

## **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 Monday, 12th November 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

### **PRESENT**

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

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

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

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

#### **Representing Religious Denominations**

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

**Observer:** Councillor R.E. Barton

### **ALSO PRESENT**

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

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

T. Bryer and Councillor N. Hugh-Jones

Apologies had also been received from the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning and the Interim Head of School Improvement.

### **SILENT REFLECTION**

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

### **WELCOME**

The retiring Chair, Mrs. M.B. Lloyd welcomed members and officers to the meeting. A warm welcome was also extended to two new SACRE members, namely Roger Hayward representing the Secondary Headteachers and Cate Harmsworth representing Secondary RE Specialists.

### **477 URGENT MATTERS**

There were no urgent matters for consideration by the committee.

### **478 INAUGURATION OF NEW CHAIR**

In accordance with the revised constitution of Denbighshire SACRE the current Vice-Chair, Rev. B.H. Jones was invested as Chair for 2007-09. The retiring Chair, Mrs. M.B. Lloyd formally welcomed the Chair in his new role. The Chair, Rev. B.H. Jones thanked SACRE for their support in electing him Chair advising that he was looking forward to undertaking that role. The Chair also extended the Advisory Council's appreciation to Mrs. Lloyd for her guidance as Chair of SACRE over the last two years and for the hard work she had undertaken. He also paid tribute to Mrs. Lloyd's continued good work in this regard with associated organisations.

#### 479 ELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for the appointment of Vice Chair for 2007-09 from the Councillor representatives in accordance with the revised Constitution of Denbighshire SACRE. It was proposed and seconded that Councillor G.J. Pickering be appointed Vice Chair for the ensuing two years. There being no further nominations and upon being put to the vote it was:-

**RESOLVED** that Councillor G.J. Pickering be appointed Vice Chair for 2007-09.

The Chair congratulated Councillor Pickering on his appointment and wished him well in his new role.

#### 480 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2007 (previously circulated) as received by the County Council on 18th September 2007 were submitted.

##### **Matters Arising -**

Page 3 – Item No. 2 – Minutes: Matters Arising: Results of Initial Teacher Training Survey to Schools – The Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that the survey had been updated to include the latest responses received from schools and sent to the colleges concerned but no response had been received as yet.

Page 5 – Item No. 4 – Agreed Syllabus Working Group – The Inspector/Adviser RE commended the work undertaken by the Agreed Syllabus Working Group to date in preparing support materials and the positive approach adopted by members. The Chair conveyed SACRE's thanks to the Group for all their hard work.

Page 6 – Item No. 5(b) WASACRE – Issues to raise with the Minister for Education – Members were advised that a meeting with the minister had been arranged for 26th November and a report thereon would be submitted to SACRE's next meeting. Members wished the delegation a fruitful meeting with the minister.

Page 7 – Item No. 6 – Spiritual Development in the Curriculum – The Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that the document offering advice on Spiritual Development across the curriculum was in the progress of being printed and copies would be sent to every teacher in the authority after Christmas.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

#### 481 PRESENTATION: RE IN DINAS BRAN HIGH SCHOOL, LLANGOLLEN

The Chair introduced and welcomed to the meeting Christine Hannaby, Head of Department RE from Ysgol Dinas Bran, Llangollen who was in attendance to deliver a presentation on the provision of Religious Education and collective worship at the school.

Ms. Hannaby thanked members for her invitation to the meeting and provided a brief resume of her background and position at the school. As part of her presentation, Mrs. Hannaby reported upon the school's very good examination results (copies of which had been made available at the meeting) as follows:-

- All examination results for 2007 had improved from 2006
- A level in 2007 was 100% A – C
- GCSE A\* - C Full Course was 72% in 2006 and 75% in 2007
- GCSE A\* - C Short Course was 28% in 2006 and 60% in 2007

Ms. Hannaby felt that to raise standards in Key Stages 3 & 4, formal examinations were needed. In addition more curriculum time should be spent on RE. In providing an outline of RE at the school, members were advised of the excellent links with local churches and the community. Links had also been forged with a Hindu Temple and Central Mosque in Birmingham and the Cathedral in Liverpool to explore other faiths as part of developing pupils multicultural awareness.

In closing her presentation Mrs. Hannaby extended an open invitation for members to visit the school to see the RE Department firsthand.

Members took the opportunity to raise questions regarding various aspects of RE provision within Ysgol Dinas Bran, particularly referring to: the quality of RE in feeder schools; take up of RE at GCSE and A levels for RE; aspects of RE enjoyed by pupils; interaction with the Youth Service; learning skills development, and assemblies.

The Chair congratulated the school on their examination results and thanked Ms. Hannaby for her informative and interesting presentation which had provided an insight into the work undertaken in Ysgol Dinas Bran in delivering Religious Education.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation on RE in Ysgol Dinas Bran, Llangollen be received and noted and a letter of thanks be sent directly to the school on behalf of SACRE.

#### **482 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF DENBIGHSHIRE SACRE 2006-07**

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a draft of the Annual Report of Denbighshire SACRE 2006-07 (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.

Members were reminded that the Annual Report had been prepared in accordance with the guidance provided by DCELLS for submission by the end of the year. The Inspector/Adviser RE drew members' attention to a number of errors in Appendix 4 – Composition of SACRE which would be corrected prior to finalisation of the report. In addition to those membership changes reference to the Christian Education Movement in Wales would be changed to Religious Education Movement in Wales and reference to DELLS would be amended to DCELLS.

Members noted the amendments verbally reported at the meeting and were content to receive the report as a true record of SACRE's work. Thanks were extended to the Inspector/Adviser RE for his work in preparing the document.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the Annual Report of Denbighshire SACRE for 2006-07 be received, and
- (b) the Local Education Authority be requested to prepare and distribute the report.

