

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 Thursday, 15 June 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors Ellie Chard (Chair), Delyth Jones and Cheryl Williams

Representing Religious Denominations and Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

Jennie Downes and Collette Owen

Representing Teacher Associations

Leah Crimes and Susan Williams

ALSO PRESENT

RE Adviser (PL), Principal Education Manager (JB) and Committee Administrators (KEJ and NPH [Zoom Host])

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes' silent reflection.

1 APOLOGIES

Councillors Gill German and Emrys Wynne together with Reverend Brian H Jones, Dominic Oakes, Sarah Griffiths and Tania Ap Siôn

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Jennie Downes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 8 WASACRE in so far as it related to Nominations for the WASACRE Executive Committee because she was a nominee.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair advised that she intended to include for discussion the following matter requiring urgent attention –

Nominations for the WASACRE Executive Committee

It was agreed to consider this item during agenda item 8 as it related to WASACRE.

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) meeting held on 8 February 2023 (previously circulated) were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 8 February 2023 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 CURRICULUM FOR WALES

The RE Adviser gave a presentation regarding Welsh Government's Professional Learning Playlist for Religion, Values and Ethics, via a web link to the Hwb website.

Members were advised that Welsh Government had recently published professional learning resources to support teachers and senior leaders' understanding and planning for Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE), and the purpose of the presentation was to aid members' understanding of the requirements and planning implications of RVE on schools, and to raise awareness of those resources within schools, etc.

During the presentation members were shown how to access the professional learning page which focused on five modules relevant to a variety of stakeholders: (1) Early Years, (2) Primary Schools, (3) Secondary Settings, (4) Additional Learning Needs, and (5) Headteachers. For the purposes of the presentation, members were guided through the Headteachers Playlist.

Areas covered as part of the Headteachers Playlist included –

- Welcome – to provide support with the changes to RVE within the Curriculum for Wales and transition to a new way of thinking, planning and delivering RVE
- Critical Engagement – provision of case studies and examples to offer inspiration and ideas for planning for individual school settings
- Aims – to develop a greater understanding of the changes to RVE to support the approach to implementing changes in specific school settings
- detailed the main changes arising from the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 as it related to RE and RVE and what had stayed the same
- Self-Evaluation – provided the opportunity to undertake a self-evaluation
- Quiz – members took part in an interactive quiz to test their knowledge
- Implications – detailed the implications relating to the curriculum design model; staff; communicating to stakeholders, and conversations with parents who may be concerned that there was no right to withdraw their child from RVE
- Summary – provided a summary of the key points and things to consider.

Members welcomed the comprehensive resource material provided which would be a valuable support for practitioners, and agreed that a letter of commendation be sent to the authors of the material in that regard.

There was further discussion on the conversations with parents who may be concerned that there was no right to withdraw their child from RVE, and implications of the staggered roll out of the removal of the right to withdraw, given that a child may be withdrawn from RE but not RVE. The RE Adviser indicated that he had

already been contacted by one school seeking advice in that regard and also reported on work to be carried out in collaboration with WASACRE, NAPfRE and the Welsh Government on producing some formal guidance in the future. However, it was noted that those concerns and conversations were current and it was agreed that some guidance/bullet points be developed in the interim with a view to providing early support in addressing those issues and concerns. Any subsequent formal guidance issued by the Welsh Government would naturally supersede the interim guidance produced by Denbighshire. To that end, it was agreed that the RE Adviser and Principal Education Manager, together with representatives from the two Dioceses and school representatives, work together with a view to formulating that interim guidance for Denbighshire's schools.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *the presentation by the RE Adviser be received;*
- (b) *members to make schools they are connected to aware of the professional learning resources;*
- (c) *a commendation letter be sent to the authors of the learning resources on the excellent material provided and its value to the education sector, and*
- (d) *the RE Adviser to work with the Principal Education Manager together with representatives from the Church in Wales Diocese (Jennie Downes) and Roman Catholic Diocese (Colette Owen) and school representatives (Susan Williams, and the school who had sought advice on the matter) with a view to formulating guidance on the removal of the right to withdraw from RVE.*

6 PLANNING FOR THE NEW CURRICULUM

Leah Crimes, Headteacher of St. Brigid's School, Denbigh gave a presentation on how the school had planned and implemented Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) within the Curriculum for Wales to date, together with next steps.

Ms. Crimes provided some context to St. Brigid's, which was a voluntary aided 3-19 through faith school with a designated religious character which was Roman Catholicism. RVE was currently statutory up to Year 6 and from September it would be statutory up to year 8. The school had mapped and trialled their whole RVE scheme from nursery to Year 7 which had been working well.

The following elements were included in the comprehensive presentation –

- St. Brigid School's Curriculum Vision – provided some history to the school, ethos and values and mission statement and work to ensure the school had been able to be pluralistic whilst promoting the teachings of the Catholic Church
- combining the Four Purposes and Catholic Learner Profile to create the Brigidine Learner Profile on which to base the Curriculum for Wales
- the vision of excellent RVE to turn out global citizens, critical thinkers, empathetic individuals, self-reflective practitioners as well as religious experts

- the journey so far – mapping through the 7 lenses in line with wider topics, and retaining the Catholic ethos and Brigidine way alongside the RVE curriculum
- provided detailed examples of Lower School RVE mapping through the school terms and topics for Nursery and Reception through to Years 1,2 3 and 4
- the next steps to think about ‘what is the Golden Thread’ that runs through the stories for children linked to concepts with further mapping and audit work
- mapping the RVE curriculum in Years 7,8 and 9 and range of topics considered
- to endeavor to equip learners with the skills to determine the truth
- pupils to study topics exploring the diversity of belief in the modern world
- provided some ‘taster’ resources from the Year 7 lessons
- explained the aim of the St. Brigid’s RVE curriculum to fulfill Welsh Government legislation, meet the Brigidine Learner Profile, equip exploration in the Humanities What Matters Statement, and offer opportunities to develop transferable skills and form links with other disciplines.

