

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in the Council Chamber, Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl on Monday, 12th October 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

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

Observer: Councillor D. Owens

Representing Teacher Associations

M. Bradshaw, L. Linaker and M.B. Lloyd

Representing Religious Denominations

H. Ellis, R. Elms, and B. Wyn Evans

ALSO PRESENT

Inspector/Adviser RE (GC), Head of School Improvement and Clerk to SACRE (KEJ)

APOLOGIES

Councillors C. Hughes and J. Yorke together with S. Harris, M. Hatch, Reverend B.H. Jones, M. Ludenbach, T. Ap Siôn and E. Wright

An apology for absence had also been received from the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning.

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

376 INAUGURATION OF NEW CHAIR

In accordance with the constitution of Denbighshire SACRE the current Vice-Chair, Councillor M.M. Jones was invested as Chair for 2009-11.

The Chair thanked the outgoing Chair, Reverend B.H. Jones for the work he had undertaken on behalf of SACRE over the last two years. She also took the opportunity to welcome Councillor C.M. Evans and Mrs. M. Phillips to their first SACRE meeting.

Members were advised that the inauguration of the new Chair also resulted in the expiration of Mrs. M.B. Lloyd's membership on the Council as a past Chair. In order to retain Mrs. Lloyd as a member on SACRE the Chair proposed that she be appointed a co-opted member on the committee.

RESOLVED that Mrs. M.B. Lloyd be appointed a co-opted member of Denbighshire SACRE.

377 ELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for the appointment of Vice Chair for 2009-11 from the teacher association representatives in accordance with the Constitution of Denbighshire SACRE. It was proposed and seconded that Mrs. M. Bradshaw be appointed Vice Chair for the ensuing two years. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED that Mrs. M. Bradshaw be appointed Vice Chair of Denbighshire SACRE for 2009-11.

378 URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent matters for consideration by the committee.

379 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held on 6th June, 2009 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Matters Arising –

Page 1 – Item No. 2 – Presentations by headteachers from schools in respect of examination results – Miss. H. Ellis commented that inviting the secondary schools to SACRE had proved an extremely worthwhile and valuable experience. The Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that SACRE had agreed to continue the practice of inviting schools to talk about examination results at meetings in the future. In response to a question from Mrs. M.B. Lloyd, the Head of School Improvement updated members on the position of post 16 provision in Rhyl. He also advised that overall, GCSE results in Rhyl High School had improved significantly on the previous year.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 6th June, 2009 be received and approved as a correct record.

380 PRESENTATION: RE IN LLYWELYN PRIMARY SCHOOL, RHYL

The Chair invited Ms. Maxine Bradshaw to deliver her presentation on the provision of RE and collective worship in Llywelyn Primary School.

Ms. M. Bradshaw commented that as a SACRE member she had been privileged to observe other presentations from schools and indicated that she was happy to share her school's experience with SACRE.

Members were advised that Ysgol Llywelyn was a large community primary school with approximately 520 pupils, although pupil numbers were decreasing. The school served a mixed catchment area of private residential and rented accommodation and approximately 2% of pupils were from ethnic minorities/other religions.

With the aid of a power point presentation, Ms. Bradshaw reported upon Collective Worship within the school as follows:-

- held separately in Infant and Junior Departments on specific days
- the head teacher took one service in each department each week
- classes were responsible for leading one service in each department
- suggested themes were provided in a file and a record kept of class services
- when children did not meet as a whole department, classes had their own service time in their rooms
- each department had a hymn singing practice each week in order to promote opportunities for worship and reflection
- Christian festivals were celebrated in each department, usually led by a class
- Christmas celebration services were held at local churches in the community
- use was made of the Lord's Prayer and The Blessing in both Welsh and English together with Welsh and English hymns.

Religious Education was taught differently in the Infant and Junior Departments as follows:-

- Religious Education in the Infant Department –
 - taught discretely in each class on a weekly basis
 - linked into the cross curricular theme where appropriate
 - celebrated links with a school in India though shared work projects etc.
 - visits to local churches/places of interest incorporated into work units

- Religious Education in the Junior Department –
 - taught discretely in each class as half-termly units of work
 - linked to topics of work in other subject areas where appropriate
 - the study of Hinduism had been developed from Foundation Phase because of the school's links with India
 - Judaism was also introduced in Year 6 as part of their study
 - visits to local churches/places of interest incorporated into work units

Throughout the presentation a number of pictures of visits and activities by pupils within different year groups were shown and made available for members' perusal. In closing her presentation Ms. Bradshaw made reference to community interaction with Year 6 children carol singing to local residential homes at Christmas, children from the school choir having taken part many times in the Rhyl Cytun Advent Service and donations to many charities being made over the course of the school year.

Members took the opportunity to raise questions with Ms. Bradshaw regarding the various aspects of RE provision within the school, particularly referring to: the presentation of the different religions and pupils' understanding of them; the allocation of resources for RE provision within the school, and the means of promoting Curriculum Cymreig within the subject.