#### **483 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 November 2006 and February 2007 in the provision of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC), and Religious Education. Inspections had been carried out at Ysgol Y Llys, Prestatyn; Ysgol Gymraeg Y Gwernant, Llangollen and Rhos Street Primary School, Ruthin and a brief history of each school had been incorporated into the report.

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 pleasing to note the 53 positive comments for SMSC across the three schools inspected and that there had been only 4 negative comments. The schools would be addressing those negative points, which had not been deemed key issues, and the Inspector/Adviser RE had already been in contact with the schools in that regard. With regard to Religious Education the three schools had received 35 positive comments between them and only 5 negative comments, 2 of which had been repeated under separate headings.

Mrs. S. Harris felt that the comment relating to pupils not asking their own questions sufficiently about spiritual matters was uncalled for. The Inspector/Adviser RE agreed indicating that during one of his monitoring visits at that particular school he had heard many deep spiritual questions being asked

naturally but that may not have happened during the inspection or could be owing to the way the questions had been phrased. The school was content that pupils are given every opportunity and encouraged to ask questions.

Members congratulated the three schools on their inspection reports noting that the positive comments far outweighed the few negative comments. It was also noted that the Inspector/Adviser RE had already been in contact with two of the schools and members thanked him for the work he had undertaken. The Chair advised that he was also Chair of Governors at Ysgol y Llys and paid tribute to the assistance and support of the Inspector/Adviser RE to the school following inspections and thanked him personally in that regard.

**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.*

#### **484 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES**

The minutes of the WASACRE meeting held in Llandrindod Wells on 28th June 2007 (previously circulated) were submitted.

The Chair referred to his attendance at the WASACRE meeting and paid tribute to an inspiring presentation from pupils at St. Christopher's School Wrexham on their faith garden which members had been encouraged to visit. SACRE members were also invited to contact St. Christopher's School directly to arrange a visit.

Mrs. M.B. Lloyd reminded members that a reprint of the handbook for new SACRE members had been undertaken and stressed the need to ensure that copies were available. It was suggested that copies of the handbook be made available at SACRE's next meeting to ensure all members, observers and visitors had the opportunity to obtain a copy.

During consideration of the minutes and in response to a question from Councillor G.J. Pickering the Inspector/Adviser RE reported upon the topics chosen to be raised with the Minister for Education by the WASACRE/NAPfRE delegation as follows:-

1. Post 16 Provision and support for teachers in delivering provision including questions concerning funding for professional development
2. Collective Worship – including changes to legislation for post 16 pupils and lack of consultation with SACREs
3. Issues RE should be tackling in the 21st century
4. Vocational/Applied qualifications in RE

The Inspector/Adviser RE indicated that another issue had been raised regarding changing legislation in the foundation phase but it was felt that this issue was now being addressed elsewhere.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Councillor M.M. Jones for her work on WASACRE during her term of office which ended recently. Councillor Jones advised that she had considered it an honour to serve on WASACRE and that she had enjoyed the time spent in that role. Councillor Jones also felt that it was beneficial for membership on WASACRE to be rotated to allow different people to have the opportunity of serving on that Council.

Finally, Mrs. M.B. Lloyd reported that both herself and the Chair, Rev. B.H. Jones would be unable to attend the next WASACRE meeting to be held in Ebbw Vale on 4th December, 2007 and sought three nominations from members to attend as SACRE representatives in that regard.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the minutes of the meeting of WASACRE held on 28th June 2007 be received and noted;
- (b) Councillors M.M. Jones and G.J. Pickering be nominated as SACRE representatives to attend the next WASACRE meeting in Ebbw Vale on 4th December, and
- (c) any member willing and able to attend as the third SACRE representative at the WASACRE meeting should contact the Inspector/Adviser RE directly in that regard.

**485 PRESENTATION: UGANDA VISIT**

The Inspector/Adviser RE delivered a powerpoint presentation regarding his recent visit to Uganda as part of a delegation visiting schools and communities during September/October 2007 through the charity Christian Relief Uganda.

Members were advised that the trip had focused on schools, churches and charities and time had been spent at the following:-

- Kamuli: Parents Primary School and Maria's Care Orphanage, Kamuli (the base of Christian Relief Uganda)
- Hope Destitute Children's Centre & Lakaya Polytechnic Institute (a centre for street children)
- Golden Christian College, Nsaggu (a secondary school and vocational college for pupils/students who would not otherwise get an education) and Little Angels Nursery and Primary School
- Restoration New Life Church & Assemblies of Christ Church at Nsaggu and Lukaya respectively.

The powerpoint presentation provided a series of photographs of the time spent in Uganda including the churches, schools and communities visited and activities and charity work undertaken. The Inspector/Adviser RE reported upon links with schools in the county and the work in raising awareness of developing countries and issues of responsibility. It was likely that another visit to Uganda would be arranged in approximately eighteen months to two years time.

The Chair thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for sharing his experiences with SACRE and paid tribute to the excellent charity work being undertaken.

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

**486 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair reminded members that the next meeting of Denbighshire SACRE would be held at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 4th February, 2008 in the Council Chamber, Ty Nant, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn.

Councillor G.J. Pickering reported upon the appointment of Councillor H.H. Evans as the Council's new leader. Whilst noting that Councillor Evans was a member on SACRE, Councillor Pickering suggested that a special invitation be extended to him as Leader of the Council to attend SACRE's next meeting. Members agreed with that action.

In closing the Chair thanked the Council's Translator and Clerk to SACRE for their hard work and wished all present a blessed Christmas and New Year.

The meeting concluded at 11.50 a.m.

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