

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 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

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

Representing the Denbighshire Teachers' Joint Negotiating Committee

M.B. Lloyd (Chair) and M. Bradshaw

Representing Religious Denominations

R. Elms, H. Evans, B. Wyn Evans, S. Harris, M. Hatch, Rev. B.H. Jones and M. Ludenbach

Co-opted Members

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

ALSO PRESENT

Inspector/Adviser RE (G. Craigen) and Administration Officer (K.E. Jones)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM

I. Barros Curtis, T. Bryer, L. Linaker and Councillor D. Owens

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed back Kath Jones, Clerk to SACRE from her maternity leave and conveyed the Advisory Council's thanks to Wendy Harness and Robert Davies who had serviced the committee's meetings in her absence. A warm welcome was also extended to a new member of SACRE, Mary Ludenbach, Head of RE at Blessed Edward Jones High School.

182 URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent matters for consideration by the committee.

183 MINUTES

(a) Denbighshire SACRE – 31st January 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st January, 2007 (previously circulated), as approved by the County Council on 17th April, 2007 were submitted.

General Matters Arising -

Page 6 – Item No. 4 – Analysis of Estyn Inspection Reports – The Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the current system of monitoring schools advising that he had visited seven out of the eight schools consortia since summer 2004 which equated to 83% of the authority's schools. The remaining

schools would be visited shortly and the last monitoring report on Ysgol Glan Clwyd and its feeder schools (together with any schools that had been missed since 2004) would be submitted to SACRE's next meeting. The Inspector/Adviser RE felt that the whole process had been an extremely worthwhile experience for both schools and SACRE. He expected the Diocese to be submitting a report to SACRE on St. Brigid's School, Denbigh as agreed previously. In response to a question from Councillor M.M. Jones regarding future monitoring the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that the matter would be discussed with the LEA and SACRE at their next meeting following considering of the final monitoring report.

Page 8 – Item No. 5 – Examination Results 2006: Resolution 5(c) – Following offers of assistance to particular schools in bringing about improvements, the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that communications had been received back from the schools concerned and he assured members that matters were being addressed appropriately.

Page 9 – Item No. 6(a) – WASACRE Special Conference Report: Resolution (c) – Members were advised that the Inspector/Adviser RE would be extending an invitation to the Muslim community for an observer to attend SACRE's next meeting.

Page 10 – Item No. 7 – DELLS: School Curriculum Review Foundation Phase Framework 3 – 7: Resolution 7(b) – In addition to responding to the consultation the Inspector/Adviser RE had written to DELLS on behalf of SACRE outlining their concerns and he reported upon subsequent correspondence from the Head of Curricular and Assessment advising that SACRE's views would be taken into account.

(b) Matters Arising: Results of Initial Teacher Training Survey to Schools

Page No. 2 – Item No. 2 Minutes (Matters Arising: Hope University ITT – RE Department) – Arising from discussion under the minutes of the last meeting the Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) on the results of a survey sent to all schools to evaluate the training of students of RE in Initial Teacher Training. Since the results had been collated more responses from schools had been received but the overall findings remained the same.

During consideration of the results members were pleased to note the overall positive response and endorsements which proved encouraging. In the primary sector the only negative issue indicated that the college did not provide a report following student placements. It was a similar picture in the secondary schools but members noted that three schools produced a nil response as they did not have any students in terms of RE. Less positive responses were received in terms of the college provision of good information about students and their projects and the number of regular visits from the college during student placements. The Inspector/Adviser RE informed members that arrangements were being made to visit another ITT Institution the following term.

Councillor G.J. Pickering suggested that the colleges be contacted regarding the negative comments with a view to securing improvement. Rev. B.H. Jones agreed but also felt that the positive comments should be highlighted to show the overall results of the survey.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the results of the Initial Teacher Training Survey to schools be received and noted, and*
- (b) *the results of the survey be updated to include the latest responses received from schools and presented to the colleges concerned highlighting the positive aspects and seeking their response regarding the negative points.*

(c) Joint Meeting of SACREs – 9th March 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th March, 2007 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Accuracy -

As a point of accuracy the Chair advised that two Denbighshire councillors (attending as observers) had been incorrectly recorded as officers within the minutes, namely Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies and Councillor Neville Hughes. It was also noted that Councillor M.M. Jones had been incorrectly recorded as Mrs. M.L. Jones.

The Chair reported upon the positive meeting of the three SACREs and drew members' attention to the resolution and recommendations agreed by Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire SACREs.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, the minutes be approved.

