

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held by video conference on Wednesday, 8 February 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors Ellie Chard (Chair), Ann Davies, Gill German, Delyth Jones, Cheryl Williams and Emrys Wynne

Representing Religious Denominations and Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

Reverend Brian Jones and Collette Owen

Representing Teacher Associations

Sarah Griffiths and Susan Williams

ALSO PRESENT

RE Adviser (PL) and Committee Administrators (KEJ & NPH [Zoom Host])

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes' silent reflection.

POINT OF NOTICE

Susan Williams was welcomed as a new member on the Advisory Council representing teacher associations and all present were introduced.

1 APOLOGIES

Leah Crimes, Jennie Downes and Tania Ap Siôn

James Brown, Principal Education Manager

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Ellie Chard declared a personal interest because she was a School Governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) meeting held on 19 October 2022 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Matters Arising –

Page 8 – Item 7 SACRE Draft Annual Report 2020/21 – The second newsletter had been distributed to schools and it was also available on the local Denbighshire RVE teachers' network.

***RESOLVED** that the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 19 October 2022 be received and approved as a correct record.*

5 CURRICULUM FOR WALES

The RE Adviser gave a presentation on the Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) Guidance and training material that teachers could use to help understand and plan an appropriate RVE curriculum based on the Denbighshire Agreed Syllabus.

Training had been provided to Conwy teachers during the autumn term which had been well received and the intention was to record a similar session for subsequent distribution to Denbighshire teachers.

Areas covered in the comprehensive presentation included –

- the use of imagery, with many jigsaw pieces representing the different pieces to be fixed together to represent the curriculum in its entirety
- use of the four purposes as a starting point – ambitious and capable learners; enterprising and creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; healthy and confident individuals and how they related to the RVE
- links to the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) accessed via Hwb and further guidance, including Section 5 Designing your curriculum and specific consideration for this area, encouraging a holistic approach to learning
- legal status of the RVE guidance which Denbighshire had agreed as its Agreed Syllabus. RVE was a mandatory element of the subject and a compulsory part of the Curriculum for Wales and links to other support areas on Hwb
- main aspects covering the inclusion of both religious and non-religious philosophical convictions; children not allowed to be removed from RVE; have regard and language changes, and teaching having to reflect that religious traditions in Wales were in the main Christian while taking account of other principal religions represented in Wales, and that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions were held in Wales
- the Denbighshire's Supporting Guidance for RVE made available to schools covered RVE Disciplines, Spiritual Development, RVE and four purposes, RVE Concepts, RVE lens, and Learner Progression and Learning Journeys in RVE
- facilitated a wordle activity as a means of provoking thought and debate
- the common aims and objectives of RE according to RE Policies
- commonality between the Humanities AoLE and illustrations relating to the meaning of the Statements of What Matter

- RVE Disciplines including religious studies, philosophy, theology, sociology, psychology and anthropology and big questions with examples which would be useful to incorporate into the guidance
- RVE Concepts and how they appeared in the Agreed Syllabus together with a number of key themes to consider as part of that curriculum
- RVE Lenses and how they appeared in the Agreed Syllabus together with a summary of the seven lenses and connected 'it's about' statements
- examples of the RVE Learning Journeys including expectation and progression
- concepts of the Agreed Syllabus cross-referenced with the concepts identified in the Humanities AoLE What Matters Statements and Descriptions of Learning
- concepts identified in the Agreed Syllabus but not referenced in the Statements of What Matters or Descriptions of Learning
- Spiritual development frameworks and examples
- further details of activities and resources which could be utilised.

Members thanked the RE Adviser for his interesting and informative presentation.

There was some debate on the significant changes to the teaching of the subject area in order to provide an up to date curriculum, fit for modern society, and to reflect the different cultures and beliefs within a democratic society. Mention was made of comparisons between the past and the present, and the changing values and beliefs of different cultures and generations over time. There was some discussion on wider high profile issues in the media relating to same sex marriages and gender identity, and also how children were supported in schools. The RE Adviser referred to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as a mandatory element of the new curriculum in schools and Councillor Gill German provided some background to the recent legal challenge and subsequent appeal against the mandatory teaching of RSE which had been rejected by the High Court. She gave an overview of RSE and teaching about relationships within families, love and respect, in an age appropriate way, highlighting the misinformation that had been shared in the media. The RE Adviser highlighted that teachings needed to focus on diversity and be representative of the differences in society to normalise an acceptance of those differences. There was a clause within the RSE that related to people who held very specific beliefs around sexuality and gender issues given that there were people who genuinely believed and held a particular view. The issue related to one of tolerance and acceptance of different views and beliefs in a democratic society.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to debate and to the RE Adviser for his comprehensive presentation which had been well received by members.

RESOLVED that the presentation by the RE Adviser regarding the Religion, Values and Ethics guidance be received and noted.

6 WASACRE

The draft minutes of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) held via Microsoft Teams on 16 November 2022 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Members' attention was drawn to the following –

- **Professional Learning Modules** – the first 5 modules of Welsh Government resources were still awaited but they had been through the quality assurance process. Whilst there was disappointment with the delay, the quality of the resources was very high and would be invaluable to schools. It was expected that the resources would soon be published and could be considered by SACRE at a future meeting. In response to a question from Councillor Emrys Wynne, the RE Adviser confirmed that, although the question had been raised regarding the potential to release the English versions ahead of the Welsh versions, it had been made clear that such practice was against both Welsh Government and WASACRE policy, ergo both versions would be released simultaneously.
- **Estyn Update** – a report had been shared on areas within the current inspection framework which referred to aspects of RVE. Estyn had re-commenced school visits and the inspection reports on those schools covered in the previous two terms would be brought to SACRE's next meeting in June 2023, and the RE Adviser would also deliver a presentation on Estyn's RVE inspection framework.

***RESOLVED** that minutes of WASACRE held on 16 November 2022 be received.*

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The dates of future SACRE meetings in 2023 had been confirmed as follows –

15 June (Thursday) and 17 October (Tuesday)

The meeting concluded at 11.45 am.