

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in COUNCIL CHAMBER, RUSSELL HOUSE, CHURTON ROAD, RHYL on Monday, 13 February 2017 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors Arwel Roberts and Gwyneth Kensler

Representing Religious Denominations

Rev. B H Jones and Rev. Martin Evans-Jones

Representing Teacher Associations

Ms. Ali Ballantyne

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Dewi Owens

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ann Davies, Councillor Joe Welch and Mr Simon Cameron, Mr Dominic Oaks and Ms. Tania Ap Siôn.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Declaration of Interests.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters.

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) meeting held on the 19 October 2016 (previously circulated) were submitted.

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) informed members he had contacted Denbigh High School to hold the SACRE meeting of 13 February 2017 in the school. He had

not received confirmation from the school, he therefore made alternative arrangements for the scheduled meeting.

NOTED that subject to the above, the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on the 20 June 2016, be proposed for approval as a correct record at the Committee's next meeting.

5 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) submitted a report (previously circulated) which provided an analysis of Estyn Inspection Reports published in the autumn term.

Inspections had been carried out at St Brigid's School, Denbigh, Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn, Denbigh and Ysgol Dewi Sant, Rhyl and details relating to each of the respective schools had been included in the report and were summarised by the CA. The Committee were informed the Estyn Reports had decreased with 3 key questions being addressed. The CA provided Members with a brief resume of the findings relating to each school, and the comments and outcomes were noted by Members.

The CA explained the importance of membership on SACRE to ratify the new curriculum. The CA explained a new syllabus was being looked into, with a number of schools trialling the new syllabus in 2018 and the new curriculum to be statutory by 2021.

NOTED that the report be received and its contents noted.

6 EXAMINATION RESULTS 2016

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) submitted the summary of Examination Results 2015-2016 Report (previously circulated) which included details of :-

- GCSE Religious Studies- Full Course

The CA highlighted the data provided in respect of:-

- Dinas Bran – New Head Teacher appointed.
- Denbigh High School – Slight number reduction saw a large decrease in the number of A*-C grades achieved.
- Prestatyn High School – Suffered number reduction but still achieved above the national average figure
- Brynhyfryd – Slight number reduction but achieved 100% A*-C grades.

The CA explained that the number of entrants on the full course had dropped in the County but had also dropped across Wales.

The CA informed Members a new Head Teacher had been appointed at Dinas Bran High School and was hopeful for positive outcomes following the appointment.

- GCSE Religious Studies – Short Course

The CA highlighted the data provided in respect of:-

- Across the local Authority an increase in pupil entrance to the short course examination was observed
- Dinas Bran – Saw an increase in participants but only a 2% A*-C pass.
- Glan Clywd – Did not enter any pupils for the short course examination
- Rhyl High School – Saw an increase of 26.2% achieving A*-C grades.

The CA explained to Members the responsibility of providing Religious Education in schools was mandatory, but there was no requirement for pupils to be examined. The short course option had been used as an alternative for students to gain a qualification.

The CA raised a concern regarding Dinas Bran High School's results and informed the Committee he would be asking what was to be done to improve results in the future.

- GCSE Religious Studies – A Level.

The following issues were highlighted in respect of:-

- It was noted that an increase was observed in the number of entrants in Local Authority sitting Religious Studies.
- Glan Clwyd had a rise in the number of pupils entered for A Level Religious Studies and achieved 100% A*-C pass.

NOTED that, subject to the above, the summary of the Examination Results 2016 Report be received and noted.

7 STATUS OF AN AGREED SYLLABUS

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA), provided the Committee a verbal report on the status of an agreed syllabus.

The CA explained to Members the Welsh Baccalaureate was having a negative impact on the amount of time RE received in KS4. The CA informed Members there was no data to support concerns to this change, in light of this the CA stated he was hopeful a questionnaire would be made available for schools to complete. Within which a reminder of the importance of Religious Education in schools would be emphasised.

Members made it clear they wanted the questions to be precise to enable the response to be used to question the changes to the curriculum. Alison Ballantyne suggested that the questionnaire be sent to both Head Teachers and Governors of Schools to emphasise the importance of completing the questionnaire to capture the necessary data. The CA noted the comment.

NOTED that the Committee receive the verbal update and the position noted.

8 UPDATE ON SACRE AND SCHOOL TO SCHOOL COLLABORATION

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) provided a verbal update including training that was scheduled. Training had been scheduled for March and April.

Training sessions had taken place last Summer term, to recap on the syllabus and ensure it was being adhered to. The CA informed the Committee the training session was well received with over 50% of attendees in agreement the day had been a positive recap.

Rev. Martin Evans-Jones expressed an interest to attend future scheduled training sessions. The CA provided the Committee details of the upcoming training events.

The CA informed Members that teachers were to be trained to lead monitoring in schools and support teacher co-operation, with schools and GwE, providing feedback and information to be shared via the Welsh HWB.

NOTED that the Committee receive the verbal update.

9 WASACRE

The minutes of the meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) held at Carmarthenshire on the 18 November 2016 (previously circulated) were submitted for Members' information.

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) informed the Committee the Welsh Government and WASACRE were working with schools to produce the curriculum by 2021.

The CA expressed the importance of Church representation present at both SACRE and WASACRE meetings. He explained the importance of feedback from SACRE meetings to emphasise the need for Religious Education on the Curriculum.

Councillor Gwyneth Kensler asked the CA, how representation from different faiths was acquired. The CA explained to Members the process for representation of denominations at SACRE meetings. The CA stated that in the South of Wales better representation of different faiths was observed. It was explained by the CA that data was collated nationally to obtain data for analysis.

NOTED that the minutes of the WASACRE held on 18 November 2016 be received and noted.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Denbighshire SACRE had been scheduled for 10am Wednesday 5 July 2017 in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin LL15 1YN

The meeting concluded at 11.20 a.m.