At this juncture (10.25 a.m.) the meeting was adjourned for fifteen minutes for a refreshment break.

184 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS ON SCHOOLS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) analysing the results of the recent inspections of three schools between October 2006 and January 2007 in the provision of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC), and Religious Education, where it was part of the inspection. Inspections had been carried out at Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd, St. Asaph; Ysgol Bryn Hedydd, Rhyl and Ysgol Glyndyfrdwy, Near Llangollen and a brief history of each school had been incorporated into the report. Members were reminded that RE had not been a subject for inspection at Ysgol Bryn Hedydd.

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. It was disappointing to note that one school had a key issue for SMSC in the promotion of Cwricwlwm Cymreig but this was being addressed by the school to ensure Cwricwlwm Cymreig would feature more strongly in pupils' learning experiences. It was pleasing to note the 39 positive comments for SMSC across the three schools inspected and that there were no negative comments. Members were also happy to note the number of commendations for the schools with the terms 'outstanding' and 'particularly well' in a number of areas. With regard to Religious Education the two schools had received 33 positive comments between them with just four negative comments.

Members paid tribute to the schools' achievements, particularly Ysgol Glan Clwyd and extended their congratulations to those schools on the positive findings.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the report be received and noted, and*
- (b) *the Inspector/Adviser RE write to the schools inspected congratulating them on the good features and offering the services of the Inspector/Adviser RE or other officers of the LEA in terms of addressing any shortcomings or key issues.*

185 AGREED SYLLABUS WORKING GROUP

The Inspector/Adviser RE verbally reported on progress with setting up an Agreed Syllabus Working Group to begin preparation of a new Agreed Syllabus for Denbighshire in light of the decision to adopt the national Exemplar Framework for RE as the basis of the Denbighshire Agreed Syllabus. He apprised members of the LEA's positive response to the request and the joint nature of the group in association with Conwy and Flintshire LEAs. Membership of the Working Group included five representatives from each authority covering the primary and secondary sectors and religious denominations. SACRE members Maxine Bradshaw and Sylvia Harris were amongst Denbighshire's representatives. The first meeting would be held on 4th July 2007.

Members were advised that the work of the Group would be shared with other authorities across Wales and vice versa. The Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that changes were still being made to the National Framework which would also need to be taken into account by the Working Group. He suggested that SACRE receive a progress report on the work of the Group at its meeting in January

2008. In response to a question from Mrs. Sylvia Harris, the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that all 22 Welsh authorities had agreed to adopt or adapt the National Framework to their Agreed Syllabus with a number of those authorities setting up Agreed Syllabus Working Groups.

Members were supportive of the joint working arrangements between the three authorities and acknowledged the benefits and consistency that approach would bring. SACRE's input into the process through its two members on the Working Group was also noted and members wished the Group well on their deliberations.

RESOLVED that the verbal report by the Inspector/Adviser RE be noted and the work of the Agreed Syllabus Working Group be supported and encouraged.

186 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES

(a) Minutes of the last WASACRE meeting held in Haverfordwest on 23rd March 2007

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted the minutes of the WASACRE meeting held in Haverfordwest on 23rd March 2007 (previously circulated). The Chair referred to the presentation by Denize Morris on the Exemplar Framework for RE which had also been delivered to the Joint SACRE meeting held on 9th March 2007.

The Chair also referred to WASACRE's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 28th June 2007 in Llandrindod Wells which had been well attended. She provided a brief summary of the meeting, particularly referring to an excellent presentation from pupils at St. Christopher's School, Wrexham on their faith garden (which she encouraged members to visit) and an interesting presentation on the Croeso Project. The Inspector/Adviser RE elaborated upon the Croeso Project, an initiative of the Commission for Racial Equality, which was funded by the Welsh Assembly. The Croeso Project focused on peer led education and WASACRE had been approached as the Croeso Team wished to include aspects of discrimination in terms of faith. The Inspector/Adviser RE also advised of the outcome of the election to the Executive Committee and members noted that Councillor M.M. Jones had not been re-elected but Tania Ap Sion had been elected onto the Executive.

