

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 Friday, 14 February 2025 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillors Ellie Chard (Chair), Ann Davies and Emrys Wynne

Representing Religious Denominations and Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

Jennie Downes and Colette Owen

Representing Teacher Associations

Sarah Griffiths

ALSO PRESENT

RVE Adviser (PL), Principal Education Manager (JB), and Committee Administrators (KEJ & SLW [Zoom Host])

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes' silent reflection.

1 APOLOGIES

Rev. Brian Jones, Dominic Oakes, Tania ap Siôn and Susan Williams

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest had been raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair declared that she intended to include for discussion the following matter requiring urgent attention – **Denbighshire SACRE Membership**.

The RVE Adviser explained that Jennie Downes was attending her last meeting as representative of the Church in Wales and that Louise Williams would be representing the St. Asaph Diocese going forward. Given Jennie's involvement with RE around the region she had asked whether she could be co-opted onto SACRE. Jennie explained her change of role from Education Officer with St. Asaph Diocese and postgraduate research with Bangor University linked to translators of the Welsh

Bible. In view of the benefits of retaining Jennie as a member on SACRE the Chair proposed that she be appointed as a co-opted member.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED that Jennie Downes be appointed as a co-opted member of SACRE.

There was some further debate on the representative groups on SACRE and it was noted that there were a number of teacher positions currently vacant. It was agreed that the RVE Adviser liaise with the Principal Education Manager directly with a view to actively seeking to fill those vacant positions.

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) meeting held on 15 October 2024 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Matters Arising – Page 12: Item 9 WASACRE Meeting 14 November 2024 – Councillor Emrys Wynne advised that he had not received any further information regarding the meeting and therefore had not been in attendance. The RVE Adviser apologised that the meeting information had not been provided and asked that in future any representatives agreed to attend contact either himself and/or the Committee Administrator who would arrange to forward the necessary details.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 15 October 2024 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 RELIGION, VALUE AND ETHICS (RVE), A SECONDARY PERSPECTIVE - SARAH GRIFFITHS (HEAD OF RVE, YSGOL DINAS BRAN)

Sarah Griffiths, Head of RVE at Ysgol Dinas Bran, Llangollen gave a presentation on how RE and RVE was being planned and delivered in the school in line with the Curriculum for Wales 2022.

The following elements were included in the comprehensive presentation –

- Year 7 – areas covered included what belief is and the power of belief and then onto Cynefin – what that is, cultural origins of religion, religions in the local area and places of worship then moving on to disasters, with student having the choice of focusing on ‘Evil’ or ‘Kindness’
- Year 8 – areas covered ‘Discovery’ at the beginning of the year looking at creation, science and religion, stewardship and animal rights followed by ‘Change’ including environmental issues, technological advancements, and a deep dive into one religion chosen by the students
- Year 9 – areas covered ‘Conflict’ including having faith, sanctity of life, war and death and afterlife followed by ‘Is it fair?’ including injustice and equal rights
- RVE in English: Year 7 – Identity, Culture and Refugees; Year 8 – The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (holocaust project) and Noughts and Crosses (segregation and racism); Year 9 – Animal Farm (communism, herd mentality and oppression) and view point writing in the digital world (being kind online, etc.)

- RVE in PE: links between Christian festivals and football; impact of the Church on football; muscular Christianity; ethical issues and sports around the world
- RVE, Science, Geography and Chester Zoo: Stewardship and Cyfenin; helping save critically endangered Llangollen White Beam; students helping plant saplings around the local area
- Upcoming plans including a Christmas Poetry Competition and science project involving the Rhug Estate about sustainability that had potential links with RVE.

The Chair thanked Ms. Griffiths for the interesting and informative presentation which had been well received by members who acknowledged the hard work in planning and implementing RVE, including links with other subjects. Members discussed the many questions raised in the teaching of RVE and how it had been weaved throughout the school in different subject areas. In response to questions Ms. Griffiths said she believed the biggest change from RE to RVE was the focus on students with RVE being much more student-led in terms of the schemes of work focusing on depth rather than breadth, and a more local emphasis.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received and noted.

6 MANDATORY RVE AND RS OPPORTUNITIES FOR YEARS 10 AND 11

The RVE Adviser introduced the item, the purpose of which was to provide members and schools with a presentation on the opportunities schools could use to provide mandatory Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) for learners in Year 10 and 11.

The presentation had been circulated with the agenda and the RVE Adviser guided members through the PowerPoint which included reference to the following –

- the change from Religious Education (RE) to RVE reflected an increase in the scope of knowledge, skills and experience covered by its various disciplines
- the mandatory status of RVE for children aged 3 – 16 and the legislation summary for RVE which incorporated ‘non-religious philosophical convictions’; parental right to withdraw for RE removed for schools delivering the Curriculum for Wales from 2022; schools having regard to the Agreed Syllabus and the Religion, Values and Ethics guidance; Spiritual Development requirement which could be developed in all areas of the curriculum not just RVE or Humanities
- links to the Curriculum for Wales landing page, Humanities Area of Learning Experience (AoLE), Designing your Curriculum page, and RVE Guidance
- the RVE Guidance having been written to complement the Curriculum for Wales and sections reference the cross-cutting themes, cross-curricular skills, integral skills and Statements of What Matters together with spiritual development, further concepts relevant to the discipline of RVE and the RVE Lens
- the RVE lens would help schools and settings understand significant aspects of RVE and identify opportunities for RVE within the statements of what matters to support curriculum development
- all maintained schools must have regard to the locally Agreed Syllabus and RVE Guidance and examples were provided of how this may be included in a school’s rationale statement in county, foundation, voluntary controlled and Church in Wales and Roman Catholic voluntary aided schools

- detailed potential planning options for RVE using a variety of approaches.

