

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 LL18 3DP on Wednesday, 16 October 2019 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Tony Flynn, Tony Thomas and Emrys Wynne and Alison Ballantyne and Dominic Oakes.

ALSO PRESENT

Phil Lord (RE Adviser) and Committee Administrator (HB)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Rev. Brian Jones and Jennie Downes.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Agenda Item 8 - Councillor Ellie Chard declared a personal interest as she was a Governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa.

3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Ellie Chard be appointed Chair of SACRE for the ensuing two year term.

4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED that Dominic Oakes be appointed Vice Chair of SACRE for the ensuing two year term.

5 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The RE Adviser advised members that Dominic Oaks had requested to discuss an urgent item, however it was decided to discuss the urgent item under agenda item 9.

He advised members of another urgent item. Kirsty Williams, Wales Minister for Education had released consultation regarding changing the name of Religious Education to Religion and Worldviews Education and the proposal to remove the 'right of withdrawal'. The RE Adviser shared a questionnaire and consultation document and advised members that they could complete individual consultation documents as well as sending one from the SACRE Committee.

6 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held 26th June 2019 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED: that the SACRE confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th June 2019 as an accurate record.

7 SACRE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Councillor Emrys Wynne proposed to accept the report, seconded by Ali Ballantyne.

RESOLVED that the SACRE approve the draft SACRE Annual Report 2018/19.

8 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

Ali Ballantyne noted that she preferred the new headings, example wellbeing. She felt it provided a full sense of where the school was at.

The RE Adviser advised that normal procedure would be to provide schools with their report only rather than the entire document. He queried whether all schools would benefit from receiving the full report, so they could see comments from other schools.

In response, Members agreed that if the reports only consisted of positive comments then it should be shared with all schools. And any negative comments taken out and discussed with schools privately.

RESOLVED that the SACRE request an Autumn Term 2020 Report, and for the report to be sent to all schools.

9 SACRE SUPPORT FOR 2019-2020

The RE Adviser noted that the group could not do much in terms of the agreed syllabus however WASACRE and NAPFRE were writing a support document to go alongside the new curriculum.

He explained that an advisor in Wrexham advised that schools were unhappy being compared with each other, The Welsh Government had made clear that GwE would not provide comparative data regarding schools. Discussions were required with both Key Stage 2 and 3 teachers to ask how religious education within schools could be improved. The RE Adviser had had conversations with the Senior School Improvement Officer (SSIO) regarding combining meetings with Conwy, to get a wider view on matters. The RE Adviser would review the idea with the SSIO and advise members of the outcome.

Urgent Item - Monitoring exploration of the relationship between religions and war and peace in religious education lessons.

The RE Adviser presented the item, he asked members whether they should ask schools to inform the group of the topics discussed over the years. He commented

that a lot of topics discussed in key stage 2 were repeated in key stage 3. He advised there was an opportunity, to write to schools to request their long term plans, they would be compared and would start the discussion on revising the key stage 2 and 3 plans to complement each other.

Dominic Oaks explained that he had brought the topic back as the response previously was fairly negative. He presented the topic again, explaining that he was suggesting asking schools what topics were discussed and whether external bodies were utilised, for example the armed forces.

Members discussed the topic. Councillor Emrys Wynne, felt if the recommendation had a slight rewording then it would be fair and he would support it. He felt if the recommendation had removed “for example, armed forces promotional visits” then it would be a reasonable recommendation for members to consider.

Members were hesitant in approving the new recommendation. Members did a show of hands to approve the new wording, which was as follows;

Recommendation – That the SACRE gathers information regarding schools’ use of topical opportunities, to explore the relationship between religions and war and peace within religious education lessons.

4 members of 6 voted to approve the new recommendation.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above amendments, the recommendation be approved.

The RE Adviser suggested as part of the work programme be a newsletter that advertises the groups positions what would be required, any other relevant information. Members agreed that a newsletter could be beneficial.

Members also discussed the possibility of having a joint meeting with Conwy and when would be best to hold the joint meeting. The RE Adviser suggested that the joint meeting take place in the spring.

A self-evaluation questionnaire for schools in response to the estyn reports. The questionnaire had headings like Good Features, concerns, training opportunities, and an area to comments on the progress of pupils.

Councillor Tony Flynn raised the matter of substitute teachers and whether there were some criteria to meet before teaching religious education, especially in high schools. In response The RE Adviser advised that in 2013 Estyn judged the quality of Religious Education in key stage 3 and 4 and stated that none-specialists did not have a detrimental effect on Religious Education in High Schools. He did however state that there was a difference in terms of covering a lesson and teaching the lesson permanently and designing the curriculum.

The RE Adviser referred to the work programme. Recommendations from Estyn regarding key stage 2 and 3 – SACRE should produce a list of places of worship

that schools could visit and secondly that local authorities provide specific training for teachers.

RESOLVED that SACRE's comments on the future work of SACRE and how SACRE could support the delivery of RE and Collective Worship in 2019-2020 be noted.

10 WASACRE

Members thanked Ali Ballantyne for attending the recent WASACRE meeting.

RESOLVED that the committee note the minutes of the WASACRE meeting.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members asked whether the next meeting on 5th February 2019 be held at Christ the Word school in Rhyl.