The Chair thanked Ms. Crimes for the interesting and informative presentation which had been well received by members who acknowledged the hard work carried out in planning and implementing RVE in the school together with the collaborative approach taken for the benefit of all pupils. It had been particularly interesting to see how, as designated faith school, RVE had been implemented.

In response to questions, Ms. Crimes explained the involvement of the Trustees and Governors within the process which had thus far satisfied all stakeholders, and also explained how information had been shared with parents, with regular updates on activities via Seesaw and Google Classroom.

At the close of debate, the RE Adviser added his thanks, advising that he had asked Ms. Crimes to deliver the presentation at Monday’s WASACRE meeting. It was interesting to note that as a voluntary aided faith school, St. Brigid’s had not previously been included in the scope of SACRE and WASACRE.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received and noted.

7 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The RE Adviser submitted a report (previously circulated) analysing the results of recent Estyn inspections in terms of RE provision and Collective Worship in twelve schools between May 2022 and May 2023.

Inspections had been carried out at Ysgol Gynradd Pentrecelyn; Ysgol Pendref; Ysgol Penmorfa; Ysgol Caer Drewyn; Ysgol Gwynrad Carrog; Ysgol Castell; Ysgol Borthyn VC Primary School; Ysgol Llewellyn; Ysgol Frongoch; Prestatyn High School; Rhyl High School, and Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd.

The RE Adviser had provided a brief resume of the findings relating to each school and comments which related to Religion, Value and Ethics. Due to changes in the inspection process the number of comments relating directly to the provision of RE and Collective Worship in schools had reduced and reports to SACRE had subsequently been submitted on an annual basis as opposed to a termly basis as in previous years. No inspections had taken place during the Covid pandemic and the

report detailed inspections undertaken since then. Some contextual information relating to each school had also been provided as previously requested by SACRE.

Members had been pleased to note the resumption of the annual analysis of inspection reports following the pandemic and the positive comments made which provided an insight into RVE within Denbighshire's schools and work undertaken.

At this point the RE Adviser reported on a meeting on 14 February 2023 between Estyn and WASACRE Executive members regarding monitoring of standards and progress (WASACRE minutes of 21 March 2023 referred) which covered topics such as: Monitoring the provision of RVE in schools and regard to the Agreed Syllabus; Monitoring standards and progression in RVE; Collective Worship, and Effective practice. It was noted that schools would not be specifically inspected in relation to the quality of RVE provision, only to ensure that RVE was being taught and meeting the statutory requirements. In terms of Collective Worship, the 2017 Estyn guidance was still relevant. Both Estyn and WASACRE had considered the meeting beneficial and agreed to meet twice a year in future, with Estyn colleagues invited to provide updates at the main WASACRE meetings as and when needed. The RE Adviser added that the new Estyn Inspection Framework due in 2024 would likely be piloted from the Spring term onwards. Given the relevance of the new inspection framework further details would be provided to a future SACRE meeting.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *the report be received and noted;*
- (b) *a letter be sent to the schools inspected informing them that their Inspection Report had been considered, congratulating them on the good features identified and reminding them of the services of the RE Adviser and School Improvement Officers in relation to any areas for development or key issues needing addressing, and*
- (c) *the Local Authority be requested to distribute the letters to the schools involved.*

8 WASACRE

- **Minutes of WASACRE – 21 March 2023**

The draft minutes of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) held via Microsoft Teams on 21 March 2023 (previously circulated) were submitted.

The RE Adviser guided members through the minutes. Particular attention was paid to Minute No. 9 Conversations with England colleagues (NASACRE, REC, Regional RE Hubs) given that education in Wales was becoming increasingly different to England with the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales, and how those organisations worked together. Further discussions were to take place with those organisations to develop the relationship between NASACRE and WASACRE; enable better communication and collaboration with REC over the long term and potentially set up a REC Wales forum, and address issues raised

regarding the development of Regional RE hubs without direct communication with WASACRE or NAPfRE, and the way forward. The RE Adviser also referred to the EFTRE Conference and encouraged members to visit EFTRE's website which provided an insight into RE across Europe.

RESOLVED that minutes of WASACRE held on 21 March 2023 be received.

- **WASACRE Meeting – 19 June 2023**

The next WASACRE meeting would be held virtually via Zoom on 19 June 2023 'hosted' by Denbighshire. It was noted that the Head of Education, Geraint Davies would be giving a welcome speech. Members were asked to contact either the RE Adviser or Democratic Services for a link to the meeting if they wished to attend.

- **Nominations for the WASACRE Executive Committee**

[This item was considered as a matter of urgency, notice having been given by the Chair at the commencement of the meeting.]

Having a declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter, Jennie Downes left the meeting at this point and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The RE Adviser reported on three nominations received for the two positions on the Executive Committee, namely Jennie Downes, Denbighshire SACRE/SAC, Councillor Arfon Wyn, Anglesey SACRE/SAC together with Marged Williams and Tyler Saunders, Vale of Glamorgan SACRE/SAC (job share), and sought members' views on those candidates.

Members considered the background and experience of the candidates and agreed all had merit. Following a brief discussion, it was –

RESOLVED that Jennie Downes, Denbighshire and Arfon Wyn, Anglesey receive Denbighshire SACRE's vote for election to the WASACRE Executive Committee.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Denbighshire SACRE would be held on 17 October 2023.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am.