At the close of the presentation the RVE Adviser emphasised that RVE was a unique and important subject on the curriculum, and across other subject areas such as science and technology, and how it was important that knowledge was not abused but brought out the best in pupils in their learning and problem solving.

The presentation was well received by members and tribute was paid to the RVE Adviser on his work and members reflected on their own experiences of spirituality and learning. There was some debate regarding the responsibilities of schools in providing the mandatory requirements for RVE and ensuring that provision was meaningful and consistent for every learner. The Principal Education Manager reported on a Working Group involving deputy and assistant headteachers from seven secondary schools in Denbighshire, supported by the GwE's core lead for secondary schools and the Council's Engagement and Progression Manager on designing their new curriculums for September in line with the new expectations and Curriculum for Wales. The task of meeting all the curriculum requirements within the school timetable was a huge challenge but the work had been beneficial.

The Chair discussed with the RVE Adviser what further information could be provided to SACRE on RVE provision within secondary schools across all year groups, and what learners gained from that provision, with a view to providing support and encouragement to schools as appropriate. However, the need to balance gaining that information without putting additional work on teachers was highlighted. It was agreed that the RVE Adviser and Principal Education Manager discuss how best to progress the issue outside of the meeting and report back to SACRE thereon.

RESOLVED that the presentation on the opportunities schools can use to provide mandatory RVE for learners in Year 10 and 11 be received.

7 EXAMPLE RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS (RVE) AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICIES

The RVE Adviser explained that schools continued to develop their curriculum in light of the Curriculum for Wales and sought SACRE's consideration and endorsement of example RVE and Collective Worship Policies (appended to the report) that could be adopted by Denbighshire's schools.

The RVE Adviser guided members through the Draft Collective Worship Policy which included a number to topics including (1) Aims and Benefits of Collective Worship; (2) What is Collective Worship? (3) What are the legal requirements for Collective Worship; (4) Right of Withdrawal from Collective Worship; (5) How we provide Collective Worship, and (6) possible appendices including organisation, planning and themes. A draft RVE Policy had also been presented for consideration which covered key areas for schools to include and tailor as appropriate.

Members considered the example policy documents and were happy with the contents, believing they would be a useful tool for schools and should be made available to schools to use if they wished.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) *the draft policies, as presented, be approved, and*
- (b) *the Local Authority be requested to arrange for the policies to be translated into Welsh and made available to all schools in Denbighshire.*

8 WASACRE

- **WASACRE Meeting – 14 November 2024**

The minutes of the last WASACRE meeting held on 14 November 2024 had not yet been made available and it was agreed to receive those minutes once published.

- **WASACRE video created to support an understanding of RVE**

Members viewed the short film created by WASACRE which promoted the value of Religion, Values and Ethics in the Curriculum for Wales and was aimed at young people, schools and settings, parents/guardians, and others with an interest in Religion, Values and Ethics. Members enjoyed watching the short film which they found thought provoking and an excellent resource. The RVE Adviser highlighted the importance of the video and confirmed the link to view the film would be sent out again to all schools to make sure they were aware of it.

- **Teacher Voice Project: RVE in the Curriculum for Wales**

Information was provided (previously circulated) about the Teacher Voice Project which was an online research survey aiming to access teachers' perspectives on RVE in the Curriculum for Wales to help contribute to research, inform professional dialogue and professional learning. Sponsored and promoted by WASACRE, the collaborative study had been devised and undertaken by researchers from the St. Giles' Centre, Wrexham, Bishop Grosseteste University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Neath Port Talbot Education Support, and Llanishen High School.

Jennie Downes provided an overview of the national project asking all teachers across the learning continuum to engage to support professional development and bodies such as SACRE and local authorities. There were a number of universities linked to the project and the findings would also be shared with the Welsh Government. It was an exciting and ambitious endeavour to collect the voices of all those teachers and the intention was to gather as much information as possible by May for the first set of findings and then to keep re-running the survey to gather the information and keep the dialogue of RVE and what it meant to schools ongoing.

RESOLVED that the information about the Teacher Voice Project be received.

- **WASACRE Meeting – 6 March 2025**

The next WASACRE meeting would be held online at 10.00am on 6 March 2025 and members discussed attendance at that meeting. The Chair advised that she had an

ongoing commitment on that day but would look to make alternative arrangements if possible so that she could attend the WASACRE meeting.

RESOLVED that, in addition to the RE Adviser, the Chair, Councillor Ellie Chard attend the next WASACRE meeting on 6 March 2025 if possible.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Future meetings of Denbighshire SACRE had been scheduled as follows –

- Summer 2025 – 10am 4 June 2025
- Autumn 2025 – 10am 2 October 2025

The meeting concluded at 11.45 am.