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.*

#### **5. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES - 19TH OCTOBER 2005**

The Inspector/Adviser RE verbally reported upon the last meeting held on 19th October, 2005 in Newport Civic Centre as follows:-

- a presentation by Mr. Chris Owens, Head of RE at Bassaleg Comprehensive School on 'Provision for Post 16 Education'. Bassaleg School had been commended by Estyn for its provision in statutory RE and had introduced the concept of a 'Stand Down Day' each term focusing on RE and undertaking workshops and activities. The presentation had proved extremely positive, and

- a second presentation on 'The Global Dimension in RE' which was also being presented by the Inspector/Adviser RE at today's meeting.

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

## 6. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES - PRESENTATION ON RE IN GLOBAL EDUCATION

The Inspector/Adviser RE delivered a power point presentation on 'The Global Dimension in RE' as given to the Association meeting on behalf of the National Advisory Panel for RE. Copies of the presentation slides were circulated at the meeting.

The Inspector/Adviser RE explained the current focus on ESDGC (Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship) with references in Estyn Inspection Reports and the Welsh Assembly Government's Consultation Document and Process. He referred to the need to for ESDGC to be incorporated within NPQH and training schemes for all head teachers and it was expected there would be corporate support mechanisms at LEA level and expectations of evidence of good practice disseminated so that people could learn from each other. It was necessary to demonstrate the positive contribution RE made in this area and to offer signposts for RE elements in all materials produced by the Welsh Assembly Government and in areas of the curriculum where RE could contribute. Members were advised that the Agreed Syllabus gave opportunities to research and explore, develop, understand and be able to express opinions and ideas about the wider world and the wider picture.

The Inspector/Adviser RE concluded that WASACRE had been asked to consider the issues and questions and provide advice and support to RE teachers in their contributions to that and work with PSE/ESDGC adviser/groups that existed. The local reviews of Agreed Syllabuses had been postponed and when the revisions were published they should also include clear signposting. He finally asked the question 'Is RE ready?' advising that many agencies were ready such as CAFOD, Christian Aid, TEAR Fund, Cyfanfyd, Global Links and Citizenship Foundation. Regarding ourselves steps had already been undertaken by organisations to produce resources for RE in terms of Global Citzenships. Hopefully ACCAC and Estyn would also produce materials to help schools in another inventive in addition to what was already within the curriculum.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for his informative presentation and she felt it was useful for SACRE to know that WASACRE and NAPfRE were aware of the latest developments in Education and ensured that RE was part of those processes. It was important that, through its work, SACRE helped schools and ensured that the LEA was aware of these issues in order to support the signposting of RE where appropriate.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation by the Inspector/Adviser RE on RE in Global Education be received and noted.

## 7. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES - SYMPOSIUM IN MAY 2006

The Chair referred to a flier (circulated at the meeting) giving advance notice of the Symposium organised by WASACRE with ACCAC being held between 10.00 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. on Saturday, 20th May 2006 entitled 'Looking Beyond 2008 - Visioning RE'. The Special Conference would be held in Llandrindod Wells and the guest speaker was Jane Davidson A.M. Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

The Inspector/Adviser RE advised that no final decision had been made on numbers but the intention was to invite SACRE's to nominate representatives and to send the flier electronically to schools to encourage teachers to attend. He suggested that members may wish to nominate one person from each representative group on SACRE together with anyone else who wished to attend. It was agreed that SACRE's representatives on WASACRE be nominated to attend and for individual members to contact either the Inspector/Adviser RE or the Clerk to SACRE if they wished to attend.

***RESOLVED*** that SACRE's representatives on WASACRE, the Chair Mrs. M.B. Lloyd, Vice-Chair Rev. B.H. Jones, the past Chair Councillor M.M. Jones and the Inspector/Adviser RE Mr. G. Craigen be nominated to attend the Symposium on behalf of Denbighshire SACRE.

In closing the meeting the Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE, the committee's translator and Clerk to SACRE for their hard work. She also advised that the Inspector/Adviser RE would shortly be returning to Uganda as part of Christian Relief Uganda and wished him well for his visit.

The meeting concluded at 11.50 a.m.