

## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in COUNCIL CHAMBER, NANT HALL ROAD, PRESTATYN on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Representing Denbighshire County Council**

Councillors Joe Welch.

#### **Representing Religious Denominations**

Mr. Dominic Oakes, Reverend. B H Jones, Ms Mary Ludenbach and Ms S Harris.

#### **Representing Teacher Associations**

Ms H. Pearson.

#### **Co-opted Members**

Mr G Craigen.

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Challenge Advisor for GwE (PL) and Committee Administrator (CIW).

### **POINT OF NOTICE**

In the absence of the Chair, Reverend Martin Evans-Jones, and Vice Chair, Councillor Arwel Roberts, Councillor J. Welsh presided over the meeting.

### **SILENT REFLECTION**

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

Members of the Committee expressed their condolences following the passing away of Councillor Margaret McCarroll a former Member of SACRE.

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## **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Simon Cameron, Councillor Dewi Owens and Councillor Arwel Roberts.

## **2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of personal or prejudicial interest had been raised.

### **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 the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2014 (previously circulated) were submitted.

#### **Accuracy –**

Page 6, 5. SACRE Draft Annual Report 2013/14 – Ms M Ludenbach explained that the absence of examination data for Blessed Edward Jones Catholic School in terms of 2013 related only to GCSE Results and not A Level Results.

#### **Matters Arising –**

Page 6, 5. SACRE Draft Annual Report 2013/14 – The Challenge Adviser (CA) for GwE (SL) confirmed that the Annual Report had been forwarded to WASACRE and had been included on their website.

Page 7, 6. Analysis of Inspection Reports – The CA confirmed that letters had been sent to the respective schools congratulating them on the good features identified in their Estyn Inspection Reports.

Page 9, 8. RE and Local Communities – The CA confirmed that dates had now been agreed to meet to discuss the practicalities of arranging sessions for RE Coordinators.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the above, the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2014 be received and approved as a correct record.

### **5 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS**

The CA submitted a report (previously circulated) analysing the results of the recent Estyn inspections in terms of RE provision and collective worship in four schools between March and June 2014. Inspections had been carried out at Prestatyn High School; Borthyn V.C. Primary School; Ysgol Penmorfa and Ysgol Pendref.

Members were provided with a brief resume of the findings relating to each school and the positive comments and outcomes were noted by Members. The CA made particular reference to the following:-

- There being distinct reference under care, support and guidance to religious education and collective working which had been very positive.
- An analysis had been conducted by WASACRE on the comments for SMSC, collective worship and religious education across the 22 Authorities. Details of the percentages provided were outlined and it was explained that a letter had been sent from a SACRE in the South to Estyn referring to the duty of

SACRE to comment on the quality, not just the provision for SMSC. Estyn had subsequently circulated a strong letter to Inspectors highlighting the importance of SMSC in the curriculum, which it was felt was a positive outcome. The significance of the mechanism for reporting collective worship when not being addressed was also highlighted.

- Reference was made to partnership working, particular reference to the relationship between Borthyn V.C. and the local Church. It was explained that a request would be made to Borthyn V.C. provide a contribution towards the case study.
- The CA reminded Members that the case study document had been created for church and other faith group organisations, as well as schools, to encourage and promote relationships with the local communities.

**RESOLVED** - that the report be received and its contents noted.

## **6 EXAMINATION RESULTS 2013**

The CA submitted the Summary of Examination Results 2013-14 Report (previously circulated) which included details of:-

- GCSE Religious Studies – Full Course.

Ms M. Ludenbach responded to a question from Mr D. Oakes and confirmed that Blessed Edward Jones did have Full Course Results. The CA explained that he had included all the results provided by Blessed Edward Jones, and he agreed to contact the school to seek further information.

Mr Oakes expressed concern regarding the decrease in numbers at Ysgol Brynhyfryd. The CA explained that no further information had been received from the school.

Mr G. Craigen explained that he had been lead to believe that the Welsh medium entry had experienced problems as a result of staffing issues.

In reply to a question from Ms M. Ludenbach, the CA outlined the process for obtaining data and highlighted the problems experienced in gathering information, which had resulted in difficulties in compiling statistics. Schools and the Local Authority were using “Fischer Family Trust” to be able to further analyse the data within and across schools.

- GCSE Religious Studies – Short Course.

Mr D. Oakes expressed concern regarding the disparity between the Local Authority and All Wales entry figures for pupils. The CA explained that data provided by the WJEC had highlighted a significant increase in Full Courses over the past three years. He also provided details of the perception in the difference of the value of Full and Shorts Courses in England and Wales, in terms of University accreditation.

In response to the concerns raised, Mr Oakes suggested that representations be made regarding the concerns raised by SACRE Members regarding the status of Statutory Religious Education. The **SL** highlighted the move back to knowledge based learning, adopted in England, with no reference to issues such as moral decision making. He confirmed that the approach by the WJEC in Wales had been more favourable with regard to the content of the courses, and a consultation process had been undertaken.

- GCSE Religious Studies – A - Level.

The CA agreed to examine the accuracy of the A Level results provided with regard to St Brigids.

SACRE Members were informed that Blessed Edward Jones no longer had a sixth form. However, RE courses were provided at Prestatyn High School with an option also at Rhyl College.