The Chair paid tribute to the work carried out at the school in the provision of Collective Worship and RE and thanked Ms. Bradshaw for her interesting and informative presentation.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the presentation on Religious Education in Ysgol Llywelyn, Rhyl be received and noted, and*
- (b) *a letter of thanks be sent to the head teacher of the school acknowledging the presentation given by Ms. M. Bradshaw.*

381 ANALYSIS OF ESTYN INSPECTION REPORTS

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a report (previously circulated) analysing the results of the recent inspections of four schools undertaken between January 2009 and June 2009 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 St. Asaph VP School, Christchurch CP School, Henllan CP School, and Ysgol Bro Elwern 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 70 positive comments for SMSC across the four schools inspected with just 6 negative comments across three schools. All schools had been graded 2 or above for SMSC provision. The Religious Education part of the report only referred to one school: Henllan CP School with 14 positive comments and no negative comments or important shortcomings recorded. Mrs. M.B. Lloyd was disappointed to note that three of the schools had not been inspected for RE in light of the changes to the inspection process. In response to a question from Ms. L. Linaker, the Inspector/Adviser RE confirmed that church schools had their own separate church inspection.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the report be received and noted;*
- (b) *a letter be sent to the schools inspected congratulating them on the good features identified and offering the services of the Inspector/Adviser RE and School Improvement Officers in relation to any areas for development or key issues needing addressing, and*
- (c) *the Local Education Authority be requested to distribute the above letters.*

382 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted a draft of the Annual Report of Denbighshire SACRE 2008-09 (previously circulated) which provided details of SACRE's activities during the previous academic year including advice given to the local education authority together with other local and national matters.

Members were reminded that it was a statutory requirement for SACRE to produce an Annual Report of its work for submission to the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) by 31st December. DCELLS guidance had been followed in production of the report.

The Inspector/Adviser RE outlined the contents of the report which included advice given and implemented by the local authority in terms of Religious Education and the Agreed Syllabus; Methods of teaching, choice of teaching materials and provision of Initial Teacher Training; and Collective Worship. He also advised that reference within the document to local education authority would be changed to unitary authority as the appropriate terminology. Other local and national matters had also been included within the report and the Inspector/Adviser RE highlighted the difficulties in filling the vacancies on SACRE and the efforts made in that regard, including correspondence with the Free Church Council in Wales who had offered to use their contacts to assist SACREs in filling vacancies. The Chair indicated that Ms. M. Colbert was no longer a SACRE member and the Inspector/Adviser RE agreed to amend the composition of SACRE accordingly.

In response to questions from Councillor C.M. Evans the Inspector/Adviser RE advised that there was a requirement to record examination results separately for boys and girls. He also confirmed that Religious Education was a statutory requirement although parents and post 16 pupils could exercise a right of withdrawal.

Members were content to receive the report as a true record of SACRE's work and conveyed their thanks to the Inspector/Adviser RE for his work in preparing the document.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *subject to the amendments referred to above, the Annual Report of Denbighshire SACRE for 2008-09 be approved as an accurate account of SACRE's work, and*
- (b) *the Local Education Authority be requested to arrange translation, printing and distribution of the report to all schools and colleges in Denbighshire and other recipients as required by law and as identified in the report.*

383 INTRODUCTION OF NEW ADVISER FOR RE

The Inspector/Adviser RE informed members that Mr. Philip Lord, Head of RE and Deputy Head of Faculty at John Bright School, Llandudno would be taking over from him as the new Inspector/Adviser RE in January 2010. He advised of the skills which Mr. Lord would bring to the position and his passion for RE and making it the best it could be. The Inspector/Adviser RE explained that he would be seconded with a view to retirement. He was moving on to his new appointment as Director of the St. Giles Centre for RE and Faith Development following half term and would retire from the local authority in September 2010.

The Head of School Improvement thanked the Inspector/Adviser RE for all his hard work in raising standards of RE within Denbighshire and in the promotion of school improvement. The Chair presented the Inspector/Adviser RE with a hanging flower basket as a token of appreciation and paid tribute to his excellent service and the valuable support and guidance he provided to schools. SACRE members echoed those sentiments. The Inspector/Adviser RE thanked members for their kind words advising that he had found working in Denbighshire schools to be a privilege and the local authority very supportive. In view of the Inspector/Adviser's knowledge and wealth of experience, Councillor G.A. Jones proposed that he be appointed a co-opted member of SACRE. The Inspector/Adviser RE thanked members for the invitation and confirmed he would be willing to accept subject to his new employer's approval. Accordingly it was:-

RESOLVED that Mr. G. Craigen be appointed a co-opted member of Denbighshire SACRE.

At this juncture (11.15 a.m.) the Head of School Improvement left the meeting.

384 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES

Minutes of WASACRE – 24th June 2009

The Inspector/Adviser RE submitted, for members' information, the draft minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) held at the Wild Pheasant Hotel, Llangollen on 24th June 2009 and hosted by Denbighshire.

The Chair was pleased that the meeting had been well attended by Denbighshire SACRE members and she reported upon the day's successes. The Inspector/Adviser RE added that many positive comments had been received regarding Denbighshire's hosting of the event. Mrs. M.B. Lloyd commended the opening address by the Chair of the County Council which showed her support for the important work of SACREs.

RESOLVED that the minutes of WASACRE held on 24th June 2009 be accepted.

Prior to the close of the meeting the Chair reminded members that SACRE's next meeting would be held on 24th February 2010 in County Hall, Ruthin.

Finally the Chair thanked the Council's Translator and Clerk to SACRE for their work and a special thanks and best wishes for the future was conveyed to the Inspector/Adviser RE for appreciation of his hard work and service to SACRE.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 a.m.