Councillor M.M. Jones and Rev. B.H. Jones had also attended the AGM and praised the presentation by the special needs pupils of St. Christopher's School which had provided an insight into the wonderful work undertaken within that school. Tania Ap Sion advised that a report on the presentation would be included within the Reflections Section of the autumn edition of the RE News.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the minutes of the meeting of WASACRE held on 23rd March 2007 be received and noted, and*
- (b) *the verbal report from members attending the meeting of WASACRE (AGM) held on 28th June 2007 in Llandrindod Wells be accepted.*

(b) Issues to raise with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

The Inspector/Adviser RE referred to the annual meeting between the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning and the WASACRE/NAPfRE delegation and provided a list of issues raised since 2002 (previously circulated). Previous meetings had been held with Jayne Davidson and it was hoped that the annual meeting would continue with the new Minister. In anticipation of the next meeting SACREs were being asked to identify potential topics to be raised with the new Minister by WASACRE. Topics which had already been raised included:-

1. Professional Training for Teachers (had been raised previously)
2. ACCAC & DELLS commissioning of new bilingual materials to continue
3. Collective Worship – review of legislation and support for training of teaching

During the ensuing discussion Councillor G.J. Pickering suggested that there could be greater collaboration with the Youth Service in terms of behavioural and other issues so that RE could be

provided outside school time but within the school environments with the behavioural unit. He also queried whether SACRE's remit would extend to Youth Offender Units. The Chair thought that SACREs remit would only cover school hours but suggested that there may be other funding sources which could be utilised by the LEA for that purpose. Mr. M. Hatch queried RE provision for excluded pupils and the Inspector/Adviser RE reported upon requirements for special education and behavioural units and referred to issues previously raised with Estyn in terms of statutory RE for pupils on work learning placements outside school. Mrs. Sylvia Harris suggested that emphasis could be placed on the need for materials for the Foundation Phase. In response the Inspector/Adviser RE advised that there was already a project underway 'RE in the Foundation Phase' involving a group of teachers preparing materials which was in its first phase of development. The Needs Identification Group had indicated that further funding was required so the issue was being addressed to some extent. The Chair referred to the increased collaboration between schools, colleges and learning placements and suggested formulating a question regarding the statutory requirements for Collective Worship and RE where pupils were registered within schools but were educated through means outside the school.

RESOLVED that, taking into account the comments referred to above, the Inspector/Adviser RE formulate a response to WASACRE on potential topics to be raised with the new Minister.

187 SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRICULUM

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a document (previously circulated) prepared by Conwy SACRE Working Group offering advice on Spiritual Development across the curriculum and sought members' views on making the document available to Denbighshire's schools.

Members were advised that Conwy LEA had agreed to Denbighshire copying and distributing the document to its schools. The Inspector/Adviser RE had made a request to Denbighshire LEA to consider that possibility if SACRE members agreed it would be valuable for its school to receive it. Denbighshire had confirmed that it would bear the costs of publication and distribution to all Denbighshire teachers. There had been some minor amendments to the document in terms of (1) ensuring the same meaning was not lost in the translation process, and (2) the translation of quotes into Welsh, and it had been agreed to incorporate a mix of both Welsh and English quotations in the final version. The Inspector/Adviser RE also advised that [with the exception of Religious Education, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, and Personal and Social Education listed at the end] the order of subjects in the curriculum had been deliberately random to illustrate that there were opportunities for providing spiritual development across the whole curriculum.

Members paid tribute to the hard work undertaken by Conwy LEA in preparing the document which they felt would be an excellent source of guidance and advice for schools and teachers on spiritual development across the curriculum.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the report be received and noted, and*
- (b) *the LEA be requested to make copies of the document available to all its schools/teachers with an accompanying letter reminding schools of their statutory requirements to provide opportunities for the spiritual development of all their pupils across the curriculum.*

188 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair advised members that the Inspector/Adviser RE would be in Uganda with Christian Relief Uganda on the next scheduled meeting date for SACRE on 3rd October 2007. Accordingly it was agreed that the meeting be rescheduled to 10.00 a.m. on 12th November 2007 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin. The Chair also reminded members that the Vice Chair, Rev. B.H. Jones would be inaugurated at the next meeting and that a new Vice Chair would need to be appointed from the Councillor representatives.

Councillor M.M. Jones referred to the forthcoming retirement of Mr. Ieuan Lloyd Roberts, Head of Education Services and Mr. Gwilym Luke Jones, Senior Education Officer (Primary) and it was

agreed that a letter be sent to both officers thanking them for their valuable service and extending SACREs best wishes for the future.

In closing the Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE, the Council's Translator and Clerk to SACRE for their hard work.

The meeting concluded at 11.45 a.m.
