

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN on Wednesday, 5 July 2017 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors Ellie Chard, Tony Flynn, Tony Thomas and Emrys Wynne

Representing Religious Denominations

Mr. Simon Cameron, Mr. Dominic Oakes and Rev. Martin Evans-Jones

ALSO PRESENT

Challenge Advisor for GwE (PL) and Committee Administrator (SJ)
Sarah Roberts- Head of Humanities, Rhyl High School

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection. The chair reflected upon recent tragic events and asked members to take a minute to consider the impact they have had on children and their families.

POINT OF NOTICE

It was agreed that Simon Cameron Chair the meeting.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Cate Harmsworth and Councillor Joe Welch

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

3 CONFIRMATION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) confirmed with members the procedure for appointing a Chair and Vice Chair of the SACRE Committee. The CA informed members that the current Vice Chair would become Chair in October and the appointment of a new Vice Chair would be on the October agenda.

4 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

None

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) meeting held on the 13 February 2017 (previously circulated) were submitted.

NOTED *that subject to the above, the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on the 13 February 2017, be proposed for approval as a correct record at the Committee's next meeting.*

6 ROLE OF SACRE

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) introduced the report (previously circulated) which provided information on the role of SACRE and the role of its members. The CA explained to members the responsibility SACRE had regarding Religious Education syllabus in schools, its contents and the way in which it is taught. Members were informed they meet 3 times a year, once in each academic school term to discuss, monitor, support and assess Religious Education in schools.

The CA explained the background to collective worship in schools, every pupil should receive an act of collective worship unless parental request to be exempt. Concerns were raised over the ability to monitor the delivery of collective worship in schools. Members raised the issue of new schools that had been built not having a space large enough for collective worship. The committee were informed that space had been allocated for reflection or dedicated for religious purpose.

The CA explained to members that a new Curriculum for Religious Education was to be introduced in September 2021 and SACRE Committee members would be monitoring and supporting the implementation.

The Chair thanked the CA for the reflection and information on the role of SACRE and its members. The Chair ushered members to take a proactive role in the Committee sharing good practice, experiences and supporting the CA.

NOTED *that the report be received and noted.*

7 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 spring term.

The CA explained that presented were the findings of the inspections that took place at 2 schools as this was the only information received from Estyn. Inspections had been carried out at Denbigh High School and Ysgol Llanbedr, 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 method Estyn adopt for inspecting schools was to be changing from September 2017. The CA explained from the two Estyn inspections received, the inspection of Ysgol Llanbedr was obtained using the previous inspection framework and the inspection of Denbigh High School the new framework.

The CA explained to members the new inspection framework was made up of 5 clear areas, from the information in the new inspection framework limited reference to items relevant to SACRE could be observed. The CA explained that Estyn have stated they will only make direct reference to Collective Worship within inspections if it is not observed.

The CA expressed the importance for the SACRE committee to monitor the new framework from the results of inspections carried out.

NOTED that the report be received and its contents noted.

8 LEAD PRACTITIONER - SUPPORTING THE NEW GCSE SPECIFICATIONS

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) introduced Sarah Roberts, Head of Humanities at Rhyl High School and Conwy and Denbighshire Hub Lead Practitioner.

Sarah Roberts Lead Practitioner (LP) for religious education in Conwy and Denbighshire presented to the committee initiatives in place to deliver the revised GCSE Religious Studies specifications.

The LP explained the background to the work the Lead Practitioners had been involved with. Work had been done with schools across the region to support staff and to share good practices.

The LP discussed with members the differences between the Full course and short course GCSE Religious Education examinations and how the modules of each are calculated.

The LP informed members that WJEC conference's held in Bangor and Ewloe expressed a number of concerns that schools had regarding the new specifications. The LP disclosed that the main concern that was aired at the meeting was the lack of resources particularly no textbook available to support teaching staff or pupils. It was also asked at the conference's that guidance be provided on the Humanist element of the syllabus to aid in teaching.

A further conference organised by GwE took place in March. The LP gave a brief review of what was discussed at the conference which included information on assessment, Humanist approach and the next stages for Hub practitioners to explore. The feedback from the 60 teachers that attended the conference was well received and positive feedback was given.

The LP attended a Hub meeting which focused on preparation for the new school year and developing concepts to support each other. The LP told the committee currently communication was through the use of emails, come September a new portal would be implemented to allow schools access to aid and support. The LP informed the committee of the next Hub meeting which would be in October 2018 and the next stages would focus on developing concept maps, to continue to share information and investigate for another conference to be arranged and attended.

Concerns that had been raised in the conference's and Hub meetings were echoed by the SACRE committee. The Committee felt it necessary to construct a letter to WJEC and the Welsh Government expressing the concerns felt by Denbighshire's SACRE.

The Chair thanked Sarah Roberts for attending the meeting and for providing the information for members to discuss and deliberate on. The Chair asked that

SACRE monitor the implementation of the new specifications and continue to communicate with the Hub practitioner.

RESOLVED that the report be received and its contents noted. A letter to WJEC and Welsh Government be drafted expressing SACRE's concerns regarding the new specifications for GCSE Religious Education.

9 SCHOOL TO SCHOOL COLLABORATIVE WORKING - UPDATE

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) briefed members on the background of the school to school collaborative working group. The CA explained to members that no meeting from the group had taken place recently. Work had been done to produce a document in the new academic year to assist schools with Religious Education.

NOTED that the Committee receive the verbal update.

10 WASACRE

The minutes of the Wales Association of SACRE's (WASACRE) held at Monmouthshire on the 3rd March 2017 (Previously circulated) were submitted for members information.

Concerns were raised from members that Religious Education would be taught as an addition to other subjects. The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) expressed the importance of SACRE members concerns being expressed at WASACRE meetings and encouraged members to attend the next WASACRE meeting to ensure concerns were heard and answered.

The CA explained to the Committee that Denbighshire SACRE were required to nominate for the appointment of Vice Chair for the Wales Association of SACRE. The CA analysed the nominations (previously circulated) with members. It was voted that Gill Vaisey be nominated for the position of Vice Chair for WASACRE by Denbighshire SACRE members.

NOTED that the minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 3 March 2017 be received and noted.

RESOLVED that Gill Vaisey be nominated by Denbighshire SACRE members for Vice Chair of WASACRE.

11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Denbighshire SACRE had been scheduled for 10am Friday 13th October, 2017 in Council Chamber, Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl.

The meeting concluded at 11:45 a.m.