- Results Comparisons to National Average (Full Course A\* - C) (Short Course A\* - C).
- Results Comparisons to National Average – A Level.
- All Religious Studies.
- GCSE Results 2014: All Religious Studies.
- GCSE Results 2013: All Religious Studies.
- GCSE Results 2014: All Religious Education Short Courses.
- GCSE Results 2013: All Religious Education Short Courses.
- GCSE Advanced Level Results 2014: All Religious Studies.
- GCSE Advanced Level Results 2013: All Religious Studies.

**RESOLVED** – that, subject to the above, the the Summary of Examination Results 2013-14 Report be received and noted.

## 7 DATA INFORMATION

The CA introduced the PowerPoint presentation created by the WJEC, Religious Studies: Data Feedback, for the WASACRE meeting on the 26th November 2014. The presentation had considered important changes in the trends regarding Religious Studies examinations, particular reference being made in the anomalies between provision in England and Wales.

The CA provided a detailed summary of the contents of the presentation which included the following issues, and matters raised by Members of SACRE:-

- GCSE Religious Studies: Specification A and Specification B.
- GCSE feedback on the last 3 years.
- AS/A2 combined entry level profile last 3 years.  
Reference was made by SACRE Members to the average split, both at AS/A2 level, being predominantly female orientated.
- GCE AS level feedback on the last 3 years.

Reference was made by Mr D. Oakes to the A2 level figures for Christianity provided on Page 46 and he questioned whether students were receiving RE Education from alternative sources or providers. The CA suggested that there could be teacher bias in choosing the units to be taught in schools, and reference was made to the availability of provision in some Denbighshire schools.

Mr Oakes suggested that representations be made by SACRE expressing the views that it was felt that Religion and Ethics and Philosophy of Religion remain as separate units. The CA explained that the consultation process had concluded in England. However, the opportunity could still arise in Wales through the WJEC and he agreed provide a response to encourage keeping them as separate units.

In response to a question from Mr Craigen regarding the future validity of courses in England and Wales, the CA explained that he understood that there would be very different statutory duties in England and Wales with the WJEC offering those duties in Wales.

- GCE A2 Level.
- Any Questions?

Following further discussion, it was:-

**RESOLVED** – *that the:-*

- (a) report be received and its contents noted, and*
- (b) Systems Lead GwE provide a response from SACRE to encourage keeping Religion and Ethics and Philosophy of Religion as separate units.*

## **8 SCARE AND CONSORTIA ARRANGEMENTS**

The CA explained that WASACRE had fed back the results of Members discussions on how they may be more involved in the role of local SACREs. The report outlined some of the responses and findings on how to support SACREs as they sought to support and monitor Religious Education and Collective Worship in their local schools.

The SL provided a detailed summary of the PowerPoint presentation circulated with the papers for the meeting, and summarised the questions, as detailed below, and the responses received:-

- How can members contribute to the work of SACREs?
- How can we ensure regular attendance from all groups?
- How could you persuade people to become a SACRE member?  
Ms S. Harris suggested the appointment of a Press Officer.
- How can we monitor RE and collective worship?
- How can we support schools to deliver good RE and CW?
- How can we ensure that LAs support SACREs  
Mr D. Oakes referred to consideration being afforded to SACRE meetings being held in schools. The CA agreed to liaise with the respective schools

regarding the suggestion. It was suggested by Mr G. Craigen that the RE Department of the host school be invited to provide a presentation at the SACRE meeting. Members were informed by Ms H. Pearson that Ysgol Llewellyn, Rhyl would be happy to host a SACRE meeting. The Chair explained that the schedule for all forthcoming Council meetings would be considered at County Council.

**RESOLVED** – *that the:-*

- (a) CA write to schools with a view to holding SACRE meetings on site at the schools, and*
- (b) report be received and its contents noted.*

## **9 RE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

The CA provided a verbal update on the project to support schools working with their local religious communities, and explained that although the number of responses received had not been as high as anticipated a sufficient number had been obtained. The majority of case studies received had been Christian based and a further e-mail had been circulated seeking further details and information pertaining to other faith communities in the area. Members were informed that sufficient numbers had been received for inclusion in the case studies.

Reference was made to responses received in relation to Secondary School activity which involved travelling to areas such as Manchester and Liverpool, and it was felt that such activity be included in the project as it reflected activity in the North.

The CA referred to the forthcoming WASACRE meeting, to be hosted by Flintshire, which would include an agenda item on presenting the case for working with local communities, in conjunction with St Giles Wrexham and their provision for local schools. The difference in provision between the North and South was highlighted by the CA, who felt the presentation would require a wider context of the various faiths.

During the ensuing discussion the CA explained that the document should be finalised and circulated to schools at the commencement of the summer term, and then presented to the WASACRE meeting in Flintshire.

**RESOLVED** - *that the verbal update on the RE and Local Communities project be received and the position noted.*

## **10 WASACRE**

### **(a) Minutes of WASACRE – 2 July 2014**

The draft minutes of the meeting of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) held in Pontypool on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 (previously circulated) were submitted for members' information.

**RESOLVED** - that minutes of WASACRE held on the 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 be received.

**(b) WASACRE meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2015**

The SL advised that the next WASACRE meeting would be held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 in Pontypool, and confirmed that he would be attending on behalf of Denbighshire SACRE.

**(c) WASACRE and WASACRE AGM – 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2015**

The CA advised that Flintshire would be hosting WASACRE and WASACRE AGM on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2015, and confirmed that he would be attending. Members agreed that Mr Dominic Oakes also attend the meeting.

**RESOLVED** - that the CA and Mr Dominic Oakes attend the next WASACRE and WASACRE AGM on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 a.m.